

Missing Child Policy

At Tir na nOg Preschool we take all necessary precautions to minimise the likelihood of children going missing while in the care of our service and provide the correct procedure to follow should that happen.

All children attending Tir na nOg preschool are of equal importance and are cared for equally. Staff are deployed and the building is used in such a way as to minimise the chance of children removing themselves from the main group without being noticed, whilst allowing them a free choice of activities. In this way staff can be made immediately aware of a child needing help or support, and react accordingly.

Procedure:

- Children are welcomed into the service by a designated member of staff
- A member of staff remains on duty by the door throughout the arrival and departure period of Tir na nOg Preschool and until all parents and carers have left the premises.
- The main door is kept secure at all times when a member of staff is not on duty at the entrance. The door leading into the entrance hall is also kept secure.
- Children's times of arrival and departure are noted on the roll book, and a note is made if a child is to leave early or with another adult.
- Staff are deployed throughout the setting during the session, ensuring that no child is left alone for any period of time without an adult being aware of their location.
- The outdoor area is supervised.
- The outdoor area is securely fenced and the gate secured at all times.
- The rooms in which the children play are never left unsupervised/out of vision of staff members.
- A member of staff remains on duty within the room at all times, unless all the children and staff are in the outdoor area together.

- If all staff and children are outside and a child needs to come inside a member of staff will accompany them.
- No unauthorised person is allowed gain access to the service.

In the event of a member of staff not being able to locate a child on the premises:

- The premises will be searched thoroughly and immediately
- The register will be called to determine which child(ren) are missing
- The grounds surrounding the premises will be searched.
- The Manager will call the local Garda station.
- The Manager will inform the parents
- A full and thorough review of procedures and practices will take place to determine how the incident occurred and changes will be made if appropriate.

In the event of a 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 person/parent 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 contacts the local Garda station and reports the child as missing. Then follow their instructions
- The manager contacts the parents, who make their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed if they are not already with the group.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting if applicable.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the local Garda Station if the child is not found.
- A full and thorough review of procedures and practices will take place to determine how the incident occurred and changes will be make if appropriate.