



## Missing Child Policy

The health & safety of children is of paramount importance. Venture Outdoor Kindergarten staff & management work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and to give them the very best start in life.

We have strict procedures and policies in place to prevent children from leaving the kindergarten base site unattended and we take every care to ensure that these are followed. This includes maintaining a high ratio of adults to children which is adapted according to the ages and abilities of the individual children in our care.

Outings from the kindergarten base are thoroughly planned and only undertaken after risk / benefit assessments have been completed.

In the unlikely event that it is found that a child is missing we will act in accordance with the following procedures.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the manager will be informed and the children will gather in their key worker groups.
- A headcount will be carried out to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- The manager will nominate as many adults as possible to thoroughly search the immediate vicinity of the last place the child was seen.
- All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in the area.

- The staff will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised, returning to the kindergarten base if they feel this is necessary.
- If after 5 minutes of thorough searching the child is still missing, the manager will inform the police and then the child's parents.
- While waiting for the police and parents to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, other staff members will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children attending the setting.

The incident will be recorded in the Incident Book with the following information:

- The date and time of the report
- Which staff/ children were in the group
- When the child was last seen in the group
- What has taken place in the group since then
- The time it is estimated that the child went missing

A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.

### **The Investigation**

In the first instance, the manager of Venture Outdoor Kindergarten will carry out a full investigation of the incident. This will include taking written statements from all the staff present at the time.

The manager may need to take action against any member of staff who they believe is found to be at fault.

If the incident warrants a police investigation all staff will cooperate 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. The Local Authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution. Ofsted will be informed.

**Monitoring and review**

This policy is monitored by the staff and management of Venture Outdoor Kindergarten and will be reviewed annually or before if necessary.

This policy was written by Venture Outdoor Kindergarten September 2017.

Reviewed September 2018.

Reviewed August 2019.

Reviewed August 2020.

Reviewed August 2021.

Reviewed August 2023.