



A Lost Child Policy



**CULMSTOCK
PRE-SCHOOL
PLAYGROUP**

In the unlikely event that a child becomes lost, the following action should be taken:

- Alert the play leader. The play leader will take responsibility for searching the premises while the other members of staff continue the session
- The safety of the other children will remain a priority with regard to supervision and security
- If the child is not found on the premises, including the back play area, the supervisor will search the local area for 5 -10 minutes
- If the child cannot be found within ten minutes the supervisor will return to the premises, and the Police and parents must be informed.
- Another police checked familiar person will be called to keep staff ratio to enable the play leader to keep searching
- If a child is lost as the parent is collecting, the supervisor will follow the above process. The other remaining staff will dismiss the group to their carers. Once the group has been dismissed they will assist the supervisor with the search

When the situation has been resolved, members of staff should review the reasons for it happening and ensure that it does not happen again. Ofsted will be informed of the incident in writing.

- Staff take a mobile phone on outings, and supplies of tissues, wipes, pants etc as well as a mini first aid pack, a snack and water. The amount of equipment will vary and be consistent with the venue and the number of children as well as how long they will be out for.
- A minimum of two staff should accompany children on outings and a minimum of two should remain behind with the rest of the children.
- As Culmstock preschool only has 3 staff, CRB checked parent from the committee will be asked to escort the children on trips to ensure adult to child ratio is maintained at 2:1

Missing child

If a child goes missing from an outing where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the setting ensures that there is a procedure that is followed.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.

- The person in charge is informed, if s/he is not on the outing and makes his/her way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- The person in charge of the setting contacts the child's parent who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the person in charge.
- The staff contact the police using the mobile phone and report the child as missing.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The person in charge contacts the chairperson of the management committee who comes down to the setting as soon as possible.

The investigation

- The management committee chairperson carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were on the outing.
- The key person/ staff writes 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.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation all staff 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 is informed.
- The Insurance Department at the Pre-School Learning Alliance is informed.