



# AUTUMN COTTAGE CHILDCARE

# LOST/MISSING CHILD POLICY

*Issued: April 2026 Next Review: April 2027*

## INTRODUCTION

Autumn Cottage Childcare (AC) recognises that the care of each child is paramount and will always try to ensure that they are safe and supervised by a staff member. However, there are circumstances, in particular in busy places, where a child may become lost. This Policy details the procedures that will be followed by AC staff in this unlikely event.

## CHILD MISSING ON AC PREMISES

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the Key Person/staff member alerts the setting Manager on Duty.
- Staff are re-deployed to attend the other children, ensuring correct adult: child ratios are maintained.
- The Register is checked to make sure no other child is missing.
- The Manager on Duty will ascertain when and where the child was last seen.
- The Manager on Duty and assigned staff members carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- Doors and gates are checked for a breach of security: allowing a child to wander out or an intruder to have entered the setting.
- If the child is not found, and/or it is suspected the child may have been abducted, the Police are called, and the child reported as missing.
- The Manager on Duty will give a recent photo and what the child is wearing to the Police.
- The parent(s) are informed.

## CHILD MISSING OFFSITE - DURING OUTING etc.

- As soon as a child is noticed missing, the Walk Leader will ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount.
- Indoor venue:
  - The Walk Leader contacts the venue's security who will carry out a wider search.
  - The Walk Leader informs the Manager on Duty and, if the child is not found, the Walk Leader will contact the Police.
- Outdoor venue:
  - The Walk Leader carries out a search of the area where the group has been active.
  - If the child is not found, the Walk Leader will contact the Manager on Duty and contact the Police.
- The Manager on Duty contacts the parent(s), who make their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the Walk Leader (unless already present as part of a Whole Setting Outing).



- The Manager on Duty, or Walk Leader will remain at the venue to assist the Police.
- Other staff take the remaining children back to the setting or to a secure area at the venue.

## **FURTHER ACTIONS**

### **Other Parties**

- If the incident warrants a full Police investigation, all staff will co-operate fully.
- If the incident raises a Child Protection issue, Children’s Social Care may be involved.
- The Local Authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution under relevant legislation.
- The Insurance Provider is informed.

### **Recording and Investigation**

- The Manager on Duty carries out an investigation and records the findings on an Incident Form on the EY Work system and reports the incident to Ofsted.
- If the findings identify staff disciplinary action, Ofsted is again informed.