

1.5 Missing child

Policy statement

Children's safety is Hempstead Pavilion Playgroup Ltd's highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our outings procedure and our 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.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff will alert our setting manager or another member of the SLT in her absence.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- The manager or another member of the SLT in her absence will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- 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 (the search is to take no longer than 5 minutes), our manager or another member of the SLT calls the police immediately (01622 690690) and reports the child as missing. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this. We will fully cooperate with the police and advice given will be followed.
- The parent(s) are then called and informed.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- Our manager talks to our staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- Our manager contacts all directors and reports the incident. Hempstead Pavilion Playgroup directors will come to the provision immediately to carry out an investigation.
- Our staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

Child going missing on an outing

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

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer 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.
- Our senior staff member on the outing contacts the police and reports that child as missing.
- Our manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- Our manager contacts the parent(s).
- Our staff take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible.
- According to the advice of the police, a senior member of staff, or our manager where applicable, should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The directors of Hempstead Pavilion Playgroup are contacted, and the incident reported. The directors come to our premises immediately to carry out an investigation.
- Our staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation (0300 123 1231).
- First Response Service 016347 334466 (03000 419191 out of hours) are informed as soon as possible.
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) 01634 331229 are informed as soon as possible.
- Hempstead Pavilion Playgroup Ltd.'s directors carry out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and volunteers who were present.
- A director of Hempstead Pavilion playgroup along with another member of the SLT speaks with the parent(s) and explains the process of the investigation.
- The parent(s) 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 designated as responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the premises/or 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 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.
- As soon as possible after the incident the manager should inform all parents.
- The insurance provider should be informed as soon as possible:

Provider: Pre-School Learning Alliance

Reference number RTT209838

Telephone number (0345) 3004006

Managing people

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- Our staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for 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 manager ensures that any 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 manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff one of whom is our manager and the other should be our Deputy or director. No matter how understandable the parent's 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 directors will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Our staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press. Joanne Jarrett or Tracy Moodie will deal with any press enquiries.

Links to EYFS Framework

Information for parents and carers 3.73 point 5

Links to policies and procedures

Safeguarding and child protection

Health and safety

Risk assessments

Legal Framework

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Every Child Matters 2003

Protection of Children Act 1999

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006

Childcare Act 2006

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015

Links to the EYFS

1.3 Keeping safe, 1.4 Health and Wellbeing, 2.2. Parents as Partners, 3.2. Supporting Every Child, 3.4 The Wider Context

This policy was adopted by

Hempstead Pavilion Playgroup Ltd

On

1st September 2018

Date to be reviewed

31st July 2019

Signed on behalf of the provider

Name of signatory

Joanne Jarrett

Role of signatory

Director
