** Avon Small Saints Pre-School’s**

**Missing Child Policy**

**Policy statement**

Children’s safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times, both on and off premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the outings procedure and the 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 as follows.

**Procedures**

###### *Child going missing on the premises*

* As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the staff will alert the Pre-school Manager.
* The Manager will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
* The Manager calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent.
* The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
* Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
* The Manager talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
* The Manager contacts a trustee and reports the incident. The trustee comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the management committee where applicable.

***Child going missing on an outing***

* As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff 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 staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
* The Manager is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident recorded.
* The Manager contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
* The Manager contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting.
* Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
* In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue’s security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
* The Manager contacts a trustee and reports the incident. The trustee comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation.
* The Manager or a member of staff may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

**If parents are present on an outing they are responsible for their own child.**

###### *The investigation*

* Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
* The Manager together with the trustee, speaks with the parent(s).
* The management committee will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
* The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
* The date and time of the report.
* What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
* When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
* What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
* The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
* A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
* If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children’s social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
* The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
* In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
* The insurance provider is informed.

###### *Managing people*

* Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger. The Manager needs to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
* The parents will feel angry. No matter how understandable the parent’s anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police will be called.
* The remaining staff need to be focused on the remaining children’s 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, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The management committee will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
* Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.