



Missing Child Policy

Arrangements for Review:

Diane Daniels is responsible for the implementation of this policy and conducting regular reviews. This policy was adopted in July 2010 and will be reviewed in **September 2011**

Policy Context:

If a missing child is not located after a first initial search, the police should be contacted immediately on 999. Go to the section below on 'Police Involvement' for further details.

Whilst it is unlikely that a child should go missing whilst at Seashells or Sheerness Neighbourhood Nursery particular protocols must be put in place to ensure safety of not only the missing child but also all other children and families in Seashells.

Statutory guidance on missing children is available at www.kscb.org.uk/ under 'Resources and Library'.

Aims:

Keeping children safe and secure both within the nursery/children's centre setting and whilst on trips is always our priority however in the unfortunate event that a child should go missing the following procedure will be applied.

Procedure:

A Child Missing From the Centre or Nursery:

- The member of staff who discovers or is informed by a parent/carer about the apparent missing child will alert the rest of the team and reception who will alert all other adults in the Centre, especially the most senior member of staff. **The search will take precedence over all other activities.**
- The remaining children should be safely grouped with adequate staff so that other staff members can search for the missing child. This might be using office staff and the Senior Management Team (SMT).
- Additional exits must be manned whilst trying to locate the child; this might be using office staff and the SMT.
- All inside and outside areas will be thoroughly searched, including cupboards, toilets and sheds, ensuring all gates are still secured.

If the parents/carers are on site:

- If the child is located two staff members to check with the parent/carer whether the child is injured.
- If a missing child is not located within 15 minutes, the police should be contacted immediately on 999. *Go to the section below on 'Police Involvement' for further details.*

If the parents/carers are not on site:

- If the child is located two staff members must check to see whether he or she is injured.
- If a missing child is not located within 15 minutes, the police should be contacted immediately on 999. *Go to the section below on 'Police Involvement' for further details.*

- The Centre/Duty Manager or Nursery Manager (or deputy if unavailable) to call the child's parents to tell them what has happened and to record the conversation. Parents/carer to sign this account when they collect the child.
- The Centre/Duty Manager or Nursery Manager (or deputy if unavailable) will do a risk assessment of the incident on that day.
- The Centre/Duty Manager or Nursery Manager (or deputy if unavailable) will inform Ofsted by phone ASAP and also in writing within 24 hours.

If the parents/carers are on site and their children are in a creche:

- The Centre/Duty Manager or Nursery Manager (or deputy if unavailable) to tell the child's parents what has happened. Records will be kept of all conversations and signed by parents/carers.
- If the child is located two staff members to check with the parent/carer whether the child is injured.
- If a missing child is not located within 15 minutes, the police should be contacted immediately on 999. *Go to the section below on 'Police Involvement' for further details.*
- The Centre/Duty Manager or Nursery Manager (or deputy if unavailable) will do a risk assessment of the incident on that day.
- The Centre/Duty Manager or Nursery Manager (or deputy if unavailable) will inform Ofsted by phone ASAP and also in writing within 24 hours.

A Child Missing from an Outing or Other Offsite Activity:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff check with all parents/carers wherever possible 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.
- The outing leader contacts the Seashells duty manager to report the incident.
- The outing leader contacts the police to report the child as missing and waits for police advice
- Where applicable the outing leader should contact the venue's security to assist with the search.

The investigation

- The outing leader carries out a full investigation and writes an incident report detailing:
 - The name of the missing child
 - The date and time of the report.
 - Which staff, children and parents/carers were with the child at the time
 - When the child was last seen
 - What has taken place since the child went missing
 - Estimated time that the child went missing
- 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 will be informed. The insurance provider is informed.

Police involvement and following procedures:

- As soon as the police arrive a member of staff will liaise with them to assist with their search.
- Staff will ensure other children and families are kept safe and reassured and if offsite return to Seashells leaving one member with details to liaise with the Police.
- Involved staff will write a report, signed and dated. A copy of this will be sent to the parents/carers, and Ofsted (if relevant).
- Following this a risk assessments will be carried out within 1 working day of the incident.

Arrangements for complaint

These are defined in the Sheerness Neighbourhood Nursery and Children's Centres Complaints Policy

Policy Implementation

- All staff are made aware of this policy as part of their induction, reviews, and training.
- This policy is linked to all centre policies including Health and Safety: Safeguarding (Child Protection); Outings; Staffing; Contact and Collection; Risk Management.