



### **Statutory framework requirement: Suitable premises, environment and equipment**

Providers must take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of children, staff and others on the premises in the case of fire or other emergency

### **Missing child policy**

Children's safety is Hartfield Playschool's highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our outings procedure and our exit/entrance procedure, to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times.

### **SAFETY PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE CHILDREN**

Safety procedures in place: the Early years manager will usually open the gate during drop off and collection times, (in her absence the gate will be opened and supervised by the Business Manager or Deputy early years manager. Each session it is the responsibility of the person opening the gate to put the number of children in a session on the back door Velcro board- indoors. This will be updated as children come and go during the day. The Early years manager or deputy will do regular headcounts to ensure all children are accounted for.

The front door will be LOCKED and THE ADDITIONAL SECURITY LOCK USED AT ALL TIMES. Only staff are permitted to unlock and open this door and they must ensure that it is always relocked.

The external entrance (the gate) will be locked at all times and the internal gate will be kept shut except when parents/children are entering or leaving the premises. The register will be kept up to date with exact times as children arrive and leave so that it remains an accurate record of the children in the building. The external entrance must only be unlocked or locked by a member of the management team.

Children will be asked to 'Everybody stop hands on top' so all children can be counted safely.

Children will be strongly discouraged from hiding from staff and parents will be informed if this becomes a habit.

In the serious event of a child becoming missing from the premises these are the procedures we have put in place.

The Early Years Manager will gather everyone together and do a headcount in the Caterpillar Room and ascertain WHICH child is missing by using the register.

All staff will be alerted that a child cannot be located



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The Early Years Manager will check all exits from the building to ensure they are still locked (external side entrance gates, front door, back door, toilet door kitchen door). Also garden exit gates.

Staff will ensure that all children in the building remain unaffected, safe & occupied in the Caterpillar Room.

One member of staff will search inside the building, remembering to look in places children have been known to hide in the past. Also this member of staff will check outside the building. Staffing deployment will be decided depending on the number of staff working.

Continue to check the platform, playhouses, behind sheds, adjacent field, housing development next door, car park and road area, immediate Forest Way area.

If the child cannot be located within 5 minutes then the Early Years Manager must call the police (999) Take advice from the police and pass to other members of staff.

The Early Years Manager is then to call parent/s

Enlist help of the Trustees, any parents/neighbours/staff in the local vicinity by phone call Widen search to village area, local houses, bridge area, Forest Way area

Liaise with parents and police

When child is found, the Early Years Manager must write a detailed account of events

Inform relevant people of incident (Trustees, Ofsted, Insurance company etc)

### Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when our staff have taken children on an outing, leaving our business manager and/or other staff back in our setting premises. Parents are asked to help escort us on such outings and we aim for a ratio of 1 adult:2 Children. If our business manager has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. Contact details for all children are taken on the 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 and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.

One staff member searches the immediate vicinity, but does not search beyond that.

Our senior staff member on the outing contacts the police and reports that child as missing.

Our business manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.



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Our business manager contacts the parents and/or carers.

Our staff take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible.

According to the advice of the police, a senior member of staff, or our business manager where applicable, should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.

A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.

The business manager contacts our Trustees and reports the incident. Our Trustee comes to our premises immediately to carry out an investigation (with our management team where appropriate).

Our staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

#### The investigation

Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.

Our Trustee carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and volunteers who were present.

Our business manager, together with the Early Years Manager and a trustee speaks with the parents/carers and explains the process of the investigation.

The parents/carers may also raise a complaint with us or Ofsted.

Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing:

The date and time of the incident.

Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue.

Which staff/children were in the premises/on the outing and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child.

When the child was last seen in the premises/or on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.

What has taken place in the premises or on the outing since the child went missing.

The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.

A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.

If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff and parents.

Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.

In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted are advised.



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The insurance provider is informed.

### Managing people

Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.

Our 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. They may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Our business and/or the Early Years manager ensures that any staff under investigation are not only fairly treated, but receive support while feeling vulnerable.

The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame our staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at our business manager and/or the Early Years Manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff one of whom is our business manager and the other should be our Trustee or another representative of the management team. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against our 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. Our 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 children's questions honestly, but also reassure them.

In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, our staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. Our Trustees will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

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

This policy was reviewed by the Early Years Manager: Debbie Arnett in line with the 'Essential policies and procedures for the EYFS' by Preschool Learning Alliance

This policy was adopted by Hartfield Playschool staff and Committee in January 2014.

Reviewed: July 2015

Review Date: July 2016

Reviewed: March 2017

Reviewed and updated: September 2019

Reviewed and updated: September 2020



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Reviewed and updated: October 2021

Reviewed and updated: February 2022

Reviewed: