

FordHaven – Missing Child Policy

Safeguarding Children



Policy statement

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times at FordHaven.

Every attempt is made through carrying out our safety procedures to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedures

1. Child going missing from the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/team member alerts the Team Manager.
- The Team Manager calls the police and reports the child missing and then calls the parent/carer(s).
- The Team Manager contacts the child's Social Worker, if required and carries out an investigation.
- The Team Manager of FordHaven will carry out a thorough search of the building, garden and car park.
- FordHaven is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The Team Manager talks to all team members and volunteers to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- Parents/carers should always be aware of exit areas in order to maintain safety.
- Parents/carers attending any group sessions or drop-ins taking place at FordHaven are responsible for their own children at all times.
- The Team Manager contacts the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and an investigation is undertaken.

2. Child going missing on an outing to the Forest

This describes what to do when Team Members have taken a group on an outing, leaving the Team Manager and/or other Team Members back at FordHaven.

If the Team Manager has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. What to do when a child goes missing from a whole FordHaven outing may be a little different, as parent/carer(s) usually attend and are responsible for their own child.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, Team Members on the outing ask all children to stand together and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One Team Member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The Team Manager is contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- The Team Manager contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The Team Manager contacts the parent/carer(s), who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the Team Manager. The setting is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the setting.
- Team Members take the remaining children back to FordHaven.
- The Team Manager contacts the DSL and an investigation is undertaken.
- The Team Manager, or designated Team Member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

3. The Investigation

- Team Members keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Team Manager together with DSL speaks with the parent/carer(s).



- The DSL carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the Team Members at FordHaven or who were on the outing.
- The Team Member writes an incident report detailing:
 - a. The date and time of the report.
 - b. What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
 - c. When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
 - d. What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
 - e. The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all Team Members co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation including interviewing Team Members. Children's Social Care will be involved.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences) arrangements; the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, the LADO is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

4. 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.
- The children may also be sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining Team Members 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.
- Parents should be informed of any incident involving a missing child by DSL.
- Team Members may feel vulnerable during this process and will need support. There should always be two senior Team Members present when handling the situation with parents.
- 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. The DSL and Team Manager will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Team Member, volunteers and Trustees must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without permission from the DSL who will have taken appropriate advice before appointing a spokesperson for the organisation.

Approved by: Roxana Ford - Director
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