



# MISSING CHILD POLICY

Catkins Preschool

July 2022

There are two main circumstances in which a child in the care of Catkins Pre-School may be deemed as missing:

1. A child may leave the premises during the course of a session, or at the beginning or, end of the session.
2. A child may be lost In the course of an outing.

Catkins Pre-School has thorough security procedures which are designed to prevent unnoticed egress by any child. Staff ratios are such that children are well supervised at all times during the session including when using the outside space.

### Missing Children

In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed. The following measures and precautions have been put into place to limit the chances of this happening:

- The entrance and exit doors are staffed at arrival and departure times.
- Children are supervised at all times once on the premises.
- The outside door is locked as soon as possible and a protective plate is put through the top of the door to stop it opening
- Any visitors or late arrivals need to come to the side door before a member of staff can let them into the building. There are two baby gates between the kitchen and the outside door. The door has an alarm on it and there is always a member of staff in or around the kitchen
- The outside gate has a heavy metal closer on it which the children cannot reach or lift. When playing outside members of staff are always vigilant near the gate to make sure children do not climb on it.
- Children are marked in the register on arrival and we carry out a headcount during each session morning and afternoon.
- The fire exits are blocked by baby gates and staff check all doors are locked and secure in the morning before the setting is opened

Should these precautions fail and, in the event, that a child is lost, we will ensure a search is made for the child as soon as possible, parents and authorities are notified at the appropriate stage, and a high level of care is maintained to other children at the setting while procedures are followed.

### *Child going missing on the premises*

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the manager and one other person will carry out a thorough search of the building and outside area.
- The manager will instruct staff to gather all remaining children into a group for a quiet activity (such as stories, or drawing ) in the kissick room where they are adequately supervised and secure. These staff must remain calm and make the other children's activities remain as normal as possible.
- The register is double checked by the staff member in the kissick room to make sure no other child has also gone missing
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could get out

- The manager will talk to all other members of staff as quickly as possible to establish when and where the child was last seen including logging the time and clothes that the child was wearing, all this information will be recorded.
- The manager will telephone the police to report the situation and follow their advice.
- The manager will telephone the parent or carer to report the situation and ask them to make their way to preschool using their normal route.

#### *Child going missing on an outing*

Children go out on walks in a ratio of two children to every member of staff. This normally means a maximum of 4 children with 2 adults. In the very unlikely event that one of the children goes missing on a walk. The following procedure will be adhered to:

- 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 member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- If the manager is not present she is contacted immediately.
- The manager contacts the police for advice and to report the child as missing.
- The manager then contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or the last known sighting as advised by police.
- Staff, will if appropriate to do so, take the remaining children back to the setting, whilst the reporting staff member remains at the last known sighting point if advised to by police.
- When taking children out on walks one member of staff on the outing is responsible for making sure she has a mobile phone so that contact can be made with the setting immediately if necessary.