

CHAGFORD MONTESSORI NURSERY SCHOOL

MISSING CHILD POLICY

Policy Statement

The Chagford Montessori Nursery School accepts their responsibility for the protection and safety of the children in their care.

Preventing Missing Child Incidents

Staff should remain vigilant AT ALL TIMES and must be aware at all times of exactly where children are at any given time. Children who may be at risk of getting out of the building should have this identified and a suitable entry made in their record. Such children should be kept under observation as appropriate to the level of risk identified.

The nursery school avoids false alarms by keeping the front door chain in place and the alarm bell left on so no one can leave or enter the nursery without the staff knowing. The garden gate is always kept padlocked and the perimeters are checked regularly to ensure they are safe.

Raising the Alarm

Staff should raise the alarm immediately they suspect that a child may be missing by informing the Teacher in Charge.

PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF A CHILD BEING REPORTED AS MISSING FROM NURSERY

When it becomes clear that a child is missing it is vital that all the members of staff work as a team and follow a clearly defined procedure. The Teacher in Charge should;

- check that the front door is chained and alarm bell has been on - if not the outside search should begin at once a member of staff should be delegated see below **3**.
- check the child has not been collected early for a prearranged reason
- alert all staff that the child is missing
- ascertain who last saw the child and where the child was seen.
- staff must follow the agreed procedure for a thorough search of the nursery school and grounds, checking that the child is not hiding or trapped somewhere on the premises, knowledge of the child and their usual movements and habits should be employed
- firstly the teacher in charge should take all the children to the Music Room and headcount the children against the register and stay with them. One member of staff will be detailed to search as indicated on the **adjoining map**:

1. The building, room by room checking cupboards, behind and under furniture

2. The playground, in & behind the playhouse the store and garden

3. OUTSIDE SEARCH, look all round & under the parked cars and in the garage

4. Down the driveway, look by the garden gate & around the end of the wall towards parking area

5. The end of the driveway - look left towards Lamb Park

6. Go right up Lower Street to small passage way, go through and scan parking area getting down on ground to look under cars for child hiding behind cars

- look back down driveway and return to nursery and report to teacher in charge
- At the end of the search the Teacher in Charge must be confident that the nursery school its grounds and the nearby vicinity have been systematically searched
- If no sign of the child can be found then the local police should be alerted and their advice and assistance sought. The nursery's registered owners must be informed, as should the missing child's parents if they have not already been contacted.
- The Teacher in Charge should make a note of times of actions and decisions as accurately as possible. They must fill out an incident form and make a record of events in the child's records.

- Parents should be requested to telephone the nursery school if the child is found and the parents should be kept informed at each stage of the search.
- Once the child has been found, it is essential that all the parties who were advised of the emergency are contacted again and informed that the search has been concluded.

Procedure to Follow After a Missing Persons Incident

Upon conclusion of a missing child incident the nursery school should mount a full enquiry and investigate the incident thoroughly. Investigations should be led by the nursery school's registered owner who will also be responsible for implementing any improvements that are indicated.

All staff are trained in the Missing Persons procedure and to know their role in the event of a search.

All the undertakings above are subject to the paramount commitment of the nursery school, which is to the safety and well-being of the child. Please see also our policy on Safeguarding Children, Complaint & Grievance, Collection of Children, Risk Assessment, Outside Guidelines