

**Lost Child
Policy**

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(2025–2026)**

Lost Child Policy

1. Policy Statement

At **Paradise Early Years Nursery**, the **safety, welfare, and security** of all children in our care are our highest priority.

This policy sets out the preventative measures and response procedures in the rare event that a child goes missing while in our care.

It complies with the:

- **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 2024** statutory framework
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025**
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)**
- **Health and Safety at Work Act 1974**
- Relevant **local safeguarding partnership procedures**

All staff have a duty to ensure children are supervised effectively, kept safe, and that robust procedures are in place to respond immediately to any potential missing child incident.

2. Aims

- To ensure **robust preventative measures** are in place to avoid any child going missing.
- To establish **clear, time-critical actions** for staff to follow if a child cannot be located.
- To ensure **staff remain vigilant**, conduct regular checks, and maintain accurate attendance records.
- To support children, staff, and parents in the aftermath of any incident, maintaining transparency and trust.

3. Preventative Measures

To prevent a child from going missing, **Paradise Early Years Nursery** ensures the following:

- **Staff-to-child ratios** are strictly maintained in line with the **EYFS 2024** statutory requirements.
- **Headcounts and name checks** are conducted:

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- At the start and end of each session.
- Before, during, and after transitions or outings.
- At regular intervals throughout the day.
- **Secure premises:**
 - Entry and exit points are locked and monitored.
 - Visitors are signed in/out and supervised at all times.
- **Clear arrival and collection procedures:**
 - Children are only released to authorised adults.
 - A password system is used where necessary.
- **Risk assessments** are completed for:
 - Indoor and outdoor play areas.
 - Outings, trips, and walks in the local area.
 - Any temporary changes to staffing, layout, or premises.
- **Staff training:**
 - All staff receive induction and refresher training on safeguarding and emergency response, including missing child procedures.
 - Refresher training is undertaken annually or following any relevant updates (e.g. KCSIE 2025).

4. Procedures in the Event of a Lost Child

A. On Nursery Premises

1. **Immediate Search:**
 - a. The staff member who identifies the absence alerts the Room Leader and immediately begins searching the immediate area.
 - b. Other staff are mobilised to search all rooms, toilets, storage areas, and outdoor spaces.
2. **Alert Management:**
 - a. The Nursery Manager (or Deputy) is informed immediately and coordinates the response.
3. **Secure Premises:**
 - a. All external doors and gates are secured to prevent further movement in or out of the setting.
4. **Escalation:**
 - a. If the child is **not found within 10 minutes**, the **police (999)** are contacted without delay.
 - b. Parents/carers are informed immediately after police contact.
5. **Documentation:**

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- a. An **Incident Report** is completed, detailing the timeline, staff actions, and outcomes.
- b. The Manager notifies the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** and the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** if required.
- c. Ofsted is informed **within 14 days** of any serious incident, in line with EYFS requirements.

B. On an Outing or Trip

1. **Immediate Safety Check:**
 - a. Staff immediately gather all other children and conduct a headcount to ensure everyone else is safe and supervised.
2. **Search Area:**
 - a. A systematic search is undertaken in the immediate vicinity while maintaining staff-to-child ratios.
3. **Inform Venue Authorities:**
 - a. Venue or site security are alerted to assist in the search.
4. **Contact Emergency Services:**
 - a. If the child is **not found within 5 minutes**, staff contact the **police (999)** immediately.
5. **Notify Parents/Carers:**
 - a. The Nursery Manager contacts the child's parents/carers as soon as possible, keeping them informed throughout.
6. **Report and Review:**
 - a. Once the child is found, staff return to the setting as soon as practical.
 - b. A full **investigation and written report** are completed by the Manager and DSL.

5. Post-Incident Actions

Following any missing child incident, the following actions must be taken:

- Conduct a **debrief and full review** of the event, including timelines and risk management.
- Identify **procedural or environmental weaknesses** and implement immediate improvements.
- Provide **support and reassurance** to the affected child, parents/carers, and staff.
- Offer **training or refresher sessions** for staff where improvements are required.

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- Update **risk assessments, policies, and procedures** to reflect learning from the incident.
- Notify **governors, trustees, or the registered provider** as appropriate.

6. Staff Responsibilities

All staff must:

- Maintain **vigilance** at all times.
- Conduct **regular headcounts and roll calls** at key transition points.
- Immediately **report any missing child or security concern** to management.
- Be familiar with and follow the **Missing Child Procedure** as part of their safeguarding duty.
- Participate in safeguarding training and policy updates.

The **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** ensures that all missing child incidents are logged, reviewed, and where required, reported to relevant agencies.

7. Policy Review

This policy will be:

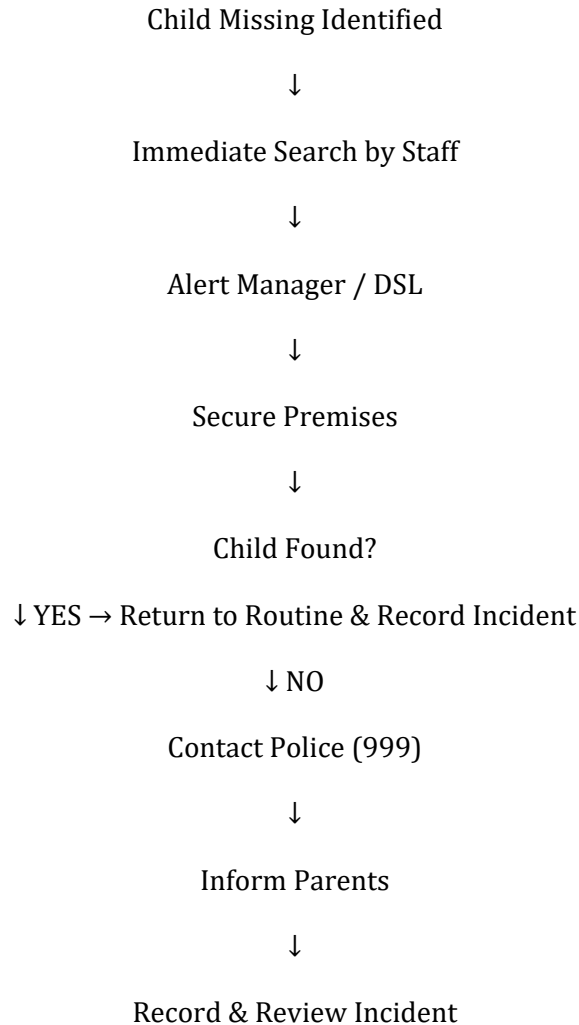
- **Reviewed annually** (or sooner following an incident, inspection, or legislative change).
- Updated to reflect the latest guidance, including **KCSIE 2025, EYFS 2024, and local safeguarding partnership procedures**.
- Communicated to all staff and parents.

Next review due: **September 2026**

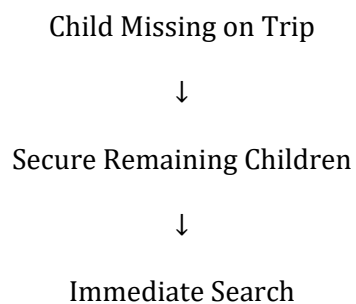
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Appendix: Visual Flowcharts

Lost Child (On Site) Flowchart



Lost Child (Off Site) Flowchart



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Child Found?

↓ YES → Return to Setting

↓ NO

Contact Police (999)



Inform Manager & Parents



Record & Review Incident