

# Montessori Home School Hub Ltd

## Missing or Uncollected Child Procedure

Approved by:  
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Next review due by: January 2026

### Policy Statement

The safety and welfare of every child is our highest priority. We take a variety of precautions to ensure that our children are accounted for at all times when in our care, including registration, close supervision, ongoing risk assessment, and ensuring that access doors are kept closed and secured. All staff and parents on-site are responsible for keeping children safe.

### Precautions Taken

- The setting door is always kept closed and locked unless manned.
- The setting door is always manned by staff at drop-off and collection times.
- When the door is opened to a visitor, staff ensure that no child leaves through the door at the same time as the visitor enters.
- Each child is registered first thing in the morning and after lunch by a member of staff.
- Staff maintain the appropriate high level of supervision throughout lessons and are aware of the location of the children in their care at all times.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are appropriately supervised.
- On trips, the NSPCC best practice staff-to-child ratio is met, and regular head counts and registers are taken.
- Children are handed over to their parents or carers at the end of the day at the door.
- Parents are required to inform staff in advance if their child is being collected by another adult.

Parents are asked to provide the following specific information when joining the setting:

- Home address and telephone number plus a second contact number in case the parent is unavailable.
- Mobile telephone number (if applicable).
- Alternative contact details if for any reason the usual contact numbers are not applicable.

### Procedure for a Child Going Missing During the Day from the Setting:

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child is found to be missing, we will carry out the following actions:

- Take a head count and register to ensure that all the other children are present.
- Report immediately to reception or Ben.
- Ben to check that doors are secured and look for signs of entry/exit.
- Ask all adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child.
- Occupy all the other children in their setting with a quiet activity in one place.
- Begin an immediate and thorough search of the building and gardens, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, toilets, etc., for a maximum of 10 minutes.
- If after 10 minutes the missing child has not been found, Ben will dial 999 and ask for the police, before contacting the parents to notify them of the situation and ask them to come to the setting at once.
- On the police's arrival, the formal responsibility of the search will pass to the police, but staff will make themselves appropriately available to assist with the incident.

- The DSL will inform Front Door for Families and the LADO.
- The setting's insurers will be informed.
- If the child is seriously injured, a report will be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

During the course of the investigation into the missing child, the setting, in consultation with the LADO, will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff, and other children.

#### **Once the Child is Located:**

- Talk to, take care of, and, if necessary, comfort the child.
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises or separate from a group on an outing.
- Ben or Philippa will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident (having discussed this beforehand with the LADO if necessary).
- Media queries should be referred to Ben (after discussion with the LADO if appropriate).

#### **On a Trip:**

In the unlikely event that a child cannot be accounted for whilst on a trip, staff will follow these actions:

#### **Immediate Action:**

- Ben will gather the children together and take a head count and register to ensure that all the other children are present.
- Ben would visually search the immediate vicinity keeping the other children safe in the process.
- Ben would contact the children's parents who should make their way to the venue at once.
- Ben will request that all entrances and exits of the venue are closed.
- Ben to call via mobile, Philippa for assistance.
- Ben will visually search the vicinity for a maximum of ten minutes.
- If the child has not been found, Ben will dial 999 to alert the police.

#### **Within the Following Hour:**

- Philippa will take the remaining children back to the setting if child ratios can be maintained.
- Ben will stay to fully cooperate with the police investigation on-site.
- Continue with the same procedure as if a child were missing from the setting.
- Should a child go missing on an outing in an outside area, police and parents will be notified immediately.

#### **Recording:**

After an incident involving a missing child, Ben (or, in their absence, Philippa) will carry out a full investigation. The investigation will involve all concerned providing written statements covering time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened, the length of time the child was missing, and how they appeared to have gone missing. The investigation and following report will aim to look for improvements to the setting policy and procedures to avoid further occurrences of the incident.

#### **Late or Non-Collection of Children:**

Parents who are persistently late in collecting children: The setting aims to find out the reasons behind the late collection and will arrange a meeting with the parent to try to establish:

- Whether this is a short-term or long-term problem.
- Why the parent is persistently late.
- What the setting may be able to do to help.

If the issue is long-term or significant, we may need to get support from local children and family services. We aim to be empathetic and solutions-focused, but we must also emphasise to parents their responsibility to collect their child on time.

If the setting has been unable to contact parents at the end of the day, we may ask for alternative contact details (e.g., a grandparent or neighbour).

Ben will be available to answer the setting phone after the end of the day in case parents try to get in touch. If a child is regularly not collected, we will work with social services to address the problem. Persistent failure to collect a child from the setting could constitute neglect. If our efforts to resolve the issue with parents aren't successful, we will make a formal referral to social services.

**Procedure for Uncollected Child:** In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of a morning/day, we put into practice a set of procedures. We ensure that the child is cared for safely by an experienced and qualified member of staff who is known to the child. We will ensure that the child receives a high standard of care to cause as little distress as possible.

**If a Child is Not Collected 15 Minutes After the Session Ends:**

- Emails and mobile phones, are checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
- If no information is available, parents/carers are contacted at home or work.
- If this is unsuccessful, the adults authorised by the parents to collect their child, and whose telephone numbers are recorded, are contacted.
- All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or nominated carers.
- The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on our contact form or in their file.

**If No-One Collects the Child One Hour After Closure:**

- We contact our local authority, Children's Social Care. The number for all child protection concerns is the Front Door for Families 01273 290400 (Mon - Thurs: 9.00-5.00, Fri: 9.00-4.30). Outside of these hours: Emergency Duty Service 01273 775905/01273 335906.
- The child stays with Ben until collected by the parents or a Local Authority Social Care Worker.
- Social Care will aim to find the parent or relative. If they are unable to do so, the child will become looked after by the local authority.
- Under no circumstances will staff go to look for the parent.

**Recording:**

After an incident involving an uncollected child, a full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file, including a written record of all attempts to contact the parents/guardians and a log of all other calls and responses.

**Training:**

Staff are made familiar with this policy on induction, and it is discussed with staff annually.