



Lost Child Policy



At all times, the safety of children in our care is our highest priority, both on and off the premises.

We have implemented comprehensive systems and procedures as an integral part of staff training to ensure children remain safe and supervised, reducing the risk of any child going missing. By following our Early Years Centre policies and procedures, the chances of a child being lost are extremely low. To maintain children's security while in our care, we:

- Ensure vigilant supervision of all children at all times.
- Adhere to appropriate staff-to-child ratios consistently.
- Monitor children's movement in and out of the building, taking a sign-in/out sheet and emergency contact information on outings and even to the garden.
- Supervise all visitors while they are on nursery premises.
- Conduct twice-daily risk assessments in each area where children play.
- Complete risk assessments before any planned outings.

In the rare case that a child becomes separated from the group, careful planning and teamwork among staff minimize the risk. If, however, a child is found to be unaccounted for, we will follow these procedures:

If a Child Goes Missing on Nursery Premises:

1. A designated staff member will conduct a thorough search of the nursery and surrounding areas.
2. The management team will be informed, and additional help will be called to assist with the search.
3. All nursery areas, including the garden and nearby spaces, will be checked with as many volunteers as possible.
4. The sign-in sheet will be reviewed to ensure all other children are accounted for and confirm whether the child was collected.
5. All doors and gates will be checked to ensure no breaches in security.
6. If the child is not located after a thorough search, the police will be called, and the child's parents will be notified immediately.

If a Child Goes Missing During an Outing:

1. Staff will immediately conduct a headcount, ensuring all other children are accounted for.
2. A designated staff member will search the immediate area.
3. Emergency services will be called at 999 with details of the child, the location, and relevant information, including any medical needs.
4. The management will be informed and, if necessary, the venue (e.g., shop, library, museum).
5. The manager or deputies will go directly to the outing location.
6. The management team will contact the child's parents and keep them updated on the situation.
7. Once the management team arrives, other children will be safely returned to the nursery.
8. The responsible staff member will remain to meet police or emergency services.
9. A full written record of events will be documented.
10. Ofsted will be notified of the incident.

Investigation

In the event of a missing child, a complete investigation will be conducted, including:

- The management team meeting with the parents.
- A management review gathering written statements from all involved staff.
- An incident report including:
 - Date and time of the incident
 - Details of staff and children present
 - The timeline of when the child was last seen
 - A summary of events leading up to the incident
 - An assessment of how the security breach occurred
- Notification of the nursery's insurance provider.

Managing the Incident

Missing child incidents are deeply concerning for all involved. During the response, we aim to maintain calm. Staff involved may feel anxious or distressed; therefore, the nursery manager will provide reassurance and support.

Parents are likely to feel distressed and may express frustration or anger. Although these feelings are understandable, aggressive behaviour toward staff will not be tolerated, and security may be called if necessary.

It's also crucial to address the needs of other children present. Staff will focus on keeping the environment calm, answer questions honestly, and provide reassurance without discussing the incident in front of them.

This policy was adopted by	Teddy Bears Childcare
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Name and role of signatory	Leahna Welch (Deputy Manager)