



FOREST ROW COMMUNITY PRE-SCHOOL POLICY

10 LOST CHILDREN

Forest Row Community Pre-school aims to provide a secure environment for pre-school children at all times (see also policies on Health and Safety, Accidents and Emergencies and Child Protection). Staff make every effort to closely monitor all children at all times whether inside the hall or in the garden.

Special outings require a ratio of 1 adult to 2 children. This is the minimum requirement and the staff/committee should encourage extra parents/carers to join in the outing. For each type of outing the Pre-school will carry out a full risk assessment and taking into account the nature of the outing will consider whether it is appropriate to exceed this ratio. The pre-school obtains written parental permission for children to take part in outings. Pre-school staff take essential records and equipment on outings, including contact telephone numbers for the parents of the children on the outing, a mobile phone and a first aid kit.

In the setting, the legal ratio of adults to children is 1 to 4 for under-3 and 1 to 8 for older children. Forest Row Community Pre-school follows the minimum and aims to have a higher ratio of adults, by keeping to a ratio of 1:6 and in addition having a parent helper. This high ratio of adults to children at all times enables the Pre-school to be confident in the knowledge that all the children are accounted for at all times.

There is always a member of staff at the main entrance when the children arrive to prevent any child slipping out after their parents.

At the end of each session there is a member of staff at the doorway of the quiet room to ensure children are met by the correct parent/carer.

A register is taken every morning to record the presence of all children, staff and helpers. The total number of children is posted on the wall, and further headcounts are made at key times such as milk time, and when children return from outdoor play.

During each session the door to the garden is closed at all times, unless a member of staff can accompany children outside. Outside, the gate is padlocked for every session (this is to be checked at the start of every session). The main door is locked and chained at the start of each session, and remains so throughout the session, opened only by a member of staff.

On departure, a member of staff is at the doorway of the quiet room and the main entrance to ensure that each child leaves with the correct adult, and is unable to slip past unaccompanied. This is backed up with verbal instruction and a departure book indicating that the child is to go home with somebody else.

Action in Case of Missing Child from the Setting

In the unlikely event that a child becomes separated grouping the setting the following will apply:

- The register will be taken to identify the missing child
- The supervisor will allocate duties to the staff to a) entertain those children present b) execute a thorough search of the immediate vicinity, with the assistance of any volunteers/helpers present
- If a child is definitely missing, the Supervisor will contact the police and the child's parents immediately (asking the parent to bring a recent photograph of the missing child)
- Continue with the search until a satisfactory outcome

Action in Case of Missing Child from an Outing

In the unlikely event that a child becomes separated from the group on an outing where parents are not attending and are responsible for their own child, the Pre-school ensures that the following will apply:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity.
- The supervisor is informed, and if she is not on the outing will make her way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff.
- Staff will take the remaining children back to the setting.
- The supervisor contacts the child's parents (s) who should make their way to the venue.
- The staff contact the police using the mobile phone and report the child as missing.
- The supervisor contacts the chairperson of the management committee who will come down to the venue as soon as possible.
- Continue with the search until a satisfactory outcome.

The Investigation

The management committee chairperson will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were on the outing.

The supervisor writes an incident report detailing:

- The date and time of the report;
- What staff/children were in the pre-school/outing;
- When the child was last seen in the pre-school/outing;
- What has taken place in the pre-school/outing since then; and
- The time it is estimated 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. Social Services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address **and the Pre-School must follow the Safeguarding procedure (ie contacting the Local Authority Designated Officer).**

The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements and is recorded in the incident book. OFSTED is informed. The Insurance Department at the Pre-School Learning Alliance is informed.

Action in Case of an Un-attending Child

In the unlikely event of a child not arriving for their allocated session the following will apply:

- We ensure parents/carers are made aware that they should contact Pre-school to inform staff of their child's absence at the start of session.
- Should we not hear from the parent/carer by the end of session the Supervisor will telephone the contact number given.
- If the child does not attend their next session and Pre-school or the Supervisor has not heard from the parent/carer the Supervisor will again try to contact them using the contact number and other emergency contact numbers.
- Should no contact be made by either parties the Supervisor at their discretion will revert to the **Action in Case of Concern for a child** in our Child Protection Policy.

Date Prepared	Reviewed	Next Review
November 2002	March 2004	March 2006
Re-written October 2007		April 2008
Amended April 2010		