



Hopton school house Playgroup and OOSC policies.

1.7 Lost & missing child policy

This policy explains the steps our setting will take to:

- **prevent** children from going missing.
- **respond promptly and appropriately** if a child is lost or goes missing while in our care.
- comply with relevant legal and statutory guidance.

It supports our safeguarding responsibilities to protect all children in our care.

Our policy is informed by:

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework

The EYFS requires providers to have clear **safeguarding and welfare procedures**, including those for *missing or lost children*, and robust systems for supervision and headcounts. Procedures for missing children are a statutory requirement and should be included in the setting's safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding Guidance — *Working Together to Safeguard Children*

All practitioners must work together to protect children from harm, ensure appropriate supervision, and take timely action if a child is missing or at risk. (Statutory guidance to safeguard children; GOV.UK)

Local Safeguarding Context — Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP)

The wider safeguarding procedures (including local categories of risk and reporting to children's social care or police where significant harm is possible) support our local approach to missing children and the responsibilities of professionals in Gloucestershire.

We take proactive steps to reduce the risk of children going missing, including:

Supervision

- Constant, age-appropriate supervision of children at all times.
- Qualified or suitably trained staff ratios are maintained.
- Doors, gates and external exits are kept secure.

Headcounts and Registers

- Attendance is recorded on arrival and departure of setting



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- Headcounts are taken regularly, especially when moving between rooms, going out to the garden or on outings.
- Ensuring we have a copy of emergency contacts when on outings
- Children are dressed suitably (HI vis with number clearly labelled)
- Risk assessments are put in place for outings to reduce the risk of lost or missing child.
- Daily checklist complete(Risk)

Secure Premises and Entrances

- All exits are monitored, locked appropriately and only handled by Hopton school house staff during sessions.
- Visitors must sign in/out and be supervised at all times.

Staff Training

- All staff receive safeguarding training, including how to respond to a missing child situation.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has additional training in responding to missing or lost child incidents. (EYFS Safeguarding requirements)

How we respond to a Child Missing in the Setting:

Immediate Action

If it is discovered that a child is missing:

1. **Alert staff immediately.**
2. **Check attendance registers** and last known location.
3. **Conduct a thorough search** of the building and outdoor areas.
4. Assign staff to search specific zones.
5. Assign staff to stay with other children whilst a search is conducted

If Not Found Within 10 Minutes

- Contact **the police (999)** if the child is still missing.
- Call the child's **parents/carers**.
- Continue searching with staff, while ensuring other children remain supervised.

Response: Missing Child During an Outing

Immediate Action

- Stop activity immediately.



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- Ensure remaining children are accounted for and supervised by a minimum of two staff.
- One staff member alerts management/DSL and begins a coordinated search.

Escalation

- If the child cannot be located within **5 minutes** of realising, they are missing, call the police.
- Contact parents/carers and provide full information.

Once Child Is Found

- Provide comfort and calm reassurance to the child.
- Reunite with parents/carers as quickly as possible.
- Conduct a **debrief** with staff to establish how the incident happened.

Recording and Reporting

- An **incident report** will be completed detailing:
 - time and place last seen
 - circumstances of going missing
 - actions taken and time child was found
 - supervisory arrangements at the time
- Reports will be reviewed to reduce future risks and updated in policies if required.
- Depending on circumstances, **local safeguarding partners, police and Ofsted** may be informed (as appropriate).

Post-Incident Review

Within 48 hours:

- Full debrief with staff
- Review risk assessments
- Identify procedural improvements
- Update training if required
- Update policies if necessary

A written action plan will be produced.



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Role	Responsibility
Manager-	Overall incident coordination
DSL-	Safeguarding decision-making and external reporting
Room Leader -	Register checks and zone search
All Staff-	Immediate search and supervision of other children

Related Policies

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy **1.1**
- Supervision & Ratios Policy **8.2**
- Health & Safety Policy **Section 6**
- Outings Policy **1.8**
- Risk Assessment Policy **8.3**