

## **LOST CHILD POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

### **Rationale**

Children's safety is always maintained at the highest priority both on and off the premises. We have put into place thorough systems and procedures which are an integral part of staff training and should ensure that children do not go missing or get lost whilst in our care. If Forfar Early Learning and Childcare Centre's policies and procedures are being observed the likelihood of a child being lost is minimal.

**This guidance will help providers and staff to take into account the relevant Health and Social Care Standards:**

2.14 I am fully informed about what information is shared with others about me.

2.25 I am helped to understand the impact and consequences of risky and unsafe behaviour and decisions.

3.10 As a child or young person I feel valued, loved and secure.

3.14 I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes.

3.15 My needs are met by the right number of people.

3.18 I am supported and cared for sensitively by people who anticipate issues and are aware of and plan for any known vulnerability or frailty.

3.23 If I go missing, people take urgent action, including looking for me and liaising with the police, other agencies and people who are important to me.

4.11 I experience high quality care and support based on relevant evidence, guidance and best practice.

4.14 My care and support is provided in a planned and safe way, including if there is an emergency or unexpected event.

4.18 I benefit from different organisations working together and sharing information about me promptly where appropriate, and I understand how my privacy and confidentiality are respected.

**This guidance will help providers and staff to take into account the relevant Quality Indicators from How Good is our Early Learning and**

**Childcare:** [https://education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/Frameworks\\_SelfEvaluation/FRWK1\\_NIHeditSelf-evaluationHGIELC/HGIOELC020316Revised.pdf](https://education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK1_NIHeditSelf-evaluationHGIELC/HGIOELC020316Revised.pdf)

1.4 Leadership and management of practitioners

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion

**This policy will be monitored by/through:** Attendance at Child Protection Training. Audit of Child Case files. Children's Plans. Complaints

This policy will be reviewed in:	12 months
Review Date:	August 2023
Reviewed By:	Management

AIMS	OUTCOMES	IMPLEMENTATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure Angus Council Guidelines and Procedures are used appropriately and effectively at all times</li> <li>• To ensure that parents and carers are aware of the procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All our children are safe and protected</li> <li>• All staff are trained and fully understand their roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• All staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe</li> <li>• All stakeholders (children, staff, and parents) receive the support they need at the time they need it</li> <li>• Families understand the responsibilities upon educators to keep their children safe and aware of Lost Child Policy and Procedures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All staff will familiarise themselves with policies and procedures on an annual basis</li> <li>• All new staff will be complete mandatory Angus Council Always Learning training as part of their induction process</li> <li>• In the interests of all our children in Angus, staff must adhere to the Angus Council Guidelines and Procedures</li> <li>• Lost Child Procedure information should be/is displayed and communicated during induction procedures</li> <li>• All staff follow local and national guidance at all times.</li> <li>• Follow guidance in Health and Social Care Standards 2017 (Standards 2.14, 2.25, 3.10, 3.14, 3.15, 3.18, 3.23, 4.11, 4.14, 4.18) – <a href="#">Health &amp; Social Care Standards</a></li> <li>• How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare Quality Indicators – 1.4, 2.1, and 3.1</li> </ul>

## **Lost Child Procedure**

### **To ensure that children are not lost while in the care of Forfar ELCC we:**

- Maintain appropriate staff: child ratios at all times
- Ensure that visitors to the nursery sign in and are always supervised
- Daily risk assessment is carried out in every area where children play
- The premises indoors and outdoors are secured at all times
- Risk assessment are in place for children leaving the premises or going on an outing
- Outings are recorded with route and contact details provided

### **In the unlikely event that a child is unaccounted for on the premises, the following procedure will be followed:**

- A responsible person will undertake a thorough search of the nursery and the immediate vicinity.
- The manager will be notified.
- The premises, including the entire Nursery, garden, and all surrounding areas will be searched, together with as many volunteers as possible.
- The signing in sheet is to be checked to make sure no other child is missing and to check the child has not been collected.
- Doors and gates to be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If, following a thorough search of the nursery and the immediate vicinity, the child cannot be found the police will be called and the child's parents will be notified without delay.
- The Service Leader will be notified.
- 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 Services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- Care Inspectorate is informed.

**In the unlikely event of a child being lost while on a trip or outing the following procedures will be followed:**

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure no other child has gone astray.
- One staff member to immediately undertake a thorough search of the immediate vicinity.
- Phone 999 (give your name, location, name and description of the child, name of the nursery, and any other relevant information e.g. any medical conditions of child).
- Manager/Depute to be contacted (if not already present), and to inform venue (shop, library, museum etc.).
- Manager/Depute to go to venue/location.
- Manager/Depute to contact parent and service leader and keep informed of what is happening.
- Staff to return other children safely to the nursery when manager/depute arrives.
- Manager/responsible person to wait for police/ambulance in case of injured persons.
- Staff must do a written record of events.
- 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 Services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- Care Inspectorate is informed.

**Investigation**

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- Manager/Depute to speak with parents.
- Management team carry out full investigation taking written statements from all staff who were on the outing.
- The manager writes an incident report detailing;
  - The date and time of the report
  - What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff member responsible
  - When the lost child was last seen in the group

- What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing
- The time estimated the child went missing
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- The report is submitted to the service leader.

### **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 the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parent anger and they may be afraid. Management need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support whilst feeling vulnerable.
- The parents 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 manager.
- When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the manager and the other should be the another member of the management team.
- No matter how understandable the parents 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. They should answer the children's questions honestly but also reassure 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.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.