

**Moulton Pre-School – Missing Child Policy and Procedure**

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| **Version:** | 2.0 |
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# Missing Child

***Moulton Pre-school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at all times and expects everybody working within this setting to share this commitment.***

## Policy statement

Children’s safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the outings procedure and the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

**06** **Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults procedures**

**06.5 Missing child**

# In the building

* As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the staff alerts the pre-school leader who initiates a search within the setting.
* The setting leader will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
* The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
* Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
* If the child is not found on site, one member of staff searches the immediate vicinity, if there is no sign of the child, the police are called immediately. The parents are then called and informed.
* The designated safeguarding lead contacts their designated officer, to inform them of the situation.
* The pre-school leader talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
* The pre-school leader contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management committee where applicable.
* If the child is found on-site, the designated safeguarding lead checks on the welfare of the child and investigates the circumstances of the incident.

**Off-site (outing or walk)**

* As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
* The pre-school leader is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident recorded.
* If the child is not found, the senior staff calls the police and then contacts the designated person.
* The designated safeguarding lead informs the parents.
* Members of staff return the children to the setting as soon as possible if it is safe to do so. According to the advice of the police, one senior member of staff should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
* The designated safeguarding lead contacts the designated officer, who attends the setting.
* In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue’s security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
* The pre-school leader contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management committee where applicable.
* The pre-school leader or a member of staff may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

**Recording and reporting**

* A record is made on 06.1a Child welfare and protection summary and 06.1b Safeguarding incident reporting form. The manager as designated safeguarding lead completes and circulates 06.1c Confidential safeguarding incident report form to the designated officer on the same day that the incident occurred.

# The investigation

* Ofsted are informed as soon as possible (and at least within 14 days).
* The designated officer carries out a full investigation.
* The designated safeguarding lead and the designated officer speak with the parents together and explain the process of the investigation.
* Each member of staff present during the incident writes a full report using 06.1b Safeguarding incident reporting form, which is filed in the child’s file. Staff do not discuss any missing child incident with the press.
* Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
* The chairperson and management committee carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
* The staff member writes an incident report detailing:
* The date and time of the report.
* What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
* When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
* What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
* The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
* A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
* If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children’s social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
* The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
* In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
* The insurance provider is informed.

## Managing people

* Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
* The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
* Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Setting leaders need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
* The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the setting leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the pre-school leader and the other should be the chairperson of the management committee or representative, No matter how understandable the parent’s anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
* The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children’s questions honestly but also reassure them.
* In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The chairperson will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
* Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.