



GROWING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

Missing Child Policy

Little Jesters take the safety of children very seriously. Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of the children is maintained at all times. Staff will undertake periodic head counts using the registration procedure

A child will never leave the group unaccompanied, and we have systems in place and work together with parents for the safety of all children in the group. In the best regulated situations, however, accidents can and do happen, and in the event that we cannot find a child who is a member of the Pre-school we will operate according to the procedure set out below.

Procedures for when a child leaves the group unaccompanied

1. Systematic search

The group is responsible for the missing child and also for the other children in the group.

- The remaining children will be gathered into one large group e.g. for a story with one adult, while the rest search for the missing child
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has gone astray
- Without alarming them, the children will be asked whether they have seen the child who is missing, as will all adults, so that we establish who last saw the missing child, when and where
- Every room in the building and any accessible outside area will be checked. Doors and Gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security
- Chairperson/committee/ school staff will be informed
- The Manager will start a record of events and times

2. Parents

The child's parents will be contacted to warn them (alarming them as little as possible) that the child may be attempting to get home. If the child lives within walking distance of the group, one adult should make the journey on foot in order to catch up with the child if possible.

3. Police and other Agencies

If the above steps do not locate the child, the police will be called in order to conduct a thorough search as swiftly as possible. If the police are contacted, the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board and Ofsted will also be informed. Members of Little Jesters preschool Committee will be notified.

We make regular checks to ensure that if an incident of this sort does happen, we have all the necessary phone numbers at hand – correct, up to date and kept together.

We will provide the following information to Ofsted/Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board:

- What happened
- What systems are in place for preventing such occurrences
- What the staff did, at what time and in what order
- Whom the staff informed, and when.

We will cooperate fully in any investigation.

4. Accident and Incident book

A record of the event will be made as soon as an adult has time to do so, and even if the child is found safe within a few minutes. This will include the last definite sighting of the child and anything unusual that day about the behaviour of that child or of any other children.

5. After the Incident

A member of staff will be available to discuss with the child's parents the events surrounding the disappearance of the child. The parents will need care and support; however our insurance also requires that we should not imply that we accept liability until the incident has been fully investigated by us and by Social Services. If appropriate, a short meeting will be held at the end of the session or the start of the following session (or a note sent home with the children) to give other parents brief, accurate information about the incident as rapidly as possible and stop rumours circulating.

6. When the child is found

Two members of staff will care for and talk with the child, bearing in mind that he/she may be unaware of having done anything wrong, or alternatively may also have been afraid and distressed and may now be in need of comfort. Other adults present will take the opportunity to speak to all the children to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises, and why.