



Missing Child Policy

Lymestone Preschool takes the safety and welfare of all children extremely seriously. Every reasonable precaution is taken to ensure that children are supervised at all times while in our care and that robust systems are in place to prevent a child from going missing.

However, in the unlikely event that a child does go missing, this policy outlines the procedures to be followed to ensure a swift, calm, and effective response.

Prevention

To reduce the risk of a child going missing, the Preschool will:

- Maintain appropriate staff-to-child ratios at all times in line with statutory requirements.
- Carry out regular headcounts and register checks throughout the day.
- Ensure effective supervision of children at all times.
- Conduct regular risk assessments of the environment, including indoor and outdoor areas.
- Ensure gates, doors, and entry/exit points are secured and monitored.
- Maintain clear procedures for arrival, departure, and handover of children.
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of safeguarding procedures.

Procedures if a Child is Missing from the Preschool Site

If it is suspected that a child is missing from the Preschool premises, the following steps will be taken immediately:

1. The member of staff who notices the child is missing will inform the Manager or Senior Staff member immediately.
2. A full headcount of all children will be carried out.
3. All available staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises, including indoor and outdoor areas, toilets, storage areas, and any other possible hiding places.
4. Doors, gates, and exits will be checked to determine whether the child has left the premises.
5. The Manager will be informed immediately and will take overall control of the situation.

If the child cannot be located within a very short time frame:

6. The police will be contacted immediately (999).
7. The parents or carers will be informed as soon as possible.
8. Ofsted will be notified as required.
9. The Local Authority Safeguarding Team will be informed where appropriate.

Staff will continue searching the premises and surrounding area until instructed otherwise by the police.

Procedures if a Child Goes Missing on an Outing

1. If a child is identified as missing during an outing:
2. The leader in charge must be informed immediately.
3. All other children will be safely supervised and gathered in a secure area.
4. A search of the immediate area will be carried out by available staff without leaving the remaining children unsupervised.

5. The venue staff will be informed and asked to assist (If applicable).
6. If the child is not found quickly, the police will be contacted (999).
7. The Preschool Manager will be informed immediately.
8. Parents or carers will be contacted as soon as possible.
9. Ofsted and relevant safeguarding authorities will be informed where required.

Staff Responsibilities

All staff must:

- Remain calm and act quickly and professionally.
- Follow instructions from the Manager or designated lead.
- Prioritise the safety and supervision of remaining children at all times.
- Avoid leaving other children unsupervised while searching.
- Record all actions taken during the incident.

Recording and Review

After any missing child incident:

- A full written record will be completed as soon as possible.
- The incident will be reviewed by the Manager and Committee.
- Risk assessments and procedures will be updated if necessary.
- Any lessons learned will be shared with staff to improve practice.

Related Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Outings and Visits Policy
- Uncollected Child Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy

This policy was approved by Lympstone Preschool Committee, and will be reviewed annually, or sooner if legislation, guidance or operational requirements change.

Reviewed: 08/06/2026