



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

### 06.5 Missing child

Children's safety is Abinger common Nursery's highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our 'short trips and outings and excursion' policy (01.05) and our 'maintaining children's security on the premises' policy (01.11) 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 below:

#### **In the building**

- ❖ As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the member of staff informs the designated person who initiates a thorough search within the setting and garden.
- ❖ A register is taken to make sure no other child has gone astray.
- ❖ If the child is found on-site, the designated person checks on the welfare of the child and investigates the circumstances of the incident.
- ❖ 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 person contacts their designated officer, to inform them of the situation and seek assistance.

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

- ❖ As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the senior staff present carries out a headcount.
- ❖ One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity.
- ❖ If the child is not found, the senior staff calls the police and then contacts the designated person.
- ❖ The designated person 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 person contacts the designated officer, who attends the setting.

#### **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 person 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 person 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.

## Managing people

- ❖ Staff should keep calm at all times and not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- ❖ Remaining staff caring for the children 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.
- ❖ The nursery manager ensures that any staff under investigation are not only fairly treated, but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- ❖ Parents may want to blame the staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the nursery manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the manager and the other should be the Nursery Chairperson or a representative of the management committee. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
- ❖ 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 Nursery Chair will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- ❖ Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

This policy was adopted by

Abinger Common Nursery

On

July 2023

Date to be reviewed

July 2024

Signed on behalf of the provider



Name of signatory

Mrs Emma Powell

Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)

Nursery Chair Person