

## General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare

Glebe House School Early Years Staff must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

### Safeguarding children

#### 1.7 Missing child

##### 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.

##### EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
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##### Procedures

###### *Child going missing on the premises*

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the setting leader.
- The setting leader will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden, and alert colleagues from the main school to join in with the search
- 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, the setting leader calls the police and reports the child as missing, and then calls the parent.
- The setting leader talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The setting leader contacts the Headmaster, who will then contact the Chair of Governors and reports the incident. The chairperson, Headmaster and or Setting Leader carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.

###### *Child going missing on an outing*

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the setting leader and/or other staff back in the setting. If the setting Leader has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

What to do when a child goes missing from a whole setting 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, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person 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 setting leader or manager is contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- The setting leader contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The setting leader contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the setting leader. The setting is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the setting.
- Staff take the remaining children back to 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 setting leader contacts the Headmaster and reports the incident. He will then report the incident to the Chair of Governors, and the Headmaster in liaison with the setting leader will carry out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.
- The setting leader, or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

#### *The investigation*

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The setting leader together with the Headmaster and chairperson or representative from the management committee, speaks with the parent(s).
- 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 key person/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 setting leader and the other should be the Headmaster or chairperson of the board of governors 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 Headmaster or 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.

### *Child going missing away from the premises*

- If a child does not attend the setting parents/cares would usually call/email to explain why they are not attending and this information would be recorded.
- If they do not call then the setting's relevant head of room/admin support will call to establish why they are absent and record their findings.
- In either of the above situations if staff are concerned for the wellbeing of the child or we cannot contact the family, then staff should follow Safeguarding procedures from Policy 1.2 or call local Police on 101 to establish where the child and family are, thus hopefully ensuring the child is not missing and is safe and being cared for appropriately.
- Once reasons for absence have been established and the child is safe, if staff and the DSL feel confident it is a valid reason for absence then no further action will be required. However if it is becoming a regular occurrence for a funded child then parents must be informed by the nursery that the nursery will need to contact Norfolk County Council Early Years Finance to notify them of the child's absence as per funding regulations.

- If the absence is regular and effecting the child’s possible safety or funding/early education entitlement, then the DSL will suggest raising a Family Support Process (FSP) for the family to help improve the child’s long-term attendance and any constraints the family may have to previously restricting the attendance.
- If FSP fails to improve attendance and staff are concerned for the child’s wellbeing staff should go back to Policy 1.2 or Early Years Finance as appropriate and take necessary steps to ensure the child’s safety and education is the priority, being aware that it is not a statutory requirement for children in nursery to attend unless they have chosen to be funded or are part of a Protection Plan.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	<u>Glebe House School Nursery</u>	name of setting
Held on	<u>September 2018</u>	(date)
Date to be reviewed	<u>September 2019</u>	(date)
Signed on behalf of the management committee		
Name of signatory	<u>Susie Pull</u>	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	<u>Setting Manager</u>	

**Legal Framework**

Please see Safeguarding children policy 1.2 references.