

Missing Child Procedure & Attendance Policy

At Children's Respite Trust we are always alert to the possibility that children/young people can go missing during sessions. To minimise the risk of this happening we will carry out periodic head counts, particularly when transporting children/young people between locations or from children/young people running offsite.

If a child cannot be located, the following steps will be taken:

- A member of the school staff will be informed, and help sought to conduct a search.
- All Children/young people's Respite Trust staff will be informed that the child is missing.
- Staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises and surrounding area.
- After 5 minutes the police will be informed. The manager will then contact the child's parents or carers.
- Staff will continue to search for the child whilst waiting for the police and parent/carers to arrive.
- We will maintain as normal a routine as possible for the rest of the children/young people at the Centre.
- The lead staff member or Centre manager will liaise with the police and the child's parent or carer.

The incident will be recorded in the **Incident Log on Family**. A review will be conducted regarding this and any other related incidents along with relevant policies and procedures. We will identify and implement any changes as necessary.

Children's safety is always maintained at the highest priority both on and off the premises

We have put into place thorough systems and procedures which are an integral part of staff training and should ensure that children do not go missing or get lost whilst in our care. If the Early Years Centre policies and procedures are being observed the likelihood of a child being lost is minimal. To ensure that children are not lost while in the care of the setting we:

- Carefully always supervise children.
- Maintain appropriate staff: child ratios always.qa
- Closely monitor children in and out of the building, ensuring that when the children are going out on trips or even to the garden the signing in and out sheet is taken with staff along with emergency contact details.
- Ensure that visitors to the setting are always supervised.
- Twice daily a risk assessment is carried out in every area where children play.
- If an outing is organized, a risk assessment will be carried out before leaving the premises.

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Very occasionally a child may become separated from the group on an outing or become lost.

With careful planning and co-operative working amongst staff, children should not be out of sight of an adult at any time.

In the unlikely event that a child is unaccounted for on the premises, the following policy will be followed:

- The setting will ensure a responsible person can help undertake a thorough search of the premises and the immediate vicinity.
- The Head of Care and/or U5's Manager will be notified, and extra staff called to help with the search
- The premises, including the entire setting, garden, and all surrounding areas will be searched, together with as many volunteers as possible.
- The register is to be checked to make sure no other child is missing and to check the child has not been collected.
- Doors and gates to be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If, following a thorough search of the setting and the immediate vicinity, the child cannot be found the police will be called and the child's parent/carers will be notified without delay.

In the unlikely event of a child being lost while on a trip or outing the following procedures will be followed:

1. As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing staff on the outing will ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure no other child has gone astray.
2. One staff member to immediately undertake a thorough search of the immediate vicinity.
3. Phone 999 (give your name, location, name and description of the child, name of the setting, and any other relevant information e.g. any medical conditions of child, description of child. Etc.)
4. The Head of Care and/or C.E.O to be notified as soon as possible (if not already present), and to inform venue (shop, library, museum etc)
5. Head of Care or any other senior staff to go to venue/ location.
6. Head of Care or Senior staff member to contact parent/carers/ child protection officer and keep them informed of what is happening
7. Staff to return other children safely to the setting when Head of Care or Senior Staff arrives.
8. Head of Care or Senior Staff to wait for police/ ambulance in case of injured persons
9. Staff must do a written record of events on **Family**.
10. Notify Ofsted

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Investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- Head of Care or Senior Staff to speak with parent/carers
- Management team carry out full investigation taking written statements from all staff who were on the outing
- The Head of Care or Senior Staff writes an incident report detailing the following:
 - date and time of the report, what staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff member responsible.
 - When the last child was last seen in the group.
 - What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing?
 - The time estimated the child went missing.
 - A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
 - The insurance provider informed.

People management

Missing child incidents are extremely worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incidents is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible. The staff will feel worried about the child; especially the member of staff who was responsible for the child whilst on the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time that the child is missing increases. The Head of Care/Senior Staff Member should ensure that the staff feel supported while they are feeling vulnerable.

The parent/carers will feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame staff and single out one member over others; they may direct anger at the Head of Care and/or Senior Staff Member. No matter how understandable the parent/carer's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated and the parent/carer will be asked to leave. If the parent/carer refuses to leave 999 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 the children need to focus on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.

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Useful numbers

Police: 999

Social Care: 01323 46222

SPoA: email webspoa@eastsussex.gov.uk

Telephone: 01323 464 222

Monday to Thursday 8.30 am to 5 pm and Friday 8.30 am to 4.30 pm

Out of hours:

Telephone: 01273 335 906 or 01273 335 905

This policy was adopted by: Michelle Hulse	Date: 13/01/2026
To be reviewed: January 2027	Signed: 