Froxfield Pre-School - Missing Child Policy

Policy statement

Children's well-being and safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our outings procedure and our 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 pre-school manager will be alerted.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child is also missing.
- The manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- 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 police will be called immediately to report the child as missing.
- The parent(s) will then be called and informed.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing will be given to the police.
- The pre-school manager will talk to other staff to get as much information about when the child was last seen, their mood and any other information that may be useful.
- The manager will contact the head teacher to report the incident. The head teacher will attend the setting and carry out an investigation if necessary.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do if staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving our manager and/or other staff back in our setting premises. If our manager has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. What to do when a child goes missing from a whole group outing may be a little different.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer 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 senior staff member on the outing contacts the police and reports that child as missing.
- The manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.

- The manager contacts the parent(s).
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible.
- According to the advice of the police, a senior member of staff, or our manager where applicable, should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The manager will contact the head teacher to report the incident. The head teacher will attend the setting and carry out an investigation if necessary.
- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- The Governors are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- The head teacher carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and volunteers who were present.
- The manager and head teacher speak with the parent(s) and explains the process of the investigation.
- The parent(s) may also raise a complaint with us or Ofsted.
- Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing:
  - The date and time of the incident.
  - Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue.
  - Which staff/children were in the premises/on the outing and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child.
  - When the child was last seen in the premises/or on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
  - What has taken place in the premises or on the outing since the child went missing.
  - The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff and parents. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, the Local Authority are advised.
- 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.

- Our 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.
- They may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The manager ensures that any 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 our staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at our manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff one of whom is the manager and the other should be the head teacher. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against our 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. Our 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, our 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 head teacher 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 by	Froxfield CE Primary School and Pre-school	(name of provider)
On	5/5/2026	(date)
Date to be reviewed	May 2027	(date)
Signed on behalf of the provider		
Name of signatory	Mrs V Farrow	
Role of signatory (e.g. chair, director or owner)	Headteacher	