



For the benefit of this policy Laura Green Trust – which is the governing body of Greenshoots Pre-school and Wraparound care is hereafter referred to as Greenshoots.

Lost / Missing Child Policy

Policy Statement

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. We aim to ensure that all necessary steps are in place to prevent children going missing from the setting or on an outing. For example, children are counted at regular points during each session; every member of our staff knows which children they are responsible for; and staff are always aware who is collecting those children who are left in our care. In addition, staff are vigilant about not allowing casual visitors into the premises. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedures followed if a child goes missing from the setting

In the unlikely event that a child goes missing during a session, a member of staff will immediately make arrangements to ensure that all other children are accounted for and their safety ensured. They will be calmly supervised whilst attempts are made to locate the child who has gone missing.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the staff alert the setting manager(s).
- The setting manager(s) will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden area. The setting manager(s) will co-ordinate with other staff and staff from the school site if required to ensure all areas are covered and checked.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- All doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If the child is found during the search the staff member will comfort and reassure the child and their parent / carer will be informed of the incident. As soon as appropriate, staff will explain to the child and other children that they must not leave the building and the reasons why (explanations will take into account the age and stage of development of the children).
- If the child is not found, the parent / carer is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police by dialing 999.
- The setting manager(s) will talk to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- Our staff will continue to search the surrounding areas until the child is found or the police assume responsibility for co-ordinating the search.
- The setting manager(s) will contact the chair person of the Laura Green Trust and report the incident. The chair person, with the board of trustees carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.

- Other parents will be subsequently briefed and correctly informed about the incident and the setting manager will ensure that this and other policies are reviewed to reduce the likelihood of children going missing in the future.
- Any incidents will be recorded, risk assessments will also be reviewed and Ofsted and Early Years Safeguarding will be informed.

Procedures followed if a child goes missing during an outing

In the unlikely event that a child goes missing during an outing, a senior member of staff will immediately make arrangements to ensure that all other children are accounted for and their safety ensured. They will be calmly supervised whilst attempts are made to locate the child who has gone missing.

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the setting manager(s) and/or other staff back in the setting. If the setting manager(s) has/have accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

What to do when a child goes missing from a whole setting outing may be a little different, as most parents / carers usually attend and are responsible for their own child.

- 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 that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The setting manager(s) is contacted immediately and the incident is reported. The setting manager(s) contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The setting manager(s) contacts the parent / carers, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the setting manager(s). The setting is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the setting.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The setting manager(s) will contact the chair person of the Laira Green Trust and reports the incident. The chair person, with the board of trustees carries out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.
- The setting manager(s), or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.
- Other parents will be subsequently briefed and correctly informed about the incident and the setting manager(s) will ensure that this and other policies are reviewed to reduce the likelihood of children going missing in the future.
- Any incidents will be recorded, risk assessments will also be reviewed and Ofsted and Early Years Safeguarding will be informed.

The investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The setting manager(s) together with the chair person or representative from the board of trustees speaks with the parent(s).
- The chair person and board of trustees, carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.

- The staff member who initially identified that a child was missing 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 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 staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's Young Peoples and Families Department may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); 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, Ofsted is informed.
- 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.
- 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 parental anger and they may be afraid. Setting manager(s) need to ensure that 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 staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the setting manager(s). When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is one of the setting managers and the other should be the chair person or representative from the board of trustees. 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 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, 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 chair person of the board of trustees will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

This policy was adopted on: _____

Signed on behalf of Laira GreenTrust - Greenshoots Pre-school and Wraparound Care
Chairperson, Laira Green Trust:

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