



## **LOST CHILD POLICY**

Effective from 1 September 2020. Latest future review date September 2021.

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### Aim of this policy

In the unlikely event of a lost child The Kindergarten at St Joseph's follows structured procedures to recover any lost child as quickly as possible. Our principal concern is for the physical and emotional safety of both the lost child and of the other children in our care.

### Procedures

#### **Child Missing on the Premises**

- Immediately it is noticed that a child is missing Louise or her deputy is to be alerted.
- All staff present are informed and an immediate thorough search of the setting is made followed by a search of the surrounding area, ensuring that all other children remain supervised throughout.
- The register will be checked to make sure no other child has gone astray.
- Louise or her deputy carries out a second search of the whole setting area including doors and gates in case of a breach of security allowing a child to wander outside the setting boundaries.
- If the child has still not been accounted for Louise or her deputy contacts the police.

Information given to the police

- The Timber Hut address.
  - The Child's Next of Kin.
  - As much information about the child including a description, age, sex, clothing.
  - The circumstances or anything that may have triggered the disappearance
  - Who is looking for the child, their location and mobile no.
  - Police advice will be documented.
- Louise or her deputy also contacts the parents/carers of the missing child.
  - During this period staff continually search for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain as near to normal routine as possible for the rest of the children and if necessary extra members of staff will be contacted to maintain ratios.

- Louise or her deputy talk to staff to establish facts [e.g. when and where the child was last seen, how the child was dressed, any image available] and meets the police and parents/carers.
- Louise or her deputy awaits instructions from the police.
- Any incidents are recorded in writing.
- Ofsted and Surrey Supporting Children are informed of any incidents first by phone and then confirmed in writing.

### **Child Missing off the Premises [e.g. on an Outing]**

- The procedure will vary as Parent / Carer will usually attend and will be responsible for their child.
- Immediately it is noticed that a child is missing Louise or her deputy is to be alerted.
- All staff present are informed and children are asked to stand with their Parent / Carer
- One designated member of staff carries out an immediate thorough search of the close surrounding area
- The register is to be checked to make sure no other child has gone astray, ensuring that all other children remain supervised throughout.
- If a managed venue, Louise or her deputy will contact venue security who will handle further searches and notify the police.
- If a public venue Louise or her deputy will notify the police with the information described above.
- Louise or her deputy also contacts the Parents / Carers of the missing child. The Parent / Carer make their way to the venue or setting as agreed with Louise or her deputy.
- During this period, staff maintain as near to normal routine as possible for the rest of the children and, if agreed, return with them to the setting and if necessary extra staff will be contacted to maintain ratio's.
- Louise or her deputy talks to staff to establish facts [e.g. when and where the child was last seen, how the child was dressed, any image available] and meets the police and Parent / Carers.
- Louise or her deputy awaits instructions from the police and will wait at the venue as required.
- Any incidents are recorded in writing.
- Ofsted are informed of any incidents in writing.

### **When the Child is Found**

If the child is happy to return they will be told in an appropriate manner about the search in order that the child is not overwhelmed by any further questions. Staff will be asked to continue with the session keeping the atmosphere as normal as possible.

If the parents had not been called, Louise will call and tell them about the incident. She will also call the police and any other persons looking for the child. Louise in her role

responsible for Health and Safety will check the security of the premises and will ensure correction works take place as soon as practically possible and in the meantime the risk assessment updated accordingly to ensure the environment remains safe.

If the child is not happy to return to the Kindergarten but is willing to explain why appropriate action will be taken eg calling parents or LADO.

All this will be documented at an appropriate time by the practitioner finding the child and will include accounts from all staff at the session.

Louise will inform Ofsted in writing about the incident and it's outcome.

Staff will also require reassurance. They may feel worried, responsible or a target of parents anger. Louise will do her best to make staff feel supported. Time will be made at the end of session for the staff to meet and talk through the incident. We will look for ways to ensure a situation like this does not occur again, ways in which it could have handled differently/ in a more efficient way and if our policy or procedures need amending.

Staff are not to give any type of account to the press without the approval of Louise.

If it is felt appropriate all parents will be given feedback.

### **Legislation and References**

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

Early Years Foundation Stage 2017

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020

UNCRC 1989

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

Surrey County Council -[http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/50243/Lost-or-missing-child-policy.pdf](http://new.surreycc.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/50243/Lost-or-missing-child-policy.pdf)

Early Years Alliance