

Sticky Fingers aspires to provide a safe, fun and welcoming environment for everyone. We offer children experiences to support their development. Empowering them to reach their full potential



**Sticky Fingers Pre-School**  
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## 06 Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults procedures

### 06.06 Missing child

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our outings procedure and our exit/entrance procedure, 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.

#### In the building

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the member of staff informs the setting manager/designated lead who initiates a search within the setting.
- Another staff member will call all of the other children to the carpet area and the register is checked to ensure that no other child/children have gone astray.
- If the child is found on-site, the designated lead checks on the welfare of the child and investigates the circumstances of the incident.
- If the child is not found on site, the lead practitioner will nominate one member of staff to search the immediate vicinity. . If there is no sign of the child, the Lead Practitioner talks to our staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and the police are called immediately. A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The parents are then called and informed.
- The designated lead contacts their designated officer, to inform them of the situation and seek assistance.

#### Off-site (outing or walk)

This describes what to do when our staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving our manager and/or other staff back in our setting premises. If our manager has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. What to do when a child goes missing from a whole group outing may be a little different, as parents usually attend and are responsible for their own child.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the senior staff present carries out a headcount.
- One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity.

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- Our staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- If the child is not found, the senior staff member calls the police and reports the child missing then contacts the designated lead. A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The designated lead informs the parents.
- Members of staff return the children to the setting as soon as possible if it is safe to do so. According to the advice of the police, one senior member of staff should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- The designated person contacts the designated officer, who attends the setting.

### **The investigation**

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible (and at least within 14 days).
- The designated officer carries out a full investigation.
- The designated lead and the designated officer speak with the parents together and explain the process of the investigation
- Each member of staff present during the incident writes a full report as part of the investigation.
- Staff do not discuss any missing child incident with the press.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff cooperate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff and parents. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- 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.
- Our 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.
- They may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Our Lead Practitioner ensures that any staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.

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- The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame our staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at our manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one staff one of whom is our manager and the other should be another representative of the management committee. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against our 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. Our 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 outcome, our staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. Our Managers will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

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