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www.pelican-childcare.co.uk

Missing child

Policy Statement

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off the 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.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the lead of the department.
- The Department lead and manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- 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 parents are contacted and the missing child reported to the police.
- The Department head and manager talk to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and record this.
- The manager contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson, with the manager carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the setting leads and other staff back in the setting. If the setting Department head has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

- 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 point.
- The manager is contacted and the incident is reported.
- The setting leader contacts the parent/carer, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the manager. The setting is advised as the best place as by the time the parent arrives, the child might have returned to the setting.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The setting manager contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson with the manager carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.
- The manager or designated person may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.
- Parents will be notified of the situation even if the child is found.

The investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The manager and chairperson speak with the parents.
- The manager will carry out a full investigation and take statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- The senior member in charge of the outing writes an incident report detailing;

The date and time of the report

What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff member in charge of the child.

When the child was last seen in the group/ outing.

What has taken place in the group/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 Accident and Incident 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.
- Risk assessments will be reviewed following any incidents.

Managing People

- Missing child incidents are very 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 key person or the person responsible for the safety of that child is missing increases.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Managers need to ensure that staff under investigation are notably 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 the others, they may direct their anger at the settings manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members present, one of whom is the settings manager and chair person. 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 and manager will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice from the local authority.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of The Board of Trustees at Pelican Children's Centre

Held
on.....

Date to be
reviewed.....

Signed on behalf of the board of
trustees.....

Name of
signatory.....

Role within the
centre.....