



# ***Missing Child and Outings Policy & Procedure***

Cherish Childcare is committed to keeping children safe both on the nursery premises and during outings. We take all reasonable steps to prevent a child becoming separated from the group and have clear procedures for immediate action should a child ever be unaccounted for.

This policy combines our arrangements for planning and supervising outings, responding to a child who is missing from the nursery premises, and responding to a child who goes missing while on an outing.

## ***Our approach to safe outings***

Outings are planned to support children's learning, development and connection with their local community. Before each outing, the person in charge considers the risks and hazards that may arise and puts appropriate measures in place to remove, minimise or manage them.

- A suitable risk assessment is completed or reviewed before the outing.
- The route, destination, transport arrangements and any known hazards are considered.
- Appropriate adult-to-child ratios are decided according to the age, needs and vulnerabilities of the children and the nature of the outing.
- Staff are allocated responsibility for specific children or groups of children so that supervision is clear.
- A register or attendance list is taken and regular head counts are carried out throughout the outing, including before leaving, on arrival, before moving between areas and before returning.
- Children are reminded, in an age-appropriate way, about staying with their group and listening to adults.
- Where appropriate, meeting points and emergency arrangements are agreed before the outing begins.
- At least one member of staff with a current paediatric first aid qualification will accompany children on outings, in line with EYFS requirements.
- Essential first aid supplies, emergency medication and any required individual care items are taken.
- Emergency contact details for the children attending are available to the outing lead.
- A current photograph or reliable current image of each child should be accessible to the outing lead, together with a description of what the child is wearing that day.
- Staff have a charged mobile phone and know how to contact the nursery, parents/carers, emergency services and relevant safeguarding services if required.



## ***If a child goes missing from the nursery premises***

If a child cannot be located on the nursery premises, staff will act immediately. The safety of the missing child and the remaining children will be treated as the highest priority.

### **1. Raise the alert and confirm the child is missing**

- The manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or most senior member of staff present will be informed immediately.
- A rapid head count and register check will be completed.
- Staff will confirm when and where the child was last seen and who last had responsibility for them.

### **2. Secure the setting and search**

- Entrances and exits will be checked and secured without delaying the search.
- Staff will conduct an immediate, systematic search of all rooms, toilets, sleep areas, storage areas, outdoor spaces and any other place the child could reasonably access.
- The remaining children will stay fully supervised and calm. Ratios and safe supervision will not be compromised in order to search.

### **3. Contact police and parents**

- If the child is not located immediately after the initial rapid search, the police will be contacted without delay.
- The child's parent or carer will be informed as soon as possible and given factual information about what has happened and what action is being taken.
- Staff will provide the police with the child's name, age, description, clothing, photograph/current image and any relevant needs or vulnerabilities.

### **4. Continue to cooperate and protect other children**

- Staff will continue the search as directed while maintaining safe supervision of all other children.
- No member of staff will leave the remaining children inadequately supervised in order to search.
- Staff will follow police and local safeguarding instructions until the child is found or responsibility is formally transferred.

## ***If a child goes missing while on an outing***

If a child cannot be accounted for during an outing, the following procedure will be implemented immediately.

### **1. Raise the alert**

- The designated outing lead or most senior member of staff will be informed immediately and all staff present will be alerted.
- A rapid head count will be completed and staff will establish when and where the child was last seen.



## **2. Protect the remaining children**

- The remaining children will be kept together, fully supervised, calm and reassured.
- The outing lead will allocate staff so that some adults can search while sufficient adults remain with the other children.

## **3. Search the immediate area**

- Staff allocated to search will conduct an immediate and systematic search of the surrounding area and any place the child may reasonably have gone.
- Where relevant, venue staff or on-site security will be informed immediately and provided with the child's description, clothing and current image.

## **4. Contact police and parents**

- The police will be contacted immediately once it is established that the child is missing.
- The parent or carer will be informed as soon as possible.
- Where only part of the nursery is on the outing, the nursery may contact the parent/carers at the direction of the outing lead. If the whole nursery is out, the outing lead or another nominated senior member of staff will make the contact.
- Staff will provide factual information and keep parents/carers updated as appropriate.

## **5. Maintain safe staffing arrangements**

- The outing lead will ensure there are enough adults to supervise the remaining children, support the search, liaise with police and return the other children safely to the nursery or agreed location.
- If extra support is needed, management will arrange help from available approved staff or another appropriate adult rather than compromising the supervision of children.

## ***When a missing child is found***

- The child will be checked immediately for injury, distress or any other welfare concern.
- First aid or medical attention will be provided if required.
- The child will be reassured calmly and staff will avoid blame, criticism or questioning that could increase distress.
- The parent/carers, police and any venue security already involved will be informed promptly that the child has been found.
- Any information given by the child about what happened will be listened to carefully and recorded factually where relevant.



## ***If the child is not found***

If the child remains missing, Cherish Childcare will continue to follow the instructions of the police and any relevant local authority safeguarding service. Staff will cooperate fully with the search and will continue to safeguard and supervise the other children.

## ***Recording, notifications and safeguarding follow-up***

- A full written incident record will be completed as soon as practicably possible.
- The record will include the child's name, time and location the child was identified as missing, when and where they were last seen, staff present, searches carried out, who was contacted, police involvement, time found if applicable and the outcome.
- Management will review the register, staff deployment, supervision arrangements, head counts, risk assessment and any relevant environmental or procedural factors.
- Where the circumstances raise a safeguarding concern, the DSL will follow Cherish Childcare's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and seek advice or make a referral where appropriate.
- Where the circumstances raise a concern about the conduct, supervision or suitability of a member of staff, volunteer, student or other adult working with children, management will consider the LADO allegations process and seek LADO advice where appropriate.
- Ofsted will be notified where the incident meets a relevant statutory notification requirement, within the required timescale.
- Any learning from the incident will be used to update risk assessments, staff practice and procedures to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

## ***Support after an incident***

An incident involving a missing child can be distressing for the child, family, other children and staff. Management will provide reassurance, debrief staff appropriately and arrange additional support where necessary. Information will be handled sensitively and confidentially.

## ***Media and confidentiality***

Staff must not speak to media representatives or post information about the incident on social media. Any media enquiries will be referred to management. Information will only be shared with those who have a legitimate safeguarding, legal or professional need to know.

## ***Staff responsibilities***

- All staff must know and follow this policy.
- Staff must remain vigilant, maintain active supervision and complete head counts as required.
- Staff must immediately report any concern that a child may be missing or unaccounted for.



- The manager/DSL is responsible for ensuring procedures are followed, records are completed, notifications are made where required and learning is reviewed after any incident.