

Wanborough Playgroup

Registered Charity Number 1026150

Ofsted Registration Number: 109096



Village Hall, High Street, Wanborough, Swindon. SN4 0AD

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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.

Procedures

Child going missing whilst at Playgroup

If a child goes missing in the vicinity of Wanborough Village Hall:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the Supervisor is informed.
- The Supervisor will immediately carry out a thorough search of the Village Hall and surrounding area.
- A second staff member checks the register to make sure no other child has also gone astray and 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 within 5 minutes the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.
- The remaining children will be supervised as required by Ofsted. Additional adults will be brought in if necessary.
- The Supervisor talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The Supervisor contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson, with the committee, carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.

Child going missing on an outing

If a child goes missing on a Playgroup outing:

- The Supervisor is informed immediately that the child is missing.
- Staff 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.
- The Supervisor checks the designated Meeting Point, which all parents / carers and children were informed of at the start of the outing.
- A nominated member of staff contacts the onsite authority to enlist the support of all site staff.
- If the parent / carer is not part of the outing, the Supervisor calls the child's parent / carer and informs them of their child's disappearance.
- The Supervisor contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The remaining children will be supervised as required by Ofsted. Additional adults will be brought in if necessary.
- The Supervisor contacts the chairperson and reports the incident. The chairperson, with the committee, carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.

The investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Supervisor, together with the chairperson or representative from the committee, speaks with the parent / carer.
- The chairperson and committee carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time the child went missing.
- The staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in Playgroup / on the outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in Playgroup/on the outing.
 - What has taken place in Playgroup or outing since the child went missing.
 - The time it is estimated that 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. The Supervisor and committee members 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 Supervisor. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Supervisor and the other should be the chairperson of the 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 will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Wanborough Playgroup
Held on	14 th September 2007
Date reviewed	5 th March 2009
Name of signatory	Sarah Kennedy
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	Chairperson
Reviewed on:	26 th March 2012
Name of Signatory:	Kath Liston
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	Chairperson
Reviewed at a meeting of	Wanborough Playgroup Committee
Held on	31 st March 2014
Signed on behalf of the management committee	
Name of signatory	Ali Petherbridge
Role of signatory (e.g. chair/owner)	Chairperson