

Missing Child Policy

This policy has been written following the guidance of the:

- Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, 2024,
- Surrey Early Years Educational Effectiveness Team guidance.

This policy applies to both Bus Stop Pre-School and Bus Stop Forest School Holiday Play Scheme.

Bus Stop Pre-School understands the importance of keeping children safe, whilst on the Pre-School woodland site, when out at Forest School and on Trips. Bus Stop Pre-School ensures that the correct adult to child ratios are maintained at all times, when on the woodland site, at Forest School or when out on Trips.

If a child goes missing whilst in our care, we will do everything possible to ensure that the child is found quickly and safely.

Every effort is made to ensure the safety of children. The Pre-School gate is locked and can only be accessed by staff. Parents and visitors can only gain access to the woodland site by the Pre-School gate and rear Emergency Exit gate, which are both kept locked/bolted during the day and can only be opened and closed by a member of staff. The woodland site also has a secure Dead hedge boundary fence, which ensures no child or intruder can enter or leave the site. The dead hedge is checked daily for signs of holes/damage. The Emergency Exit gate located in the woodland is kept bolted during the day and is locked at night/weekends. Please see Safeguarding Children/Child Protection policy for information regarding visitors to the setting and Arrivals and Departure procedure and Emergency Closure Including Lock Down Procedure.

During Forest School days/Trips the correct adult to child ratio is maintained at all times. During Forest School days the main group may separate into small activity groups, however the correct ratio is maintained. The emergency services and children's parents will be contacted on the settings/staff mobile phones and child record information can be accessed in the event a child goes missing. Please see the Mobile Phone, Camera and ICT policy, Trips, Forest School and Outings Policy and Forest School Emergency Procedure.

Missing Child Procedure

As soon as it is identified that a child has gone missing on the woodland site or out at Forest School/Trips/Outing:

- Raise the alarm immediately. Adult calls "1,2,3 where are you?" to gather all the children and adults together, children are re-counted and register is taken.
- Staff ensure that the rest of the group is kept together and calm.
- Staff to continue with the activity where possible, the correct child/staff ratio must be maintained.
- Inform all available adults to help find the missing child.
- Search the immediate area for no longer than 5 minutes.
- Call the emergency services if the child is not found during the first search, so that a full search can commence. Call 999/112 on settings/staff mobile phone if required.
- Call parents immediately after the initial search.
- A member of staff must remain in the area where the child was last seen until the child has been located or until Emergency services/parents arrive.
- Main group of children to be taken to a place of safety. Maintaining correct staff/child ratio.
- Kate /Kelly to write incident down on Incident Form and evaluate, review Risk assessments and Trip, Forest School and Outings policy.
- Parents/carers asked to read and sign Incident form.
- Kate/Kelly to notify Ofsted in writing. Notify the National Trust team of incident if required.

In the event that a child goes missing and then is found by staff members/Emergency services, the child will be offered comfort and supported by a member of staff. They will be checked for signs of injury, shock and their emotional well-being supported. The main group of children and other staff members emotional wellbeing will also be supported, as the situations can/may be traumatic for everyone involved. In the event that a child is not found, the child's parents/carers and the whole Pre-School community will be supported appropriately and advice can be sought from the Early Years Effectiveness teams and the incident reported to Ofsted.

This policy was adopted in September 2006, reviewed in annually.

This policy was reviewed in September 2024, reviewed in September 2025.

Signed by Owner _____ Manager _____