**Banwell Buddies Lost Child Procedure**

If a child goes missing from our setting or from our care outside the setting, the following actions will be carried out:

* The Leader on duty carries out a thorough search of the building, garden and grounds, ensuring the correct ratio of staff stay with the remaining children.
* The deputy on duty checks the register to make sure no other child has gone astray.
* Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
* If the child is not found, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.
* The Leader on duty talks to staff to establish what happened.

**The Investigation**

* The Management Committee Chairperson carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time.
* The Leader on duty writes an incident report detailing:
  + the date and time of the incident
  + which staff/children were in the group.
  + when the child was last seen in the group.
  + what was taking place in the group.
  + 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. The local Children’s Social Care department may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
* The Incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995); 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.
* Where deemed necessary our Insurance company is informed.

**Managing People**

* Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
* The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
* Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid.

Setting leaders need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable

* The parents will feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the setting leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the setting leader and the other should be the Chairperson of the Management Committee or representative, or the proprietor. No matter how understandable the parent’s anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
* The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their 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 counseling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The Chairperson or proprietor will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
* Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice

This Policy was adopted at the meeting of: \_\_\_\_\_\_Banwell Buddies\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Held on: \_\_\_\_\_\_26th June 2015\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Signed on behalf of the Committee: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Role of Signatory: Chair of Management Committee

Last update 26/06/2015