

1.7 Lost Child

EYFS: The Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements
3.63, 3.65 & 3.66

Policy Statement

At Hopes and Dreams Montessori Nursery we take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children on the premises, we only release children into the care of individuals who have been notified us by the parent and have safety systems in place to ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised e.g. high door handles

On outings, we also take all reasonable steps to ensure children are kept safe while on outings. We assess the risks or hazards that may arise for children and identify steps to remove, minimise and manage those risks and hazards. This includes the consideration of adult to child ratios and carrying out regular head counts of children throughout any outing or visit and children wearing high visibility jackets.

Procedures

Within the nursery premises

In the unlikely event of a child going missing within/from the nursery, we have the following procedures which will be implemented 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 Nursery 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 nursery, followed by a search of the surrounding area, whilst ensuring that some staff remain with the other children so they remain supervised, calm and supported throughout.
- During this search, a member of the Admin or Management team will check the CCTV to see if we can either locate the child or see the last time they were visible.
- The manager will call the police as soon as they believe the child is missing and follow police guidance. The parents of the missing child will also be contacted
- 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 Nursery Manager will meet the police and parents
- The Nursery Manager will then await instructions from the police
- In the unlikely event that the child is not found the nursery will follow the local authority and police procedure
- The Nursery Manager will inform their line Manager-Nazish Usman Principal of Hopes and Dreams Nurseries who will take over procedures from the Nursery

Manager in turn informing the Safeguarding Governor at Dukes Education
Libby Nicholas

On a walk/outing

In the unlikely event of a child going missing whilst on an outing we have the following procedure which we implement immediately:

- All staff are 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 designated person in charge of the walk/outing is 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 Manager who will contact the child's parents giving details of what has happened. If the whole nursery is on an outing, all contact details will be taken on the trip by the person in charge
- During this period, some 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 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)

After the event

- 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, the nursery will follow the local authority and police procedure
- Ofsted will be contacted and informed of the incident as soon as possible, but always within 14 days
- 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.

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 when they went missing. 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. The Nursery Manager 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 Nursery Manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Nursery Manager and the other the Principal or a representative from Dukes if possible, but if not, then another member of the Management Team. 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 Nursery Manager with the support of the Principal and a representative from Dukes will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Hopes and Dreams offers a free Employee Assistance Programme that all staff will be advised to make use of.

Reviewed: April 2023	Next review date: April 2024
Signed on behalf of the Nursery School: <i>L. Thorpe Zircanska</i>	