The Lloyd Williamson Nurseries

Nursery Missing Child/ Uncollected Child Policy

2026 - 2027

Updated by Ramona Cristea
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Introduction
At LWN, the children's safety is maintained as the highest priority both on and off the nursery premises.

LWN have thorough safeguarding systems and procedures which are an integral part of staff training and should ensure that children do not go missing or get lost whilst in our care. To ensure that children are not lost while in the care of the nursery we:

- Carefully supervise all children
- Maintain appropriate staff: child ratios.
- Closely monitor children in and out of the building
- Ensuring that when the children are going out on trips, staff take emergency contact details, a school issue mobile phone (fully charged) and complete a trip form
- Ensure that visitors to the nursery are always supervised.
- Risk assessments are completed as necessary in every area where children play.
- If an outing is organised, a risk assessment will be carried out before leaving the premises (as part of the school trips form).

Very occasionally a child may become separated from the group on an outing or become lost. With careful planning and good co-operation amongst staff, children should not be out of sight of an adult at any time.

In the unlikely event of a child becoming lost, while in the care of the nursery, the nursery will immediately put into place the procedures detailed below. These ensure that a systematic approach to find the child is taken and consideration is given to the levels of risk to the child.

We will ensure a search is made for the child as soon as possible, parents and authorities will be notified at the appropriate stage, and a high level of care will be maintained towards other children at the nursery while procedures are followed.

Procedures
If a child goes missing from the nursery, the person in charge will carry out a thorough search of all the rooms in the building, outside perimeter and outside spaces. The remaining children will be gathered into one large group, e.g., for a story, while the remaining staff search for the missing child. The register will be checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray. The children will be sensitively asked whether they have seen the child who is missing, as will all adults, so that it can be established who was last to see the missing child, when and where. Senior management will be notified immediately.

Doors and gates will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could exit the premises. If the child lives within walking distance of the setting, one adult should make the journey on foot to see if the child is walking towards home.

The person in charge will talk to staff to establish what happened. If the child is not found the parent / carer will be contacted (alarming them as little as possible) and the missing child will be reported to the police.

Lost Child on Outing Procedure
If a child goes missing from an outing, where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the nursery will ensure the following procedures are put into place:

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing a headcount will be taken to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.

The most senior member of staff will contact the police using the school issue mobile phone and report the child as missing.

Management should be informed if they are not on the outing. Where possible, a member of the senior management team will make their way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff.

The proprietor of the nursery will contact the child's parent / carer (alarming them as little as possible) who should make their way to the venue as agreed with the person in charge.

In an indoor venue, the staff will contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.

When The Child is Found

Two members of staff will care for and talk with the child, bearing in mind that he/she may have been afraid and distressed and may now need comfort.

After The Incident
A full report will be written up (see below) and Ofsted will be informed about the incident.

Investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried
- Nursery manager to speak with parents
- Senior Management team carry out full investigation taking written statements from all staff who were on the outing
- The manager writes an incident report detailing:

    1. The date and time of the report
    2. What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff member responsible
    3. When the last child was last seen in the group
    4. What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing
    5. The time estimated the child went missing

- A conclusion will be drawn as to how the breach of security happened
- The insurance provider informed
- Policies and procedures to be updated, along with staff training, to ensure this does not happen again,

People management
Missing child incidents are extremely worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incidents is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible. The staff will feel worried about

the child; especially the member of staff who was responsible for the child whilst on the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time that the child is missing increases. The Nursery Manager should ensure that staff feel supported while they are feeling vulnerable.

The parents will feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame staff and single out one member over others; they may direct anger at the nursery manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent there should always be more than one member of staff present. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated and, when necessary, police should be called.

The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for the children need to focus on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.

UNCOLLECTED CHILD PROCEDURE

1. Every effort must be taken by the EYFS Lead Practitioners to contact the parents/guardians/designated people as soon as possible.

2. If none of these people can be contacted, then the emergency person will be contacted to collect the child from school. At this stage, either the Nursery Manager or Director will be informed.

3. EYFS Lead Practitioner will wait 1hr after the official closing time (in this case waiting until 7pm) of the nursery.

4. If all attempts to contact a parent/legal guardian, designated person or emergency contact fail, then the registered people in charge (Lucy Meyer or Ramona Cristea) should inform the local authority, duty social worker of the situation without delay (refer to Safeguarding Policy for details).

5. It will be up to the duty social worker to take charge of the situation and to decide what happens next and whether the police need to be involved in helping to trace the parent/guardian of the child.

6. If the parent/guardian or other designated person cannot be found, the duty social worker will arrange for the child to be placed temporarily with foster parents until the situation is resolved.

Updated: October 2026

Lucy Meyer (Director)