

Tenbury CE Primary Academy Nursery



Missing Child in Nursery Policy

‘Therefore encourage one another and build each other up’

Thessalonians 5:11

Children’s safety is always maintained at the highest priority both on and off the premises

We have put into place thorough systems and rigorous entry/exit 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 all policies and procedures are being observed the likelihood of a child being lost is minimal. To ensure that children are not lost while in the care of the nursery we:

- Carefully always supervise children.
- Maintain appropriate staff: child ratios
- Keep a daily paper register (in addition to the main school electronic Arbor register), which shows morning/lunch/afternoon sessions, so that staff can clearly see which children are in each session and are aware of the changing numbers throughout the day. This is accessible to staff at all times.
- Ensure that visitors to the nursery are always supervised.
- A daily check is carried out in every area where children play, to ensure the nursery site is secure.
- If an outing is organised, a risk assessment will be carried out before leaving the premises.

With careful planning and co-operative working amongst staff, children should not be out of sight or sound of an adult at any time.

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

1. The Nursery will ensure a responsible person can help undertake a thorough search of the nursery and the immediate vicinity.
2. The Headteacher will be notified, and additional staff called to help with the search
3. The premises, including the entire Nursery, outdoor play area, and all surrounding areas of the school site will be searched, together with as many volunteers as possible.
4. 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.

5. Doors and gates to be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
6. 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.
7. The Headteacher will then carry out an investigation.

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

1. 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.
2. One staff member to immediately undertake a thorough search of the immediate vicinity.
3. Phone 999 (give your name, location, name and description of the child/staff, name of the nursery, and any other relevant information e.g., any medical conditions of child)
4. Nursery Leader to be notified as soon as possible (if not already present), and to inform venue (shop, library, museum etc)
5. Nursery Leader to contact parents and Headteacher and keep them informed of what is happening
6. Staff to return other children safely to the nursery when Nursery Leader arrives.
7. Nursery Leader/responsible person to wait for police/ ambulance in case of injured persons
8. The Headteacher will then carry out an investigation

Investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- Nursery Leader and Headteacher to speak with parents
- Headteacher to carry out full investigation taking written statements from all staff who were on the outing
- The Nursery Leader 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 designated responsible for the missing child
 - when the child was last seen in the group/outing
 - what has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing
 - the time that it is estimated that the child went missing

People management

Missing child incidents are extremely worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incidents is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible. The staff will feel worried about the child; especially the member of staff who was responsible for the child whilst on the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time that the child is missing increases. Nursery Leader should ensure that the staff feel supported while they are feeling vulnerable.

When dealing with a distraught or angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Nursery Leader and the other the Headteacher. No matter how understandable the parent's 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 the children need to focus 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 outcome, staff may need counselling and support. The Headteacher will use discretion to decide what action to take.

Staff may not discuss any missing child incident with the press. The Headteacher will take advice from the DHMAT central team.

Last reviewed: September 2026

Next review due: September 2028