

# **LOST OR MISSING CHILD POLICY**



## **OBJECTIVE**

The aim of this policy is to prevent a child from going missing or being lost and to ensure that all staff are aware of the procedure to follow in the unlikely event that a child goes missing.

## **STRATEGIES**

- Doors and gates to the centre and centre rooms are childproof, with reminders posted for parents, visitors and staff to ensure that they remain shut
- Parents are required to sign their child in and out every day and to ensure that their child's arrival and departure have been noted by a staff member
- Ensure that the perimeter fence is always secure
- Children are supervised at all times
- Ensure that a head count and efficient yard check are completed when transitioning inside from outdoor play
- Excursions are undertaken in accordance with Regulations 100, 101 and 102 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011. For more details refer the Excursion Policy, but in brief, when on excursions away from the centre:
  - Adequate staff/child ratios will be maintained at all times
  - Individual children will be assigned to the care of individual staff/adults
  - A photocopy of the excursion roll and parent contact numbers will be taken
  - Regular head counts will occur
  - At least one staff member will have a mobile phone, to make outgoing calls, with sufficient battery power
  - Where appropriate, children will wear centre identification

## **PROCEDURE SHOULD A CHILD GO MISSING WHILST AT THE CENTRE**

- All staff are to be notified, including the Centre Director; remain calm.
- Children are to be called together in their respective rooms and the rolls checked to establish which child is missing.
- One staff member is to remain with each group and supervise the children.
- Remaining staff and the Director are to conduct a thorough, co-ordinated search of the centre and grounds, searching cupboards, sheds, cubbies and any secluded areas that may attract a young child. Ensure all exit doors and gates are closed.

### Lost or Missing Child Policy

- Should the missing child not be located within 10 minutes, Police and the child's parents will be contacted by the Centre Director
- In accordance with Regulation 176 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011, the Director will also advise the Children's Policy and Regulation Unit as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours of the incident.
- Following the incident, statements must be taken from all staff working in the child's group. This should be done on the same day
- A risk assessment of the incident is also to be carried out and the centre's risk assessment amended if required.

### **PROCEDURE SHOULD A CHILD GO MISSING WHILE ON AN EXCURSION AWAY FROM THE CENTRE**

- Bring the group together and check the roll to establish which child is missing
- The children are to be kept together under adequate supervision whilst remaining staff conduct a check of the vicinity
- Venue management are to be notified and a public announcement made if possible
- The Team Leader is to contact the Centre Director by mobile phone
- If the child is not found within 10 minutes, the Centre Director will contact the Police and the child's parents
- The group is to remain together until the Police arrive. The Excursion Leader will then stay behind to assist Police while the rest of the excursion group returns to the centre
- In accordance with Regulation 176 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011, the Director will also advise the Children's Policy and Regulation Unit as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours of the incident
- Following the incident, statements must be taken from all staff attending the excursion. This should be done on the same day
- An incident report and risk assessment of the incident is also to be carried out and the centre's risk assessment amended if required.

### **RELATED POLICIES:**

Excursion Policy

Safe environment Policy

### **SOURCES:**

Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011