Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection
Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

1.5 Missing child

Policy statement

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our outing's procedure and our exit/entrance procedure, to ensure the security of children is always maintained. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the child's room leader alerts our setting manager.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Our manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- 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, our manager calls the police immediately and reports the child as missing. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this.
- The parent(s)/carer(s) are then called and informed.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child was wearing are given to the police.
- Our manager talks to our staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- Our manager contacts our Chair and reports the incident. Our Chair comes to the provision immediately to carry out an investigation.
- If a child can leave their room unattended and access the school site, the manager will ask the staff what has happened, review CCTV in the setting, inform parents as soon as possible, ring LADO, and contact and report to Ofsted. The staff involved will receive a verbal warning, be asked to refresh their safeguarding knowledge via CPD and explain what has happened during the incident. We will then as a setting look at our security and safety measures and will change them accordingly.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when our staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving our manager and/or other staff back in our setting premises. If our manager has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. What to do when a child goes missing from a whole group outing may be a little different, as parents usually attend and are responsible for their own child.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members 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.

- Our senior staff member on the outing contacts the police and reports that child as missing.
- Our manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- Our manager contacts the parent(s)/carer(s).
- Our staff take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible.
- According to the advice of the police, a senior member of staff, or our manager (where applicable), should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child was wearing are given to the police.
- Our manager contacts our Chair and reports the incident. Our Chair comes to our premises immediately to carry out an investigation.
- Our staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up to date with the investigation.
- Our Chair carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and volunteers who were present.
- Our manager, together with Chair speaks with the parent(s)/carer(s) and explains the process of the investigation.
- The parent(s)/carer(s) may also raise a complaint with us or Ofsted.
- Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing:
  - The date and time of the incident.
  - Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue.
  - Which staff/children were in the premises/on the outing and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child.
  - When the child was last seen in the premises/or on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
  - What has taken place in the premises or on the outing since the child went missing.
  - The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation including interviewing staff and parents. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted are advised.
- The insurance provider is informed.
- Any written complaint relating to the fulfilment of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements will be investigated thoroughly. A written outcome will be provided within 28 days, including any actions taken to improve practice, safeguard children and prevent a recurrence.
- Complaint records will be kept securely and made available to Ofsted on request. Parents and carers will be reminded that they may contact Ofsted if they are not satisfied with the outcome or if they believe the setting is not meeting legal requirements.
- Where a complaint or incident raises a safeguarding concern, the setting will follow safeguarding procedures immediately, including contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer, children's social care, the police or Ofsted as appropriate.

Relevant legislation and guidance

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, including safeguarding and welfare requirements for group and school-based providers.
- Childcare Act 2006 and Childcare Register requirements.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children and local safeguarding partnership procedures.
- Ofsted guidance on complaints, notifications and serious childcare incidents.

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.
- Our staff will feel worried about the child, especially the room lead 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.
- They may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Our manager ensures that any 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 our staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at our manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff one of whom is our manager and the other should be our Chair or other representative of the Committee. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against our 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. Our 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 outcome, our staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. Our Chair will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Our staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

This policy was adopted by	Stowey Bears Pre-school	(name of provider)
On	31st January 2020	(date)
Date to be reviewed	15th July 2027	(date)

Signed on behalf of the provider	Rachel penny
Name of signatory	Julia Jameson
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Chairperson