



Foresteers Outdoor Preschool

Missing Child Procedure

Reviewed January 2026

Reviewed by Hayley Smith - Preschool Manager

Introduction

The health & safety of children is of paramount importance at Foresteers Outdoor Preschool. Our setting will work with children, parents and the community to ensure the safety of children and give them the very best start in life.

We take every care to ensure children cannot leave the security of the setting unattended and have strict procedures and policies in place to ensure as much as possible that this cannot happen. Routines are in place to minimise the risk of this occurring including

- a daily safety chat with children at the start of each day including the rules of not going under, over or through the boundary,
- a daily walk around the boundary with the children so they are familiar with the area,
- regular head counts and games such as "1,2,3, where are you?"
- good communication between staff, staff are aware of and observant to the location of individuals within the setting, staff have mobile phones
- children all in bright blue waterproof suits or other suitable colour

Any outings from the regular setting are thoroughly planned and only undertaken after risk assessments have been completed and when the appropriate adult to child ratios are present (see Foresteers Outdoor Preschool Outings and Visits Policy). This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedure and Health and Safety Policy. It also forms part of the Emergency Procedure Policy.

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, staff inform the Preschool Manager.

The Emergency alarm is raised by blowing three blasts on the whistle.

- Children gather at the log circle and key persons conduct a head count. Children remain with one member of staff for low level activity. Half of staff remain with children to keep them calm, engaged and together.
- The Manager will nominate as many staff as possible to thoroughly search the immediate vicinity of the last place the child was seen. The Manager talks to the key person to establish what happened;
- All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the preschool grounds.
- The staff will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.

- If after 5 minutes of thorough searching the child is still missing, the Manager will inform the police and then the child's parent/carer(s);
- The Manager will be the point of contact for the police as well as to support staff;
- While waiting for the police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, remaining staff will supervise children with low level activities.

The key person/ staff will later the same day write an incident report detailing:

- the date and time of the report;
- what staff/ children were in the group/outing;
- when the child was last seen in the group/outing;
- what has taken place in the group/outing since then; and
- 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 Preschool Manager and Directors of Foresteers Outdoor Preschool will carry out a full investigation of the missing child. This will include taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were on the outing.

There may be action taken against any member of staff who they believe is found to be at fault

If the incident warrants a police investigation all staff will co-operate 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 and is recorded in the incident book; 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.

This policy was adopted on

1st January 2026

Signed on behalf of the preschool

Hayley Smith

Date for review

December 2026