

London Borough of Waltham Forest

Draft

Lost or missing child policy

Early Years, Childcare & Business Development Service

London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) Early Years, Childcare & Business Development Service have written this document to help you write a lost or missing child policy for your setting. This document is for reference only and you must adapt it to reflect the service your setting offers. To download guidance on other policies and procedures go to <https://thehub.walthamforest.gov.uk/>

Whenever we say parents in this document we mean parents and carers and whenever we say child we mean children and young people aged 0 to 19 years old (up to 25 years old for young people with SEND).

Aim

In the event of a child going missing, what would you do? You should ensure the safety of everyone else on site is not compromised.

Points to consider

- You must inform parents and carers of your procedure to be followed in the event of a child going missing.
- As soon as a child is thought to be missing who will you tell immediately? Consider how you will tell staff without causing panic.
- You must start searching immediately. Consider how you will do this and where you will search? Do all members of staff know? How will you keep in contact while searching? Think about redeployment of staff to allow staff to search, but also making sure the children at the setting are safe.
- If a child is found, what procedure will you follow? Consider if the child is injured or unwilling to return to the setting. How will you document the incident and who will you report it to (parents, Ofsted)?
- You may need to update your risk assessments after a child goes missing. Who will do this? When will you do this? How will you tell the rest of the staff of the actions from the risk assessment?
- If the child is not found immediately – you need to call the police on 999. Who will do this and from where?
- The police will want to know:
 - Where you are (address of setting).
 - The next of kin of the child.
 - A detailed description of the child, including age, sex and as much information about their clothing as possible working down from head to toe.
 - The circumstances of the incident, including anything that may have triggered the disappearance, how long the child has been missing, where they were last seen, if there was an argument (older child).
 - Who is looking for the child, where are they, do they have a mobile with them, what is the number?
 - Exact time the child was last seen.

- You will need to document the incident so far, including any conversations and advice from the police. Who and where would you do this?
- The child's parents will need to be contacted using the contact details you hold. You will need to continue calling until contact is made. Who will do this?
- Who else needs to be told at this point? Consider management structure, governing body, committees, Ofsted.
- Staff should continue to search (until advised otherwise by the police). Always consider Ofsted and the welfare requirement ratios for the children still at the setting. Consider regrouping and staff deployment.
- How will staff be reassured and who will do this?
- Who will continue to document the incident?
- Once the child is found, who do you need to tell?
- You must tell Ofsted of the incident, and its outcome, in writing. If the incident results in a serious accident, illness or injury, or death of, any child whilst in your care, the provider must notify Ofsted, please see [EYFS Statutory Framework 3.73](#). You should also carry out a risk assessment to make sure this does not happen again. Who will do this?
- If a child on your register does not show up, what do you do? Do you contact the class teacher and the parents? You should not take the word of other children that the child was not at school.
- If a parent/carer arrives at your setting to collect a child who is not on the register that day what are your procedures? Do you follow up with the school/club where the child was last known to be? Do you keep a record? Do you follow up with the parent/carer?

Useful information and websites

- HSE Health & Safety Executive: www.hse.gov.uk, info line: 0845 345 0055 and advisory line 0300 003 1747
- A brief guide to controlling risks in the workplace and a risk assessment and policy template are available to download from www.hse.gov.uk/risk/controlling-risks.htm
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA): www.rosipa.com/