



A Missing Child Procedure

Updated September 2024

This policy outlines the procedures to follow in the event a child is reported missing from Briar Dene Childcare. The safety and well-being of all children is our top priority. We are committed to ensuring that appropriate measures are taken immediately to respond to a missing child situation.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and contractors at Briar Dene Childcare and covers the procedure for a child being missing while under our care.

A child is considered "missing" when they are unaccounted for during regular operational hours, and their whereabouts are unknown to staff despite reasonable efforts to locate them.

Immediate Response

If a child is reported missing or cannot be located during nursery hours, the following steps must be taken immediately:

1. **Alert Staff:** The staff member who notices the child is missing must immediately inform the designated supervisor or manager on duty.
2. **Search the Premises:** Staff should conduct a thorough search of the building, garden, bathrooms, staffroom, and any other areas where the child could be hiding, playing, or have wandered off. This search should include checking doors and windows to ensure there has been no unauthorised exit.

Escalation of the Situation

If the child is not located within 10 minutes:

1. **Contact Emergency Contacts:** Call the child's primary emergency contact, and then secondary contacts, to inquire if the child has been picked up early or is with someone outside of the scheduled arrangements.
2. **Notify Authorities:** If the child cannot be located after the initial search and communication with family contacts, the nursery will contact local law enforcement immediately to report the child as missing.
3. **Notify Parents/Guardians:** The parents or guardians of the missing child must be informed as soon as possible. If the child is still missing, the nursery will cooperate with authorities in the investigation.

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4. **Maintain a Calm and Coordinated Response:** It is essential that all staff remain calm and focused. A designated team member will handle communications with the authorities and parents, while others will continue assisting in the search.
5. **Account for Other Children:** Other children in the group should be accounted for to ensure that the missing child is the only one unaccounted for.
6. **Check Sign-In and Sign-Out Records:** Verify that the child was signed in at the beginning of the day and whether they were signed out early or by someone else.

Communication Procedures

- **Internal Communication:** Staff members must maintain clear and continuous communication throughout the response process. A designated point of contact should be assigned to communicate with law enforcement, parents, and other stakeholders.
- **External Communication:** Media inquiries regarding a missing child will be directed to the nursery's administration or the designated spokesperson. Under no circumstances should staff members speak to the press or make any public statements without authorisation.

Post-Incident Procedures

Once the child has been located, the following steps should occur:

1. **Document the Incident:** A full report of the incident, including the time the child was missing, actions taken, and the circumstances surrounding the incident, must be completed by the staff involved. This report will be kept in the child's file and reviewed by preschool management.
2. **Review and Evaluation:** The nursery will review the circumstances leading to the missing child incident to determine whether it was preventable and if any safety procedures need to be updated or reinforced.
3. **Provide Support:** If needed, counselling services will be made available for both staff and the child's family. The well-being of the child and their emotional health after the incident is a priority.
4. **Follow-up with Authorities:** If law enforcement was involved, the preschool will cooperate fully with any investigations and follow any recommendations or legal requirements.

Preventative Measures

To minimise the risk of a child going missing, the nursery will:

- **Staff Training:** All staff will undergo regular training in child supervision, emergency response procedures, and child safety protocols.
- **Child Tracking:** Procedures for drop-off and pick-up will be strictly followed, with all children signed in and out of the facility. Staff will regularly count children to ensure no one is unaccounted for.
- **Secure Premises:** The premises, including outdoor play areas and entrances, will be routinely checked for safety, and any unlocked or open doors/windows will be promptly addressed.
- **Supervision Policies:** Children will always be supervised by appropriate staff ratios. No child will be left alone without supervision, even in enclosed or familiar spaces.

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any incident involving a missing child to ensure it remains effective and up to date. Any revisions will be communicated to all staff and stakeholders, and appropriate training will be provided as needed.

Review of Policy:

This policy will be reviewed annually (September 2025), or as needed, to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in meeting the evolving needs of the children, families, and staff within the nursery.

Name:	Position:	Signed:	Date:
David Birkbeck	Owner		
Kayleigh Tydd	Director		
Greg Bamber	Nominated Individual		
Zoe Tydd	Manager & DSL		
Abbie Lloyd	Deputy Manager		
Jade Radcliffe	Second Deputy Manager		
Pamela Lear	Practitioner		
Diane Jones	Practitioner		
Emily Gautrey	Practitioner		