



EYFS
Missing child policy

Summer 2025



WHINLESS DOWN
ACADEMY TRUST

“Procedure to be followed in the event of a child going missing at, or away from, the setting”

Statutory Framework for the EYFS 2024

INTRODUCTION

The welfare of all children at Vale View Nursery is our paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the nursery has been trained to appreciate that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. Our staffing ratios ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that they are in our care, whilst providing freedom and opportunity for recreation on the nursery site.

EYFS

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) children at Vale View Nursery refer to children from 2 to 5 years of age. The indoors and outdoors premises are safe and secure. The outside area is fenced in and the children are supervised at all times. The staff have relevant qualifications and are present in adequate numbers for safe supervision. There are security systems in place such as keypads on external doors, locked gates with padlocks and there are signing in/out procedures and name badges for visitors. The children do not leave the premises unsupervised and are only released into the care of individuals named by the parents.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- Always supervise children attentively, maintaining sight and sound monitoring.
- Maintain appropriate staff-to-child ratios at all times.
- Complete risk assessments daily in all areas where children play.
- Conduct a comprehensive risk assessment prior to any trip or outing.
- Complete register at the beginning of every session and write total number of children in. Update this if a child leaves or arrives.
- Ensure that all visitors are signed in and closely supervised at all times.
- Train staff to be vigilant and to act swiftly and calmly in any situation.

With consistent and careful planning, children should never be out of sight of a trusted adult.

MISSING CHILD PROCEDURE

1. If a Child goes missing

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

If a child goes missing from the setting the following actions will be carried out:

- Designated staff member will carry out an initial thorough search of the building and garden. Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security.
- Staff will gather remaining children and the register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone missing
- Headteacher/EYFS Lead Practitioner and/or member of SLT informed immediately
- Arrange for as many staff as possible to carry out a thorough search, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, including cupboards and washrooms where a child might hide. The grounds staff should be asked to assist – Vale View carpark to be checked as well as the road (to the bottom). Ensure that searchers are equipped with mobile phones or walkie-talkies.
- Headteacher/SLT talks to staff (and children if necessary) to establish what happened.
- The Headteacher or member of SLT will ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. They may ask them to come to the nursery at once, or delay until further information has come to light.
- If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set out on foot or in a car, to attempt to catch up with him/her and staff will drive along the main roads to check.
- If the child is not found, then the missing child is reported to the police. The advice of the police is then followed

If a child goes missing when away from the setting (e.g. from an outing)

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff to carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone missing.
- One designated member of staff searches the immediate vicinity.
- One designated member of staff would retrace steps to the last place where the child was seen, the remaining children staying in one place with the other staff.
- The Headteacher and/or member of SLT is contacted via mobile phone.
- If the child isn't found then the lead staff member contacts the venue's security who will support the search.
- The Headteacher or member of SLT contacts the child's parent to explain what has happened and the current situation.
- The Headteacher or lead staff member contacts the police using the mobile phone and report the child as missing. The advice of the police is followed.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.

Actions to be followed by Staff once the child is found

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child.
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group

- Inform all staff involved in the search that the child has been found.
- Headteacher or member of SLT will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
- An investigation will be carried out by Headteacher/CEO. The investigation should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the child was last seen, what appears to have happened, the length of time that the child was missing and how s/he appears to have gone missing and lessons for the future.

2. The Investigation:

- The Headteacher carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time
- Each key person writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the incident
 - What staff/children were in the group/outing
 - When the child was last seen in the group/outing
 - What has taken place in the group/outing since then
 - The time it is estimated that the child went missing
 - A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened
 - Children's comments are also noted if applicable
- 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.
- Ofsted is informed within 14 days as a missing child can be deemed a significant event.
- Our insurance company is informed.
- A decision will be made as to whether staff disciplinary processes need to be followed.
- As a result of the investigation: risk assessments, policies and procedures will be updated and all staff and families will be made aware of the changes made.
- The parents/carer of the child involved will be given information about the investigation (whilst maintaining confidentiality of any staff members and other children).

PEOPLE MANAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Managing Emotions

Missing child incidents are distressing. Staff involved may feel responsible or overwhelmed. T SLT will:

- Offer emotional support and reassurance.
- Ensure staff wellbeing is prioritised throughout and after the investigation.

Managing Parents/Carers:

- We understand that parents may be anxious or upset. We will provide full transparency and support.

- However, aggressive or threatening behaviour toward staff will not be tolerated. .

Supporting Other Children:

- Children will be kept calm and reassured.
- Staff will answer any questions honestly but age-appropriately.
- The incident will not be discussed in front of the children unnecessarily.

Report to be completed when a child goes missing

To be completed by the manger or SLT

Name of childcare setting:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Name of child:

Male

Female

Date of birth:

Address:

Telephone number:

Name of parent/guardian:

Date, time and location of disappearance:

Who was responsible for caring for the child at the time he/she disappeared?

What was the child wearing?

Any distinguishing features?

Circumstances surrounding disappearance:

Follow up action:

Time parent/guardian informed:

Time police informed (if child not located after parent/guardian has been contacted):

Details of contact person and advice given:

What happened next:

Signed by Manager/ Leader

Date:

Follow up actions carried out:

Children/staff/parents/guardian supported:

Date Ofsted informed (within 14 days of incident):

Policies/ Procedures/ Risk Assessments reviewed:

Signed by Manager/ Leader

Signed by Parent/Guardian where possible:

