

Beatle Woods

Missing Child Policy

Statement of intent

We believe that the health & safety of children is of paramount importance. Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

We take every care to ensure children cannot leave the security of the setting unattended and have strict procedures and policies (see Beatle Woods Health and Safety Policy and other related documents) in place to ensure as much as possible that this cannot happen.

Any outings from the regular settings are thoroughly planned and only undertaken after risk assessments have been completed and when the appropriate adult to child ratios are present (see Beatle Woods Health and Safety and Outings and Visits Policies and Procedures).

In the unlikely event that it is found that a child is missing we will act in accordance with the following procedures.

If a child goes missing during our risk assessed sessions at our Forest site:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff tell the person in charge (usually the Nursery Manager/Deputy manager) and the children are to stand with their key people. A headcount is carried out to ensure that no other child has gone astray;
- The Manager or person in charge who will nominate as many staff as possible to thoroughly search the immediate vicinity of the last place the child was seen;
- If the Nursery Manager is not on the outing they will make his/her way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff;
- The Manager talks to the key person to establish what happened;
- All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the nursery grounds.
- The staff will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.
- If after 5 minutes of thorough searching the child is still missing, the Manager or person in charge will inform the police and then the child's parent / carer;
- The Manager contacts Beatle Woods Managing Director, Rachel Macbeth-Webb who will arrive at the Forest as soon as possible.
- While waiting for the police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, other staff members will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children attending the setting.

The key person/ staff will write an incident report detailing:

- the date and time of the report;
- what staff/ children were in the group/outing;
- when the child was last seen in the group/outing;
- what has taken place in the group/outing since then; and
- the time it is estimated that the child went missing.

A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.

The Investigation

In the first instance, the Nursery Manager, Managing Director Rachel Macbeth-Webb, and Directors of Beatle Woods will carry out a full investigation of the missing child. This will include taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were on the outing.

There may be action taken against any member of staff who they believe is found to be at fault

If the incident warrants a police investigation all staff will co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Social Services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.

The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements and is recorded in the incident book; the Local Authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution. Ofsted will be informed.