



## **Exford Little Berries Preschool**

### **Procedures followed when a child is lost**

Links with Exford Little Berries Preschool: Safeguarding Policy; Student Placement; Working in Partnership Policy;
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Links with Exford First School: Safeguarding Policy;
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All parents/carers and staff are made aware of the procedures we follow in the unlikely event that a child goes missing.

Potential risks have been carefully considered and efforts made to minimise these through Risk Assessment procedures. The stringent safety systems in place mean that it is unlikely that a child could leave unobserved.

#### **Preschool Access:**

Access to the preschool is through the gate into the preschool play area. This gate will be padlocked during session times, any visitors will need to report to the main school office. All staff will ensure that the preschool door is securely shut before moving away from the door. New parents/carers and visitors are made aware of this procedure. A sign on the door serves as a reminder. Where possible all entries/exits are overseen by a member of staff. Once inside an adult locks the door to prevent any child letting themselves out. This door is kept locked at all times.

#### **Outdoor Play Area:**

The external play area is used by the preschool and is a secure area surrounded by a wall and a gate. A gate with a bolt serves as an escape route onto the school playground in the event of a fire.

#### **Off the premises:**

The setting complies with the Somerset County Council for off- site activities. Risk Assessments are carried out before each outing to assess and minimise possible risks. The adult/child ratio for off school premises is halved and parents are encouraged to attend wherever possible.

#### **Main Playroom:**

There are potential hiding places within the main playroom and staff are aware of these. Rooms that exit from the playroom are either fitted with high handles, safety gates or key pads.

#### **In the event of a child being missing;**

##### **1. Find out quickly**

Our key worker system, high adult\child ratio and registration system will ensure that if a child is missing it would be readily noticed. Whoever notices a child is missing alerts all staff, without alarming other children and parents\carers.

## **2. Search Systematically:**

A thorough search of the building and outside is carried out by the person in charge on the day. Another member of staff would check the school, school playground and areas surrounding the school building. The last sighting of the child is established. If on an outing, the children are gathered into appropriate groups with a member of staff to ensure their safety whilst others search the immediate area.

## **3. Contact Parents/carers:**

If the child is not found, the child's parents are called (or person named as emergency contact), alerting them to the situation. If the child lives within walking distance of the preschool one adult makes the journey on foot in case the child was attempting to walk home.

## **4. Contact Police:**

If the above steps do not locate the child, the police are called. The most recent photograph from the child peg is made available to confirm appearance.

## **5. Informing other people:**

- Contact Somerset Direct (Tel 0845 345 9122) to let them know what has happened, what has been done and that the police have been called.
- Contact OFSTED (08456 40 40 40) to let them know what has happened and that the police have been called.

## **6. Complete incident paper work:**

As soon as an adult has time, the situation has to be recorded following Somerset County Council guidelines for reporting incidents. This has to be completed even if the child is found quickly and safely. The last definite sighting of the child is noted and anything unusual about the child's behaviour or that of others.

## **7. Dealing with other people's reactions and the media:**

Sensitivity is needed in dealing with all concerned with this potentially stressful and distressing situation, particularly parents/carers. It is important to avoid emotive language. Advice will be given by Somerset County Council and all media enquiries will be passed to the SCC designated press officers. One nominated person (Early Years Lead Practitioner or Head of teaching and Learning) will be designated as spokesperson for the setting.

## **8. Informing Other Parents:**

Other parents/carers need to be given brief, accurate information as rapidly as possible to avoid the spread of inaccurate information.

## **9. When the Child is found:**

Adults should curb their emotions and respond calmly. All responses should be appropriate, sensitive and child centred.

It is important to enlist the support of all key people (School, Early Years and Lead Centre Officer Manager, Cluster Manager & PCSO) in learning from the event to ensure it does not happen again. Where appropriate additional risk assessments are undertaken and procedures revised.

**Reviewed and Adopted : August 2015**

**Signed :**

**Role :**

<b><u>Preschool Team</u></b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Early Years Assistant		
Early Years Assistant		
Early Years Lead Practitioner		