

Mayday Playschool

Safeguarding Child Protection Policy & Procedure

Missing child

Statement of intent

Mayday Playschool take the safety of children very seriously and will take every precaution necessary to ensure that the children in their care do not leave a session unaccompanied. Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises.

Aim

Every attempt, through carrying out the outing's procedure and the exit/entrance procedure, to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. Staff will undertake periodic head counts using the key person system in addition to the registration procedure. If, in the unlikely event of a member of staff not being able to account for a child's whereabouts, the following procedure is followed:

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 carries out a thorough search of the building and outside area, this should take 2/3mins.
- If child is not found in allocated time scale the setting leader will call the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent. Description of child's clothes and up to date photo to be given to police.
- 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.
- 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 manager and reports the incident. The manager comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management team where appropriate.

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 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 setting leader or manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- 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.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.

- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security, where security staff and the setting leader will continue the search and record details.
 - The setting leader contacts the manager and reports the incident. The manager comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the staff (where appropriate).
- The setting leader or member of staff 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 a representative of the management team, speaks with the parents.
- The manager carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing. The manager will make parents aware of the complaints policy.
- 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 advice & duty service may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- We will provide the following information to Ofsted (03001231231)/the Medway Council Safeguarding Children's Board(01634 334466)
- The insurance provider is informed. (Insurers: Preschool Learning Alliance tel. No. 020 7697 2500)

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 Manager/Owner. 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 Manager will use their discretion to decide what action to take, in conjunction with police

Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press but must divert press to Lesley Chilton (Owner)

After the Incident

We will review our current procedure.

We will evaluate processes and make necessary adjustments to ensure future effectiveness.

Contacts

Kent Police - **Medway Police** emergency 999 non-emergency 101 Police advice will be followed at all times

Ofsted: Tel. 03001231231

Children's advice & duty service (CADS) 01634 334466 out of hours 03000 419191

This policy was adopted at a meeting of Mayday Playschool

Signed on behalf of all members of staff (print)

Updated 7/9/20

This policy relates to safeguarding & welfare requirements