Harvey Bears Nursery and Preschool
Missing Child Policy

Date of last review	September 2026
Signature of registered provider	*C. Hall* Committee Chair

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. In the unlikely event of a child going missing our missing child procedure is implemented.

Child goes missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the child's Keyperson / the relevant member of staff notifies the setting manager.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child is missing.
- The Manager will conduct a thorough search of the building and garden.
- Gates and doors are checked to check a child could not have exited.
- If a child is not found the police are informed immediately. If a child may have been abducted police are informed of this.
- The parents/carers are then rung and informed.
- A recent photo (where possible) and a note of what the child was wearing are given to the police.
- The Manager talks to all staff to establish where the child was last seen and records this.
- The Manager contacts the Chairperson and reports the incident. The Chair and another committee member comes to the setting to carry out a full investigation.

Child goes missing during an outing

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer. A headcount is carried out.
- One staff member searches the immediate vicinity, but does not go further.
- A senior staff member contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The Manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and contacts the parents.
- Staff take the children back to the setting, if possible.
- According to the advice of the police the manager or a senior member of staff remains at the site where the child went missing and waits for the police.
- A recent photo and description of what the child was wearing is given to the police.
- The manager contacts the chairperson who carries out a formal investigation.

Whether in the setting or outside the staff keep all other children calm.

The Investigation

- OFSTED are informed as soon as possible and kept up to date with the investigation.
- The Chair carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all staff and volunteers who were present.
- Our manager, together with a committee member speaks with the parents and explains the process of the investigation.

- The parents may wish to raise a complaint to OFSTED.
- Each member of staff present writes a full report detailing;
    1. The date and time of the incident.
    2. Where the child went missing from,
    3. Which staff/children were in the proximity. The name of the member of staff in charge of the child.
    4. When the child was last seen including the time.
    5. The proceedings after the child went missing.
    6. The report is counter signed by the manager and the chairperson and the date and time checked.
- A conclusion is reached as to how the incident happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, including interviewing staff and parents, all adults will comply. Children's social care may be involved if there is considered to be a child protection issue.
- In the event of disciplinary action OFSTED will be advised.
- The insurer is notified.

Managing People

- Missing child incidents cause a lot of worry. Part of managing the incident is to keep people calm
- Staff will feel worried about the child, especially the one with responsibility of the child.
- This person may be the target of parental, staff anger. The manager provides comfort and support.
- The parents will be angry and fraught. They may blame staff or the manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent this should be dealt with by the manager or chairperson. If this becomes aggressive the police should be informed.
- The incident should not be discussed in front of other children so as not to increase worry.
- In accordance with the severity of the incident staff may need counselling and support.
- Our staff must not discuss any missing child with the press or on social media.

Policy Review

These policies and procedures are a working document and can be added to and changed as and when necessary.

This policy will be reviewed annually or when an incident occurs or there are new local or national policies and procedures. The review process will be led by the registered provider and the DSL and include all those working in the setting.