Missing Child and Uncollected Child Policy

Policy Statement
At Rooftops Montessori Nursery, we are committed to ensuring the safety, security and wellbeing of all children attending the nursery.

The nursery recognises that the loss or unaccounted absence of a child is an extremely serious safeguarding incident requiring immediate action, clear communication and effective emergency response arrangements.

The nursery therefore maintains robust systems designed to:

- Prevent children from going missing
- Maintain safe supervision arrangements
- Respond rapidly and effectively to missing child incidents
- Manage uncollected child situations safely
- Protect children from harm
- Support staff, parents and children appropriately following incidents

This policy outlines the nursery's arrangements for preventing and responding to missing child and uncollected child incidents and operates in accordance with:

- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

The nursery is committed to maintaining high standards of safeguarding, supervision and child protection.

Scope
This policy applies to:

- All children attending the nursery
- Employees, agency staff, students and volunteers
- Contractors and visitors where relevant
- Nursery premises and outings
- Forest school, educational visits and external activities

Definitions
Missing Child
A child whose whereabouts are unknown and who cannot be accounted for immediately.

Uncollected Child
A child who has not been collected by an authorised adult within a reasonable period after the agreed collection time.

Absconding
A child intentionally leaving supervision or attempting to leave a supervised area without permission.

Emergency Escalation
The process of contacting emergency services and safeguarding agencies where a child's safety may be at risk.

Responsibilities
The Registered Provider and Management Team Will:

- Ensure suitable safeguarding and supervision arrangements are implemented
- Maintain secure premises and access controls
- Ensure staff receive appropriate safeguarding and missing child training
- Ensure emergency contact information is maintained
- Oversee incident management and escalation procedures
- Liaise with police, safeguarding authorities and Ofsted where required
- Conduct investigations and post-incident reviews

Staff Will:

- Always supervise children appropriately
- Conduct regular headcounts and register checks
- Follow security and collection procedures
- Report concerns immediately
- Implement missing child procedures without delay where necessary
- Support and reassure children during incidents

Parents/Carers Will:

- Provide accurate emergency contact details
- Inform the nursery of authorised collectors
- Notify the nursery regarding collection delays
- Follow nursery collection and security arrangements

Preventative Safeguarding Measures

The nursery recognises that prevention is the most effective way to reduce missing child risks.
The nursery will therefore maintain:

- Secure entry and exit arrangements
- Supervision procedures
- Daily attendance registers
- Signing in and signing out procedures
- Headcount arrangements
- Staff ratio monitoring
- Visitor management systems
- Outings risk assessments
- Collection password systems where appropriate

Children will only be released to:

- Parents/carers
- Authorised persons identified by parents/carers

Where concerns arise regarding collection arrangements, children will not be released until verification is completed.

Supervision and Ratios

Children will be always supervised appropriately.
Consideration will be given to:

- Transitions between areas
- Outdoor play
- Toileting arrangements
- Sleep areas
- Educational visits
- Forest school activities
- Children with SEND or additional vulnerabilities

Regular headcounts will be completed:

- During transitions
- Before leaving rooms or areas
- During outings
- On returning from outings
- During emergency situations

Security Arrangements

The nursery will maintain suitable security measures including:

- Keypad or controlled access systems
- Secure perimeter arrangements
- Door release controls inaccessible to children
- Visitor sign-in procedures
- Monitoring of entry and exit points

Staff must remain vigilant regarding:

- Unauthorised persons
- Open doors or gates
- Tailgating through entrances
- Security defects

Security concerns must be reported immediately.

Outings and External Activities
Outings and external activities will be risk assessed appropriately.
Control measures may include:
- Enhanced staffing ratios
- High-visibility clothing
- Headcounts
- Emergency contact information
- Assigned key children
- Defined boundaries and meeting points
- Use of walking ropes or buggies where appropriate

A designated lead person will oversee safety arrangements during outings.

Missing Child Onsite Procedure
If a child is identified as missing from the nursery premises:

1. The member of staff identifying the concern must immediately inform management or the most senior person present.

2. A rapid and coordinated search of:
- The nursery premises
- Outdoor areas
- Toilets
- Sleep areas
- Storage areas
- Immediate surrounding areas will begin immediately.

3. Staff will:
- Remain calm
- Continue supervising remaining children appropriately
- Reassure children where necessary
- Conduct headcounts and register checks

4. Parents/carers will be informed immediately once initial checks confirm the child is unaccounted for.

5. Police will be contacted immediately where the child's whereabouts remain unknown.

6. Staff will provide:
- Recent photographs where available
- Clothing descriptions
- Relevant medical or vulnerability information

7. The manager or designated person will liaise directly with:
- Police
- Parents/carers
- Safeguarding authorities where required

8. Ofsted will be informed of serious incidents in accordance with reporting requirements.

Missing Child During Outings Procedure
If a child goes missing during an outing:

1. The designated lead person will be informed immediately.

2. Staff will:
- Conduct immediate headcounts

- Supervise remaining children appropriately
- Search the immediate area promptly

3. Police/security personnel will be contacted immediately where necessary.

4. The nursery will contact parents/carers and provide updates.

5. A staff member will remain available to:
- Meet emergency services
- Continue searching where appropriate
- Coordinate remaining children safely

6. Where required:
- Additional staffing support may be requested
- The outing may be terminated

The welfare and supervision of remaining children will remain a priority throughout.

Missing Child During Emergencies or Evacuations
During emergencies, evacuations or lockdown situations:
- Registers and headcounts will be completed immediately
- Missing persons will be identified rapidly
- Emergency services will be informed immediately
- Staff will follow emergency procedures and police guidance

Further details are contained within:
- Fire Safety and Emergency Evacuation Policy
- Critical Incident and Business Continuity Policy

Uncollected Child Procedure
If a child is not collected at the agreed collection time:
1. Staff will attempt to contact:
- Parents/carers
- Authorised emergency contacts

2. The child will remain supervised and always reassured.

3. Two members of staff will remain with the child wherever reasonably practicable.

4. If contact cannot be established within a reasonable timeframe, management will assess safeguarding concerns and determine whether escalation is required.
5. Where necessary, the nursery may contact:
- Children's Social Care
- Police
- Safeguarding authorities

The nursery will always act in the best interests of the child's safety and welfare.

SEND and Vulnerable Children
Additional safeguarding arrangements may be implemented for children who:
- Have SEND needs
- Have communication difficulties
- Have behavioural or absconding risks
- Require medical support
- Have reduced awareness of danger

This may include:
- Additional supervision
- Individual risk assessments
- Enhanced headcount arrangements
- Specific collection procedures

Communication and Media
Only authorised persons may communicate externally regarding incidents.
Staff must not:

- Speak to the media
- Share information on social media
- Discuss incidents inappropriately

Confidentiality must be always maintained.

Recording and Investigation
All missing child and uncollected child incidents must be:

- Recorded appropriately
- Investigated thoroughly
- Reviewed by management
- Risk assessed following the incident

Records may include:

- Time identified
- Actions taken
- Persons contacted
- Police involvement
- Outcome of incident
- Corrective actions implemented

Post-Incident Review
Following any incident, the nursery will:

- Conduct a review of events
- Identify lessons learned
- Review supervision and safeguarding arrangements
- Update risk assessments where necessary
- Implement corrective actions
- Provide support and reassurance to affected persons

Additional safeguarding referrals may be made where concerns are identified.

Staff Training and Awareness
Staff will receive appropriate instruction and training relating to:

- Supervision arrangements
- Missing child procedures
- Outings safety
- Safeguarding responsibilities
- Emergency escalation arrangements

Training may be provided:

- During induction
- Through refresher training
- Following incidents or lessons learned

Monitoring and Review
The nursery will monitor:

- Supervision standards
- Security arrangements
- Incident trends
- Near misses
- Outings procedures
- Safeguarding concerns

Corrective actions and improvements will be implemented where necessary.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner following:

- Missing child incidents
- Safeguarding concerns
- Changes in legislation or guidance
- Significant operational changes

The nursery is committed to maintaining safe, secure and well-supervised environments for all children.

Rooftops Nursery works with external advisors and internal leads to ensure safety standards are upheld.

Health and Safety Advisor:
Supply Me Ltd
support@supply-me.co.uk
0113 4790810

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually to ensure staff, children and visitor health, safety and welfare is continually promoted in the organisation.

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