

# Harrold Pre-School Policies



## **Missing Child Policy**

At Harrold Pre-School the children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times, both on and off premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out risk assessments, 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.

## **Missing Child Procedure**

### Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff must alert the Pre-School Leader/Deputy.
- The Pre-School Leader/Deputy will carry out a thorough search of the building and outside play area.
- Doors and gates must be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The register must be checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- If the child is not found, the parent must be contacted and the missing child must be reported to the police.
- The Pre-School Leader/Deputy talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The Pre-School Leader/Deputy must contact the Chairperson and report the incident. The Chairperson, with the management committee, must carry out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.

### Child going missing during an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the preschool leader and/or other staff back in the setting. If the preschool leader has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing 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 Pre-School Leader is contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- The Pre-School leader/deputy must contact the police and report the child as missing.
- The Pre-School Leader/Deputy contacts the parent, who makes their way to the Pre-School or outing venue, as agreed with the Pre-School Leader/Deputy.
- The Pre-School leader/deputy makes their way to the outing venue.
- On arrival of the Pre-School Leader/Deputy, staff must take the remaining children back to the setting.

- The Pre-School Leader/Deputy must contact the Chairperson and report the incident. The Chairperson, with the management committee, must carry out an investigation and may come to the Pre-School immediately.
- The Pre-School Leader, or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

### The investigation

- Staff must keep calm and not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Pre-School Leader/Deputy, must speak with the parent(s).
- The Chairperson and management committee, must carry out a full investigation, taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- The Pre-School Leader/Deputy must write an incident report detailing:
  - a) The date and time of the report.
  - b) What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
  - c) When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
  - d) What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
  - e) 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 must co-operate fully. In this case, the police must handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 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, Ofsted is informed.

### Managing People

- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The Pre-School Leader must ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there must always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Pre-School Leader/Deputy and the other must be the Chairperson of the management committee or representative. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff must not be tolerated.
- The remaining staff caring for the other children must not discuss the incident in front of them. They must 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 or comment on social media.