Blanchelande College

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Nursery Missing Child Policy

Policy Statement

Children's safety and wellbeing are Nursery's highest priority, both within the nursery environment and when children are off-site. Robust procedures, including secure entry and exit arrangements, attendance registers, supervision practices, and outing procedures, are in place to minimise the risk of a child going missing.
In the unlikely event that a child cannot be located, staff must follow this Missing Child Procedure immediately. All staff have a responsibility to remain calm, act promptly, and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all children.

Procedure

Child Missing on Nursery Premises

If a child is discovered to be missing, the following actions must be taken immediately:

1. The member of staff who notices the child is missing must immediately inform the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager.
2. The Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager will take responsibility for coordinating the response and will ensure additional support is requested from the nursery office.
3. The attendance register must be checked immediately to confirm that no other child is missing and that all children are accounted for.
4. The Manager/Deputy Manager and available staff will carry out a thorough search of all areas of the nursery, including:
    a. classrooms and play areas;
    b. toilets and hallway areas;
    c. gardens and outdoor play spaces;
    d. forest/outdoor learning areas;
    e. any other areas the child may have accessed.
5. All doors, gates, and access points must be checked to identify any possible security breach.
6. Staff must maintain supervision of the remaining children throughout the search and ensure they remain safe and reassured.
7. If the child is not located quickly, the Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager must contact the police and report the child as missing.
8. If there is any suspicion that the child has been abducted, the police must be contacted immediately.
9. Parents/carers must be informed without delay and kept updated as appropriate.
10. The following information must be provided to the police:

- a recent photograph of the child;
- a description of the child, including clothing worn;
- details of where and when the child was last seen;
- any relevant information about the child's movements, behaviour, or circumstances.

11. The Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager must record:

- the time the child was last seen;
- the actions taken during the search;
- details of staff involved;
- witness statements from relevant staff members.

12. Following the incident, a full review must be completed to identify any learning points and whether any changes to procedures are required.

Child Missing During an Outing

If a child is discovered to be missing during an outing, staff must act immediately:

1. The member of staff who notices the child is missing must alert the lead practitioner and the other staff members on the outing.
2. Staff must gather the remaining children together in a safe location and carry out an immediate headcount to confirm that no other child is missing.
3. One member of staff may carry out a brief search of the immediate area while the remaining children stay supervised by other staff members.
4. Staff must not leave the remaining children unsupervised or conduct a search that takes them beyond the immediate area.
5. If the child is not found immediately, the lead practitioner must contact the police and report the child missing.
6. The nursery office must be contacted as soon as possible, and the incident must be recorded.
7. The Nursery Manager or Deputy Manager will contact the child's parent/carer without delay. Parents/carers may be asked to provide a recent photograph of the child.
8. The remaining children should be returned to the nursery setting as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so.
9. Following advice from the police, the Nursery Manager or designated member of staff should remain at the location where the child was last seen and provide information to support the search.
10. Staff must provide the police with:

- a recent photograph of the child;
- a description of the child's clothing and appearance;
- details of the last known location and circumstances.

11. Staff must remain calm and reassure the other children, ensuring they do not become distressed or anxious.
12. All staff involved in the outing must complete an incident record as soon as possible after the event.

After the Incident

Following any missing child incident, the Nursery Manager will ensure that:

- the incident is fully documented;
- parents/carers are kept appropriately informed;
- safeguarding procedures are reviewed;
- relevant authorities are notified where required;
- staff receive any necessary support or guidance.

Nursery is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all children and will use any incident as an opportunity to review and strengthen safeguarding practice.