

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement: Child Protection

Providers must have and implement a policy, and procedures, to safeguard children.

1.5 Active2Learn Academy Missing child

Policy statement

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our outings procedure and our exit/entrance procedure, to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Child ratio: 2 childminder to four children while on visit/ outing, if working with assistants and or registered childminder of Active2Learn Academy.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the childminder alerts Suffolk **Childcare Agency (SCA)**.
- Checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Our Staff team will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If the child is not found, we will call the police immediately and then **SCA Agency** reports the child as missing. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police and **SCA Agency** are informed of this.
- The parent(s) are then called and informed.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing are given to the police.
- Our staff team to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- Our staff team will contact **SCA Agency** and reports the incident. **SCA Agency** will carry out a visit to our provision immediately to carry out an investigation, with our childminders where appropriate.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when we have taken a small group on an outing, leaving our other childminder and/or other staff back in our setting premises.

- The lead childminder calls the police and report the child missing and call the parent then call our agency, **SCA Agency**.
- The childminder does a thorough search and where possible alert the vicinity.
- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.

- One lead childminder member searches the immediate vicinity, but does not search beyond that.
- Our lead childminder staff member on the outing contacts the police and reports to our **SCA Agency** that child as missing.
- Our lead childminder is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- Our childminder on the outing contacts the parent(s).
- Our childminder take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible.
- According to the advice of the police, a senior childminder member of staff, or our the lead childminder where applicable, should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing are given to the police.
- We will inform our **SCA Agency** contacts and reports the incident. **Our Agency** and designated person come to our premises immediately to carry out an investigation, with our team (where appropriate).
- We will keep calm and not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- **SCA Agency** are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- **Our SCA Agency** carries out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and volunteers who were present.
- **Our SCA Agency** together with a representative of our management team speaks with the parent(s) and explains the process of the investigation.
- The parent(s) may also raise a complaint with us or **SCA Agency**.
- Each member of Childminder, and staff present writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the incident.
 - Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue.
 - Which staff/children were in the premises/on the outing and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the premises/or on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - What has taken place in the premises or on the outing since the child went missing.
 - The report is counter-signed by the senior childminder member of staff and the date and time added.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, include interviewing staff and parents. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, **SCA Agency** is advised.
- The insurance provider is informed.

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 key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. 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. Ensures that any staff / childminder under investigation is not only fairly treated, but receives support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame our staff and may single out one staff team over others; they may direct their anger at our **(SCA agency)**. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of Childminder were possible one of whom is the lead childminder and the other should be our representative of the setting. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against our staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. Our staff team 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 team may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. We will use our discretion to decide what action to take.
- Our staff team must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.