

PEMBURY SCHOOL HOUSE NURSERY



Lost Child Policy

Statement of Intent

All safety checks are carried out before sessions start and at regular intervals throughout the session, to ensure the setting is safe and secure.

Aim

Our aim is to ensure that in the unlikely event that the whereabouts of a child is unknown, that the appropriate steps are taken to locate the child as quickly as possible.

Methods

To meet this aim:

Find Out Quickly

The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child's absence is quickly discovered. When the register is taken all members of staff must be told the number of children in a session and this is written for reference on the board in the entrance hall.

All Staff must make regular head counts, especially when moving the children from one play area to another.

Search Systematically

We ensure we have correct staff/child ratios. In an emergency, some adults will be freed to respond to the new situation without neglecting the needs of the other children. The remaining children will be gathered into one group and supervised while the search commences.

It will be established who last saw the child and what they were doing.

Every room in the building and the outside garden area, front and back, will be checked.

The school will be called for back up. Office staff will immediately start searching the school premises.

Parents

The child's parents will be called, alarming them as little as possible, to warn them that the child may be attempting to get home. The home or emergency contact numbers in the day book folder will be used for speed. If the child lives within walking distance of the nursery, one member of staff will make the journey on foot, in order to catch up with, or intercept the child, if possible.

The parents will need advice and support as soon as they are informed.

The Police

If the above steps have not located the child, the Police will be called. They have the resources to conduct a search, as speed is important.

Informing Other People

Parents will be reminded regularly, to inform the nursery if there are any changes in the emergency contact numbers they have provided, so that details can be kept up-to-date.

If the Police have been called, Social Services must also be informed. The Social Services department will want to conduct their own investigation and will need to know -

- What systems we operate for preventing such occurrences.
- What happened.
- What we did, at what time and in what order.
- Who we informed and when.

The Chairperson will need to be informed as soon as possible.

The Insurance Manager at the Pre-School Learning Alliance at the National Centre (0207 697 2500 membership no. 50210) will need to be informed and will advise us and contact the insurers on our behalf.

Accident & Incident Book

A record of events will be logged. This is important, even if, as is likely, the child is found safe within a few minutes. The record will include the last positive sighting of the child and anything unusual that day, about the behaviour of the child or of any other children.

Dealing with People's Reactions

The child's parents will be distressed. These feelings are natural and because powerful emotions are involved, people's behaviour can be unpredictable.

It is important to be very careful from the beginning, about the words we use to talk to people about the incident.

In handling this situation, we will have support from the legal department at the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

Informing Other Parents

Other parents will be given information when appropriate explaining what happened and what we have learnt from the event, in order to ensure that it does not happen again.