

St Michael's Pre-school

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

Safeguarding children

1.7 Missing child

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 exit/entrance 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.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.3 Keeping safe 1.4 Health and well-being	2.2 Parents as partners	3.4 The wider context	

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the manager in charge.
- The manager will carry out a thorough search of the building, garden and immediate surrounding area.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If the child is not found, the manager calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- The manager talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and record this.

- The manager will contact the chairperson and reports the incident. The chair, or a trustee nominated by the chair in their absence, comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management team where appropriate.
- The manager may choose to inform the main school staff at this point

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the manager and/or other staff back in the setting. If the 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 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.
- Our senior staff member on the outing contacts the police and reports that child as missing.
- The manager will be informed immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- The manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the manager.
- The remaining children are taken back to the setting as soon as possible.
- According to the advice of the police, a senior member of staff, or our manager where applicable, should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The manager contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson, or a trustee nominated by the chair in their absence, comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management team (where appropriate).
- The manager, or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.
- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- The chairperson or representative of the management committee carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- The managers and a representative from the management committee speaks with the parent(s) and explains the process of the investigation..
- Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing:

- The date and time of the incident.
- 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. The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- What has taken place in the group or outing since 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 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 managers 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 managers. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is a manager and the other should be the chairperson of the management committee or representative. 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 chairperson or proprietor will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press or other outside persons, without taking advice.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of

St Michael's Pre-school

Held on

19/04/2021

(date)

Date to be reviewed

(date)

Signed on behalf of the management
committee

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light beige rectangular background. The signature is cursive and reads "Ellena Lloyd".

Name of signatory

Ellena Lloyd

Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)

Committee Chair