

General Welfare Requirement: Safeguarding and Promoting Children's Welfare

The provider must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Safeguarding children

1.8 Missing child

Policy statement

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every effort is made to ensure the safety of children within Rainbow Pre School. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed immediately.

The aims of this policy are;

- To ensure that preventative measures are an integral part of the activities carried out at Rainbow.
- To highlight the importance of security arrangements with regard to the children's safety.
- To ensure that should a child go missing, emergency procedures are implemented swiftly whilst other children are kept safe and disruption to normal routines is minimised.

EYFS key themes and commitments

A Unique Child	Positive Relationships	Enabling Environments	Learning and Development
1.3 Keeping safe 1.4 Health and well-being	2.2 Parents as partners	3.4 The wider context	

Procedures

Preventative measures

- All visitors must be signed in and out of the Pre School in the visitors' book.
- Staff will ensure that the outside gates are bolted out of reach when children are playing outside. When children are in the outside area they are protected by 6ft fences, gates and are supervised by an adult as per stipulated ratios.
- The front and back doors are always locked when the Pre-school is in session with the key hung out of reach of children but accessible to adults in case of fire.
- At the beginning and endings of sessions a member of staff is situated on the door and ensures that children leave with an appropriate adult. Parents/carers must ensure that the Pre School is made aware by writing in the notices book or by telephone if another adult is to collect their child. Each child has their own individual password and children will not be released to adults unknown to the pre school staff without the parents consent **and** the password.
- Children are not permitted to enter or leave the Pre School via the front door, unless arriving late or being collected early. The main entrance to the Pre School is via the back gate and back door; this is made clear to new starters and their parents.

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the Police in the first instance, along with the Manager.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- The Manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden, ensuring that all other children remain supervised throughout and that all external exits are still secure.
- If the child is not found, the Manager calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The Manager talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The Manager contacts the Chair and reports the incident. The Chair comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management committee where applicable.
- During this period, staff will continue to search for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain normal routines as far as possible for the rest of the children in the Pre School.

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Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the Manager and/or other staff back in the setting. If the Manager has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. What to do when a child goes missing from a whole group outing may be a little different, as parents usually attend and are responsible for their own child. However, child safety remains our priority, and the same search procedure will be followed.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff 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 staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident recorded.
- The Manager (if present) or lead practitioner contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The Manager (if present) or lead practitioner contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- 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 Manager contacts the Chair and reports the incident. The Chair comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management committee where applicable.
- The Manager or a member of staff may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

During this time, staff will ensure that all other children remain supervised throughout and that normal routines are maintained as far as possible.

Any incidents (either on or off the premises) must be recorded in writing on an incident report form, and Ofsted must be contacted and informed of any incidents.

The investigation

- The Manager together with the chairperson or representative from the management committee speaks with the parent(s).
- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- The Chair and management committee, carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff and volunteers who were present.

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- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
 - What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
 - The time it is estimated that 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 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.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

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.
- The 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.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Our Manager will ensure 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 staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the Manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Manager and the other should be the Chair of the management committee or representative. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against 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. The 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.

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- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The Chair will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of	Rainbow Pre School
Held on	09/01/2019
Date to be reviewed	2021/2022
Signed on behalf of the management committee	
Name of signatories	Lisa Brown & Lucy Daybell
Role of signatories (e.g. chair/owner)	Co-Chairs