

Chollerton Pre-School Ltd

Station Road, Barrasford, Hexham, NE48 4AA
chollertonpreschool@yahoo.co.uk
01434 681572

Reg. Charity 1132501 Company No. 07005338



Chollerton Preschool **Lost or Missing Child Policy**

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, this missing child policy is followed.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the relevant member of staff alerts the preschool leader / manager
- The register is checked to make sure no other children have gone astray
- Our preschool leader / manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and school grounds
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out
- If the child is not found, our preschool leader / manager will call the police immediately and report the child is missing. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this
- The parents are then called and informed
- A recent photo and note of what the child is wearing are given to the police
- Our preschool leader / manager talks to our staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this
- Our preschool leader / manager contacts our chairperson and reports the incident. Our chair comes to the provision immediately to carry out an investigation.

Child goes missing on an outing

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members on the outing ask children to stand with preschool staff and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray
- One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity, but does not search beyond that
- Our most senior member of staff on the outing contacts the police and reports the child as missing
- Our preschool leader / manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded
- Our preschool leader / manager contacts the parent(s)
- Our staff take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible
- According to the advice from the police, the most senior member of staff present, should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police
- Our preschool leader / manager contacts our chairperson and reports the incident. Our chairperson comes to carry out an investigation
- Our staff keep calm and do not let other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up to date with the investigation

- Our chairperson carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and other people who were present
- Our preschool leader / manager, together with a representative from our management team speaks to the parent(s) and explains the process of the investigation
- The parents may also raise a complaint with us or Ofsted
- Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing-
 - The date and time of the incident
 - Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue
 - Which staff / children were in the premises / on the outing and the name of the staff member who was responsible for the missing child
 - When the child was last seen in the premises / on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing
 - What has taken place in the premises or on the outing since the child went missing
 - The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff will co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff and parents
- Children's social care 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 are advised
- The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try and keep everyone as calm as possible
- Our staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated staff member responsible for the safety of that child on the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases
- They may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Our preschool leader / manager ensures that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated, but receive support while feeling vulnerable
- The parents will feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame our staff and may single out one staff member over others, they may direct their anger at our preschool leader / manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff one of whom is our preschool leader / manager and the other should be a representative of the committee or a trustee. No matter how understandable the parents' anger may be, aggression or threats against our staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. Our remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly, but also reassure them
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, our staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. Our chairperson will use their discretion to decide what action to take
- Our staff must not discuss any missing child incidents with the press or media without taking advice.

This Policy has been agreed by the Chollerton preschool committee

Signed by Pre-School Manager

Signed on behalf of the committee

This Policy was reviewed in June 2023