Missing Child Policy

Aim

At Alamiyah Montessori we take the security and safety of children very seriously. Child safety and security is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off site. The outings procedure and the exit and entrance procedure ensures the security of children is maintained at all times.

Approach

The following systems are in place for the protection of the children:

- An accurate and up to date register is kept of both children, adults and visitors, when they enter and leave the premises.
- Full time children are registered twice a day, at the start of each session.
- All exits from the premises are locked/guarded in a way that makes it impossible for a child to leave unobserved/unattended whilst allowing rapid exit for the whole group in the case of an emergency,
- Information about new children is sought from parents/carers about particularly adventurous children so that the setting is forewarned.
- No unauthorised adults are able to enter the setting.
- Both parents and children are informed where they may go and not go.
- Children are continuously inducted into the rules of the setting and the reasons for them.
- Parents and staff work together for the safety of all the children within the setting.

Procedure

Should a child go missing, the following steps should be taken:

1. Headcount

Take a headcount of all pupils. Take a quick register, checking that all children marked present are accounted for.

2. Alert the Manager

If a child is missing, tell the manager, who will then check with other staff as to when and where the child was last seen.

3. Register

Bring all the setting children together in each class calmly in a safe place supervised by two members of staff and one person takes the register.

4. Check Building and Site

The manager will direct one or two+ staff (depending on ratios) to check the building and site thoroughly.

5. Inform Police

If the above steps do not locate the child, the police must be called. The Manager will call the police after the site has been checked and after no longer than 5-10 minutes. They have the resources to conduct a search and speed is important. The Manager/Director will be responsible for meeting the police and the missing child's parent/carer. The Manager will coordinate any actions instructed by the police, and do all they can to reassure the parents/carers.

6. Inform Parents

Alarming parents as little as possible, call the child's parents/emergency number to let them know that their child is missing. Remember that the parents will need advice and support once informed.

7. Check CCTV Footage

As soon as a staff member is available, CCTV footage at the setting should be replayed to see where the child may have gone.

8. Continue to Widen the Search

While waiting for the police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. Continue to search, using a wider area if necessary, while keeping in touch at all times by mobile phone. If there is a possibility that the child could have left the site (if the security gate was open during a pick up or drop off time) one adult could search the immediate vicinity to catch up with the child if possible.

Informing other people

Make regular checks to ensure that all necessary phone numbers are at hand, correct, up to

date and kept all together.

1. Ofsted

Ofsted will be contacted and informed of the incident

2. Social Services

Tell the social services department if you have to call the police giving the following information:

- What systems are in place to prevent such an incident
- What happened
- What you did, at what time and what order
- Whom you informed and when

They will want to conduct their own investigation.

3. Trustees

The Trustees must be informed as soon as possible.

4. Insurance Company

The insurance company must be informed as soon as possible.

Recording the Incident

When the situation has been resolved the manager should review the reasons for this incident, do a risk assessment, complete the “missing child form” and ensure measures are taken to ensure that the situation does not arise again. The Manager must write an incident report with corrective action to be filed in the Accident and Incident file.

It is important to write up even if the child is found sound safe within a few minutes. Include in the report how the child was able to leave undetected, the role played by the adults involved in this incident, the last definite sighting of the child and anything that day about the behaviour of the child or any other children.

Dealing with people's reactions

It is important to be very careful from the beginning about the words being used to talk to people about the incident.

Don't say anything which might invalidate your insurance by implying that you accept liability. However, don't appear uncaring:

a. Offer sympathy

b. Explain that a full investigation is in hand

c. Explain that the social services have been informed and will also be investigating.

The child's parents may be frightened, distressed and could be angry. By talking to parents when a child starts the setting about safety issues and procedures may help all to work together within a framework of mutual trust and understanding.

Dealing with the media

Distressed parents may contact the local press, or reporters might hear if the police are involved. It is sensible for one person to speak to the press. Advise all adults to refer anyone with questions to the agreed spokesperson.

Informing other parents

Other parents need to be given a brief and accurate account as soon as possible to prevent gossip. This can be done by circulating an email statement and a short note/short meeting when they arrive to collect their child. The important thing is to enlist the support of the whole setting community and ensure it does not happen again.

When the child is found

During the time a child is missing, however brief, all adults involved may suffer great fear, guilt and distress. It is not always easy to control all these emotions when the child is found. It is important to remember:

d. That the child might need comfort

e. That the child might be completely unaware that anything is wrong.

f. That this provides a good opportunity to talk to the children to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises and why.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner or if there is any change in statutory guidance or legislation. See 'Policy Review Schedule'

Adopted in a meeting at Alamiyah Montessori on 08/09/2025

Last Reviewed: 07/10/2026

Signed by Nasim Bobat (Manager) and S Motara (Nominated Person)

on behalf of Alamiyah Montessori

Legal Framework

With reference to -
Statutory Framework for the EYFS (Sept 2026)