Beechoak Farm Montessori Pre-school

Safeguarding children

1.4 Missing Child

Policy statement

At Beechoak Farm children's safety is of highest priority, and the nursery is kept safe and secure at all times. Children do not leave the premises at any time other than with their parent or other adults authorised to collect them. We do not take the children on visits off the premises; all visitors come to the nursery. Security is maintained by all staff at all times, following the exit/ entrance procedure. In the unlikely event a child should go missing the child missing procedure is followed.

Managing the incident

- The manager will be notified as soon as a child is deemed missing.
- The manager and any additional available staff not caring for the other children will carry out a thorough search of the nursery and its grounds, all CCTV monitors will be checked and all exits will be checked to ensure security hasn't been breached.
- If the child is found on-site, the designated person checks on the welfare of the child and investigates the circumstances of the incident.
- If the child is not found on site, one member of staff searches the immediate vicinity, if there is no sign of the child, the police are called immediately. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- The register is checked to ensure no other children are missing. All staff will be briefed to find out the child's last known whereabouts.
- The manager talks to staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The manager contacts our owner and reports the incident. Our owner then comes to the provision immediately to carry out an investigation.

Recording and reporting

- A record is made of the incident. The manager as designated person completes and circulates the incident report form to the owner and designated safeguarding lead (DSL) on the same day that the incident occurred.

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible (and at least within 14 days).
- The owner carries out a full investigation.

- The owner, manager and the DSL speak with the parents together and explain the process of the investigation
- Each member of staff present during the incident writes a full report, which is filed in the child's file. Staff do not discuss any missing child incident with the press.

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 child's key person. 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 manager ensures that any 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 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 of whom is our manager. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against our staff are not tolerated, and the police will 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 final 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 proprietor will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

This policy was adopted by staff at Beechoak Farm Montessori preschool.

Held on 2nd December 2025

Date to be reviewed December 2026

Signed on behalf of Beechoak Farm Montessori by

Charlotte Muggleton & Hayley Majeika

Proprietor Manager