



## **Lost or Uncollected Child Policy**

### **Statement of Intent**

The Oak Montessori has the highest regard for the safety of the children in our care - from the time they arrive until they leave. Staff are aware of the risks associated with a young child getting lost during any given session, whether they are learning indoors or outdoors.

### **Lost Child**

Even when all precautions are properly observed, emergencies can still arise. Therefore staff will undertake periodic head counts, especially at the transition points between sessions (in addition to the registration procedures set out in the Arrival and Departures policy). If for any reason a member of staff cannot account for a child's whereabouts during a session, the following procedure will be activated:

- The member of staff in question will inform both the Manager and the rest of the staff team that the child is missing and a thorough search of the entire premises will commence. Staff will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.
- The Manager will nominate a member of staff to search the area surrounding the premises. All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the setting.
- If after 10 minutes of thorough searching the child is still missing, the Manager will inform ID Verde (management of Wimbledon Park), the police and then the child's parent/carer.
- While waiting for the police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, staff will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children at The Oak Montessori.
- The Manager 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 she/he can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers.
- Once the incident is resolved, the Manager and the staff team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes (paying particular note to the relevant provisions of the setting's Site Security and Risk Assessment policies).
- All incidents of children going missing from The Oak Montessori will be recorded in the Incident Record Book, and in cases where the police or the children's social care have been informed, Ofsted and the insurance provider will also be informed, as soon as is practicable.
- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. The parents may feel angry and fraught. The staff may blame themselves and feel anxious and in distress. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, the Manager and the Classroom Leader. It needs to be ensured that the staff under investigation are treated fairly and receive support while feeling vulnerable. Aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated and the police will be called in such circumstances.



## **Uncollected Child**

At the end of every session, the The Oak Montessori will ensure that all children are collected by a parent, carer or designated adult, in accordance with the Arrival and Departures policy. If for some reason a child is not collected at the end of a session, the following procedures will be activated.

- If a parent, carer or designated adult is more than 15 minutes late in collecting their child, the Manager will be informed.
- The Manager will call the parent, carer or designated adult, and use any other emergency contact details available in order to try to ascertain the cause for the delay, and how long it is likely to last.
- Messages will always be left on any answer phone requesting a prompt reply.
- While waiting to be collected, the child will be supervised by a member of staff who will offer them as much support and reassurance as is necessary.
- If, after repeated attempts, no contact is made with the parent, carer or designated adult, and a further period of 60 minutes has elapsed, the Manager will call the Police non-emergency telephone number for advice.
- In the event of the Police being called, the Manager will attempt to leave a further telephone message with the parent/carers or designated adult's answer phone, where available. If the child is taken from the setting to a place of safety, a note in an envelope, for the parent/carers or designated adult will be left on the door of the premises. The note will reassure them of their child's safety and ask them to call The Oak Montessori's phone number or Police phone number.
- Under no circumstances will a child be taken to the home of a member of staff, or away from the premises unless absolutely necessary.
- The child will remain in the care of The Oak Montessori until they are collected by the parent, carer or designated adult, or until alternative arrangements are initiated by the Police.
- Incidents of late collection will be recorded by the Manager and discussed with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity. Parents and carers will be informed that persistent late collection may result in the imposition of a fine or the loss of their child's place at The Oak Montessori.
- Ofsted may be informed.

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Policy written in June 2019  
Natasha Rawdon-Rego

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