

Monty's Daycare Missing Child and Uncollected child Policy and Procedure

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 arrivals and departures policy and 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.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager) or Naomi Washer (Deputy Nursery Manager).
- Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager) or Naomi Washer (Deputy Nursery Manager) will carry out a thorough search of the exterior of the premises, then building and garden.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The register is checked by the leading Practitioner, Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager) and Naomi Washer (Deputy Nursery Manager) to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- If the child is not found, the parent/guardian is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.
- Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager) or Naomi Washer (Deputy Nursery Manager) talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager) or Naomi Washer (Deputy Nursery Manager) contacts Rachel or Nick Whitley (Directors) and reports the incident and an investigation is carried out immediately.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staffs have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the Nursery Manager (Kerry Allen) and/or other staff back in the nursery. If Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager) 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/guardian 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.
- Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager) or Naomi Washer (Deputy Nursery Manager) is contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager) or Naomi Washer (Deputy Nursery Manager) contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager) or Naomi Washer (Deputy Nursery Manager) contacts the parent/guardian, who makes their way to the nursery or outing

venue as agreed. The nursery is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent/guardian arrives, the child may have been returned to the nursery.

- Staffs take the remaining children back to the nursery.
- In an indoor venue, the staffs contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The setting leader, or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The investigation

- Staffs keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager) / Naomi Washer (Deputy Manager) and/or Rachel/Nick Whitley (Directors) will speak with the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager) / Naomi Washer (Deputy Manager) and/or Rachel/Nick Whitley (Directors) will 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, which include 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/guardians 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/guardian, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager) or Naomi Washer (Nursery Deputy Manager) and the other

should be Rachel Whitley (Director). No matter how understandable the parent's/guardians 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. Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager), will use her discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

Monty's Uncollected child Policy and Procedure

Policy statement

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of a session/day, the setting puts into practice agreed procedures. These ensure the child is cared for safely by an experienced and qualified practitioner who is known to the child. We will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible.

We inform parents/guardians of our procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for.

Procedures

- Parents/guardians of children starting at the setting are asked to provide the following specific information which is recorded on our Registration Form:
- Home address and telephone number - if the parents/guardians do not have a telephone, an alternative number must be given, perhaps a neighbour or close relative.
- Place of work, telephone number (if applicable).
- Mobile telephone number (if applicable).
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of adults who are authorised by the parents/guardians to collect their child from the setting, for example a childminder or grandparent.
- Who has parental responsibility for the child.
- Information about any person who does not have legal access to the child.
- On occasions when parents/guardians are aware that they will not be at home or in their usual place of work, they inform us in writing of how they can be contacted.
- On occasions when parents/guardian or the persons normally authorised to collect the child are not able to collect the child, they provide us with written details of the name of the person who will be collecting their child. We agree with parents/guardians how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child and are informed of the password signed on file.

- Parents/guardians are informed that if they are not able to collect the child as planned, they must inform us so that we can begin to take back-up measures. We provide parents/guardians with our contact telephone number.
- We inform parents/guardians that we apply our child protection procedures as set out in our child protection policy in the event that their children are not collected from the setting by an authorised adult within **one hour after the child's set session, without contact or a reason** and the staff can no longer supervise the child on our premises.
- If a child is not collected at the end of the session/day, we follow the following procedures:
 - The child's file is checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
 - If no information is available, parents/guardians are contacted at home or at work.
 - If this is unsuccessful, the adults who are authorised by the parents/guardians to collect their child from the setting - and whose telephone numbers are recorded on the Registration Form - are contacted.
 - All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents/guardians or nominated carers.
 - The **child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file.**
 - If no-one collects the child after one hour and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect the child, we apply the procedures for uncollected children.
 - We contact our local authority children's social services care team:
 03000 411111 (telephone number)

For full day care, this will be the out of hour's duty office (Social Services):
 03000 419191 (telephone number)

- The child stays at setting in the care of two fully-vetted workers until the child is safely collected either by the parents/guardians or by a social care worker.
- Social Care will aim to find the parent/guardian or relative if they are unable to do so, the child will become looked after by the local authority.
- **Under no circumstances do staff go to look for the parent/guardian, nor do they take the child home with them.**
- A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file.
- Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents/guardians for the additional hours worked by our staff.
- Ofsted may be informed on the following number
 0300 1231231

*This policy was revised at a meeting during the month of February 2021. Kerry Allen (Nursery Manager) and Naomi Washer (Deputy Manager) were present.
 (Policy and procedure to be revised during the month of February 2022, Spring Term)*