



Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO – Missing Child Procedure Policy

School Lane, Thriplow, Royston, Herts, SG8 7RH

CIO Charity Number 1162435

Tel: 01763 208055 Email: ladybirdplaygroupthriplow@gmail.com Web: www.ladybird-playgroup.co.uk

Missing Child Procedure

Aim

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off the premises. The purpose of this procedure is to give all Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO practitioners, helpers and parents a clear and concise guide to managing this critical incident.

Missing Child Procedure (in setting)

In the unlikely event of a child going missing from within/from the Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO setting (including the playground outside) then the following will be implemented immediately:

- A staff member will inform the Playgroup Leader/Deputy in charge.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- All staff present will be informed and an immediate search of the Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO will be made followed by a search of the surrounding area, ensuring that all other children remain supervised throughout.
- The Playgroup Leader/Deputy will carry out a second search of the area.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been any breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If the Playgroup Leader/Deputy is unable to find the missing child then the police are contacted.
- The Playgroup Leader/Deputy in charge will inform the parents/carers of the missing child.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- During this period, the playgroup staff will continue to search for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain as near normal routine as possible for the remaining children in the Ladybird Playgroup and Pre-school.
- The Playgroup Leader/Deputy in charge will meet the police and parents/carers.
- The Playgroup Leader/Deputy in charge will then await instructions from the police.
- An incident involving a missing child must be recorded within the Incident Book.
- The Playgroup Leader also contacts the Chairperson to report the incident. The chairperson, with the Ladybird Playgroup Committee will carry out an investigation and may come to the setting.
- Ofsted must be contacted and informed of any such incidents.



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Missing Child Procedure (Outings)

Throughout a Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO outing, regular headcounts will be carried out. In the unlikely event of a child/ children going missing, whilst on an outing, then the following will be implemented immediately:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity.
- If appropriate, on-site security will also be informed and an accurate description of the missing child/children given. They and a staff member will widen the search.
- In the event of the missing child/children not being found, the Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO Leader/Deputy in charge will immediately inform the police.
- The Playgroup Leader/Deputy is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- The Playgroup Leader/Deputy in charge will inform the parents/carers of the missing child/children, giving details of what has happened. The contact numbers for parents are found in the register, which is taken on all Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO outings.
- During this period, the playgroup staff will continue to search for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain as near normal routine as possible for the remaining children, assisting in the safe return to the Ladybird Playgroup.
- At least one member of staff will remain at the scene where the missing child/children were last seen, whilst the others return to the Ladybird Playgroup with the children if appropriate. This member of staff will continue to search for the missing child/children.
- The member of staff who has remained at the scene will then meet the police and parents/carers when they arrive at a designated point and await instructions from the police.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The Playgroup Leader also contacts the Chairperson to report the incident. The chairperson, with the Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO Committee, will carry out an investigation and may come to the setting.
- Our staff Keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The Investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- The Chairperson carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.



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- The Playgroup Leader together with the Chairperson speaks to the parents and explains the process of the investigation.
- The parents may also raise a complaint with us or Ofsted.
- Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing;
 - The date and time of the incident.
 - Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue.
 - Which staff/children were in the premises/on the outing and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the premises/or on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - What has taken place in the premises or on the outing since the child went missing.
 - The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.

A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.

- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements; the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try and keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The Playgroup Leader and Chairperson need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated, but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others, they may direct their anger at the Playgroup Leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Playgroup Leader and the other should be the Chairperson. No matter how understandable the



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parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated and the police should be called.

- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's question honestly, but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The Chairperson will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff and Committee Members must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice or getting agreement from the Committee as a whole.

This policy was adopted at a meeting of the Ladybird Playgroup Thriplow CIO	
Held on (date)	
Signed on <i>behalf</i> of the Ladybird Playgroup Committee	
Role of signatory (e.g. chairperson etc.)	
Signed by Playgroup Leader/Deputy	
Name of Playgroup Leader/Deputy	