

CATERPILLARS PRE-SCHOOL (SUSSEX) LIMITED

**6. MISSING CHILD POLICY**

In the event that a child becomes lost while in the care of the preschool, the Preschool will implement the following procedures. These ensure that a systematic approach to finding the child is taken, whilst other children in the preschool are kept safe and calm.

In the event that a child is missing, we will instigate an immediate search for the child, notify parents and authorities at the appropriate stage and maintain a high level of care for other children in the preschool.

**Procedures**

1.1. As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the Preschool person in charge must be alerted.

1.2. The person in charge will carry out an initial search of the preschool

This will include:

1.3. Checking doors/gates for a potential breach of security

1.4. All rooms, including toilets, cloakroom, outdoor play area, garden shed and other storage

1.5. In and around garden play equipment

1.6. All indoor cupboards

1.7. Under seating, tables

1.8. While the initial search is carried out, the register should be checked to confirm that the child was in preschool for that session, that they have not been collected early and to ensure that no other child has gone astray.

1.9. The person in charge of the session will then send a member of staff and any extra helpers available to search for the child. The search should start with

1.10 Checking up and down the pathway and area between the preschool and the car park, check across the bridge and paths leading behind the preschool.

1.11 The search should be completed as thoroughly and as quickly as possible, before reporting back to the person in charge.

1.12 While the extended search is being made, the person in charge should establish from staff/visitors who have since left when the child was last seen, what they were wearing and their emotional state (happy, upset etc) and record this information ( using the report sheet)

1.13 If the child is not found, the person in charge should contact the police, report the child as missing and follow their advice.

1.14 The person in charge should contact the parents/ carer and report the situation.

1.15. The parents/carer should be asked to come to the pre-school by the normal route they follow to the pre-school, police advice should be followed. This may include the parents returning home by the normal route and waiting, in case the child manages to make their way home.

1.16. The Manager/person in charge of the session should contact the Provider to inform them of the situation and the Provider should visit the preschool as quickly as possible.

1.17. Telephone lines should be kept as free as possible so that important information is not delayed.

1.18. Preschool activities for the other children will continue as normal, with staff not involved in the search giving them their full attention, keeping the atmosphere as calm as possible.

**The Investigation**

1.19. The Manager and/or Provider will carry out a full investigation.

1.20. The person in charge of the session of the time must write an incident report

Detailing:

\*the name of the missing child

\*the date & time of the disappearance

\*which staff, children, other adults were present

\*when and where the child was last seen

\*what the child was wearing

\*Any distinguishing features

\* What has taken place since the incident

\* A conclusion should be drawn as to how the incident occurred

1.21. The incident should be reported under RIDDOR arrangements and should be recorded in the incident book. The local authority Health and Safety Officer may also wish to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution

1.22. OFSTED should be informed.

1.23. The insurance department should be informed.

1.24. If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff should co-operate

fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation,

including interviewing staff. Social Services may also be involved if it seems

likely that there will be a child protection issue to address.

1.25. Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to keep everyone as calm as possible. Staff will feel worried and may blame themselves. Parents will be fraught and may be angry.

Distraught and angry parents should always be dealt with by two members of

staff (The Person in charge of the session and the manager).

1.26 Children may also be worried and need reassurance.

1.27. Depending on the severity of the final outcome, staff and children may need additional support or counselling and the Provider should use their discretion to decide what action to take.

1.28. Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

This policy was adopted by the Manager of Caterpillars Pre-school on 04/09/2024

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Name of signatory: Catherine Clark Role of signatory: Manager



CATERPILLARS PRE-SCHOOL

Please follow the full procedure for when a child goes missing

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Child’s Name |  |
| Name of Parent/Carer |  |
| Date of disappearance |  |
| Time of disappearance |  |
| Location of disappearance – where was the child last seen |  |
| Names of staff, children and other adults present |  |
| Who was responsible for the child at the time of disappearance |  |
| What was the child wearing? |  |
| Any distinguishing features? |  |
| Details of what has taken place since the incident |  |
| A conclusion of how the incident occurred |  |
| Signed by person in charge of session |  |
| Print Name  Date |  |

**Please continue on back of this sheet if necessary**