

Missing Child – November 2025

All precautions are taken to ensure children are safe and secure on the premises at all times. Precautions are also taken if children are taken out to school or on a visit. To maintain security we will:

- Make sure the register is updated as soon as children arrive or leave the nursery.
- Make regular checks throughout the session to ensure all children are accounted for.
- The use of an outdoor register may be used so you know where each child is located.
- Make sure all staff know how many and which children are present at all times.
- Staff to be responsible for the group allocated to them, regular head counts.
- Ensure that children are within visual range of staff at all times.
- Whilst on short walks children will remain with nursery staff at all times, where needed staff/child ratios will be exceeded.
- Keep garden gates secure.
- Make sure the security door is kept closed.
- Make sure fire escapes are secured and the alarms are switched on at all times.
- Complete daily checks of gates, doors and fencing and report/repair any issues immediately.
- A copy of this procedure is carried out every time staff take children out of the Nursery as well as emergency contact details for each child.
- In the event of a missing or lost child the most senior member of staff present will take charge of the situation and follow the procedures below.
- Ensure remaining children are safe.
- Coordinate a search for the missing child.
- Escalate to telephone the police if the child is not found within 5 minutes.
- Ensure parents, senior staff at Charlie Caterpillars and other relevant parties are kept informed.
- Ensure follow up investigation is completed.

More detailed descriptions of these activities are below.

The remaining children are safe:

Children in the garden will be taken into the play rooms.

Children and staff out walking must return to the nursery as soon as possible.

A full headcount of all children will be taken against the details recorded in the register.

There is a coordinated search for the missing child:

Identify the lost child.

The premises, garden and immediate area are searched thoroughly and quickly by any staff available.

The most senior member of staff should be informed immediately and all communication and coordination should be through them.

Staff will escalate to the Police using 999 or other agencies if needed if the child cannot be found within 5 minutes. This will normally be the most senior member of staff but any staff member can telephone the police if needed.

If the Police are called, they will take over the search and investigation

The most senior person in the nursery should notify the child's parents/carers and a the Managing Director as soon as possible.

If the children are on an outing:

Identify the lost child.

Safeguard the other children by sitting them somewhere safe and remaining calm.
Check the nearby area. If you have enough staff organise a mini search around the area.
Only search for 5 minutes.

If this is not successful telephone the Police using 999 and follow their instructions.

Continue to look for the child while waiting for the Police.

Nursery to inform the Manager of what has happened giving them as many details as possible.

The Manager will keep in contact with the Parents to make them aware of what has happened and what action has been taken to locate their child.

When the child is found, the child will be comforted and checked for injuries. The Accident Procedure will apply for any injuries.

A full investigation into the matter will take place and the issue will be reported to external bodies as required.

If a child is lost for a short period of time and found without the need to inform the Police:

The child should be comforted and checked for injuries. The Accident Procedure will apply for any injuries.

The Manager will inform the child's parents about the incident as soon as possible.

The Manager will inform the Quality and Development Manager and Managing Director as soon as possible.

A full investigation into the matter will take place (concluded within 14 days where possible) and the issue will be reported to external bodies as required.

Following any incident:

The Children's Work Director or the Quality and Development Manager will liaise with Ofsted to decide if the incident is reportable.

The Quality and Development Manager, Nursery Manager, a Director, and any other suitable member of staff will liaise with the parents to discuss the incident.

The Director, Quality and Development Manager and Nursery Manager (when applicable) will fully investigate the incident, write a report and carry out a review of the safety procedures in the Nursery. A copy of this report, plus any action plan will be forwarded to OFSTED in line with legislative requirements.