



Last Review:	Nov 2025	S Fisher
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Lost Child Policy

Policy statement

Discoveries Montessori Nursery School is co-located with Paddock Wood Primary School, the whole school site is within a secure boundary fence with access restricted via gates that are kept locked except at the start and end of the school day. Additional safety checks are carried out before sessions start and at regular intervals throughout the session, to ensure the setting remains safe and secure.

Aim

Our aim is to ensure that in the unlikely event that the whereabouts of a child is unknown, that the appropriate steps are taken to locate the child as quickly as possible.

Methods for locating a lost child

Find Out Quickly

The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child's absence is quickly discovered. When the register is taken the number of children is confirmed and all members of staff are advised of how many children in a session. All Staff must make regular head counts, especially when moving the children from one play area to another.

Search Systematically

We ensure we always have correct child/adult ratios.

- Children aged two – at least one member of staff for every four children
- Children aged three and over – at least one member of staff for every eight children.

In an emergency, some adults will be freed to respond to the new situation without neglecting the needs of the other children.

It will be established who last saw the child and what they were doing. The garden area will be checked by the Health & Safety Officer.

The Health & Safety Officer will leave the DMNS site to check the main school playing field and playground area, they will have a mobile phone with them.

If the child has not been found within 15 minutes, the Manager will telephone the Parents and the Police to inform them of the situation, whilst the Health & Safety Officer will continue to search the area.

Parents

The child's parents will be called, alarming them as little as possible. The parents will need advice and support as soon as they are informed.

The Police

If the above steps have not located the child within the initial 15 minute window the Police will be called. They have the resources to conduct a search, as speed is important.

Informing Other People

Parents will be reminded regularly, to inform the Preschool if there are any changes in the emergency contact numbers they have provided, so that details can be kept up-to-date. If the Police have been called, Safeguarding and Social Services must also be informed. The Social Services department will want to conduct their own investigation and will need to know -

- What systems we operate for preventing such occurrences.
- What happened.
- What we did, at what time and in what order.
- Who we informed and when.

Accident & Incident Book

A record of events will be logged. This is important, even if, as is likely, the child is found safe within a few minutes. The record will include the last positive sighting of the child and anything unusual that day, about the behaviour of the child or of any other children.

Dealing with People's Reactions

The child's parents will be distressed. These feelings are natural and because powerful emotions are involved, people's behaviour can be unpredictable. It is important to be very careful from the beginning, about the words we use to talk to people about the incident.

Informing Other Parents

Other parents will be given information when appropriate explaining what happened and what we have learnt from the event, to ensure that it does not happen again.

When the situation has been resolved, members of staff should review the reasons for it happening, and ensure measures are taken to ensure that it does not happen again. The incident should be reported to Ofsted and recorded in our Incident Book.