# Lost Child Policy

## Statement of Intent

In the event of a child becoming lost while in the care of the Pre-school, the Pre-school will put into practice its written procedures. These ensure that a systematic approach to find the child is taken and consideration is given to the levels of risk to the child.

## Aim

In the event that a child is lost, we will ensure a search is made for the child as soon as possible, parents and authorities are notified at the appropriate stage, and a high level of care is maintained to other children at the Pre-school while procedures are followed.

## Procedures

### Lost Child at Preschool

* We will check the register to confirm the child came to the Preschool or has not left early. A thorough search of all rooms, cupboards and all areas in the Pre-school will take place.
* The manager will send a member of staff to make an initial search for the child. He/she will check the immediate area around the building checking by parked cars and other visual obstructions. This will be done as quickly as possible before reporting back to the session manager.
* While the initial search is made, the manager will make enquiries of all adults at the Pre-school to establish the last sighting and time, clothes that the child was wearing, and the mental state of the child (happy, upset etc.).
* The manager will then telephone the police and report the situation and follow their advice.
* The manager will telephone the parent or carer and report the situation. The manager will ask the parent to come to the Pre-school, by using the normal route that the child would take. The manager will then send a different member of staff to make a search of the area, and continue the search until instructed otherwise.
* When the parent arrives at the Pre-school, if the child is still lost, we will ask the parent to arrange for someone to be at home and wait, in case the child has managed to make their way home.
* Telephone lines should remain as free as possible so that messages are not delayed.
* The Pre-school activities for the remaining children will continue as normal and staff not involved in the search will give the children proper attention.
* After the event full details of the incident will be written in detail in the incident book and this account should be signed by the Pre-school manager and the parent/carer. A copy of this will be sent to Ofsted.

### Lost Child on Outings

### (Visits within the locality of West Wycombe)

We attempt to minimise the opportunity of lost children by ensuring they are properly supervised by a member of staff, parent or carer. High adult to child ratios are maintained at all times.

* Children are head counted before they leave the Pre-school premises. This number is recorded & checked against the daily register.
* Before leaving Pre-school premises the lead practitioner on the walk ensures she is in possession of the Pre-school mobile phone and at least one other adult has a personal mobile with them.
* Regular headcounts are carried out at intervals throughout the outing and checked against the daily register, to confirm all who are present.
* Adults will be asked when they last saw the child and what clothes he/she was wearing.
* A thorough search of the surrounding area will be carried out by two members of staff. They will report back to the manager as soon as possible.
* The rest of the group will remain together and will not proceed unless the child is found during the initial search. Staff not involved in the search will give the children proper attention so as to ensure their safety.
* If the child cannot be found two adults will retrace their route back to the pre-school, remaining in contact with the group.
* If the child has not been found the manager will ring the police, report the situation and follow their advice.
* The manager will telephone the parent or carer and report the situation. The manager will ask the parent to come to the pre-school, by using the normal route that the child would take. The manager will then send a different member of staff to make a search of the area, and continue the search until instructed otherwise.
* After the event full details of the incident will be written in detail in the incident book and this account should be signed by the Pre-school manager and the parent/carer. A copy of this will be sent to Ofsted.

This policy was adopted by West Wycombe Pre-school Playgroup in October 2013. Policies are updated when necessary and reviewed on a yearly basis.

Reviewed and amended June 2025