



Little Crickets Forest School Missing Child Procedure Policy

Missing child from Forest School

At Little crickets Forest School we are committed to promoting children's safety and welfare. The safety of the children in our care is paramount. Every care is taken to ensure that the children are accounted for at all times. We do this by:

- At the start each session a register and head count will be taken
- Doing a head count regularly throughout the day
- Doing a head count before and after transitioning into different environments
- Boundaries will be established with the group at the beginning of each session.
- Staff maintain the appropriate high level of supervision and are aware of the location of the children in their care at all times. We consistently adhere to EYFS staff/child minimum ratios.

In the unlikely event of a child going missing within/from the forest school, we have the following procedure which will be implemented immediately:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff will alert the forest school manager and the emergency whistle will be blown. The whistles will be attached to the radios that will be carried by the leaders. All children and staff will gather in the yurt and await further instructions.
- A head count and register will take place to make sure no other children have gone astray.
- The leader will carry out a thorough search of the forest school site.
- If the child is not found the leader will inform a senior member of the Dean Park Day Nursery team to check inside the building.
- A thorough check of the grounds will be then carried out.
- If the child is not found, the leader will call the police, social care team and the DSL and report the child as missing and then contact the parents.
- The leader will then talk to staff to find out where the child was last seen and record this.
- All staff will be aware of the procedure when a child goes missing and supply information to support the search, e.g. a recent photograph and a detailed description of clothing
- A second search of the area will be carried out
- During this period, available staff will be continually searching for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain as near to normal routine as possible for the rest of the children in the nursery
- The manager will meet the police and parents
- The manager will then await instructions from the police

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- In the unlikely event that the child is not found the nursery will follow the local authority and police procedure
- Any incidents must be recorded in writing as soon as practicably possible including the outcome, who was lost, time identified, notification to police and findings
- Ofsted must be contacted and informed of any incidents
- With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience. Management will provide this or seek further support where necessary
- In any cases with media attention staff will not speak to any media representatives
- Post-incident risk assessments will be conducted following any incident of this nature to enable the chance of this reoccurring being reduced

Missing Child Procedure from Outings

At Little Crickets Forest school we are committed to promoting children's safety and welfare. This includes where children are on outings and visits. We carry out regular head counts of children throughout any outing or visit. In the unlikely event of a child going missing whilst on an outing we have the following procedure which we implement immediately:

- All staff will be aware of the procedure when a child goes missing and supply information to support the search, e.g. a recent photograph and a detailed description of clothing
- The manager will be informed immediately and all staff present will be informed. Some staff will be deployed to start an immediate thorough search of the area, ensuring that all other children remain supervised, calm and supported throughout
- If appropriate, on-site security will also be informed and a description given
- The designated person in charge will immediately inform the police
- The designated person in charge will then inform the nursery who will contact the child's parents giving details of what has happened. If the whole forest school is on an outing, all contact details will be taken on the trip by the person in charge
- During this period, staff will be continually searching for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain the safety and welfare of the remaining children
- It will be the designated person in charge or the manager's responsibility to ensure that there are adequate staff to care for the children and get them back safe, a member of staff to meet the police and someone to continue the search (this may mean contacting relief staff)
- Any incidents must be recorded in writing as soon as practicably possible including the outcome, who was lost, time identified, notification to police and findings



- In the unlikely event that the child is not found, we will follow the local authority and police procedure
- Ofsted must be contacted and informed of any incidents
- With incidents of this nature parents, carers, children and staff may require support and reassurance following the traumatic experience. Management will provide this or seek further support where necessary
- In any cases with media attention staff will not speak to any media representatives
- Post-incident risk assessments will be conducted following any incident of this nature to enable the chance of this reoccurring being reduced.

Missing child investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The leader will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff

Each staff member writes an incident report detailing:

- The date and time of the report.
- What staff/children were at forest school session
- When the child was last seen
- What has taken place during the forest school session since the child went missing.
- The time 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 will cooperate fully. In this case the police will handle all aspects of the investigation including interviewing all staff. Children's social care may also be involved if it appears that there is a child protection issue to address.

- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

Procedure for Managing adults and children in the group

- The forest school manager will manage the incident and will try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The staff will feel worried about the child, they may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- Understandably staff may be the target of parental anger and this may cause the staff to be apprehensive and nervous about the whole situation. The DSL needs 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 forest school leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent,

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there should always be two members of staff. In most circumstances it will be the leader and the DSL. No matter how understanding of the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police will 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 incident and the final outcome, staff may need counseling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press or any other forms of social media.