

MISSING CHILD POLICY AND PROCEDURE

AACC staff and trustees hold children's safety as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every attempt is made to follow the site security policies to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times.

Members of staff will undertake periodic head counts, especially at the transition points between sessions (in addition to the registration procedures set out in the Arrival and Departures policy).

In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the setting leader.
- The staff will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic.
- The staff will ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.
- All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the setting.
- The setting leader will carry out a thorough search of the building, garden and school playground.
- The setting leader will nominate as many members of staff as possible to further search the area surrounding the premises beyond the school gates.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If after 10 minutes of thorough searching the child is still missing, the setting leader will inform the police and then the child's parent/carer.
- While waiting for the police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, other members of staff will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children in the setting.
- The setting leader will be responsible for meeting the police and the missing child's parent/carer. The setting leader will co-ordinate any actions instructed by the police, and do all that they can to comfort and reassure the parents/carer.
- The setting leader talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The setting leader contacts the chair and reports the incident. The chair, with the management committee, carries out an immediate investigation.

The Investigation

- Staff should keep calm and do not let the children become anxious or worried.
- The AACC coordinator, together with the chairperson or representative from the management committee, speaks with the parent(s)/carers(s).
- The chairperson and management committee carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room.
- The key person / staff member writes an incident report detailing:

- The date and time of the report.
- What staff/children were in the group and the name of the designated member of staff responsible for the missing child.
- When the child was last seen in the group.
- The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- What has taken place in the group since the child went missing.
- 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 is likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Recording and Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy).
- 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 children incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.

The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or allocated member of staff. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress may rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.

Staff may be the understandable target of anger from a parent or carer and they may be afraid.

Setting manager and the committee need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.

The parents/carers 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 setting manager.

When dealing with a distraught and angry parent/carers, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the setting manager and the other should be the chairperson of the management committee or another trustee. No matter how understandable the parent's/carers' 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.

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/trustees will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

Once the incident is resolved, the committee and setting manager will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes (paying particular note to the relevant provisions of the Site Security and Risk Assessment policies).

All incidents of children going missing from the setting will be recorded on an Incident Record Sheet, and in cases where either the police or social care have been informed, Ofsted will also be informed, as soon as is practicable.

The incident and accident logs are reviewed by the management committee and the managers of each setting regularly and appropriate action taken where necessary.

Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be monitored by the administrator and the manager of AACC and will be reviewed at least annually.

Data Protection:

The setting’s record keeping systems meet legal requirements; means of storing and sharing that information take place within the framework of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

ADOPTION AND ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE POLICY

This policy was adopted at a meeting of: **Abington Community out of School Club**

Print Name: Ruth Beach

Date: 04/12/2018

Role: Administrator

This policy was reviewed on:	Signature and name:	This policy was amended on:	Signature and name:
13/10/2021	R Beach		
21/11/2022	E Turner	21/11/2022	E Turner
20/12/2023	E Roper		