**Missing Child Policy and Procedure**

**Statement of intent**:

This procedure has been created to provide clear guidance as to the process that we would adopt. Every care of each child in our responsibility is at the centre of all that we do. This procedure will be reviewed termly.

**Aim**

In the event that a child became lost or missing we will take every step to minimise the time taken between becoming aware of the situation and putting into effect the procedure as outlined below. Spire Pre-School has the following system in practice to ensure that a child is unable to leave the group unaccompanied.

 \* All exits from the premises are locked in a way that makes it impossible for a child to leave unobserved, while allowing rapid exit for the whole group in case of an emergency.

 \* During arriving and departing times all exits from the premises are guarded in a way that makes it impossible for a child to leave unattended.

 \* An accurate and up to date register is kept at all times and both adults and children, including visitors, are signed in and out whenever they enter or leave the premises.

 \* Key persons of new children take special care to ensure that both children and their parents know where they may go and may not go and where entry and exit points are situated. Key persons will also seek advice from parents of children new to the group so that they are forewarned about particularly adventurous children.

 \* All children are taught the rules of the group and the reasons for them.

 \* Staff works together with parents for the safety of all children in the group. Parents are made aware of the group's safety policy and are encouraged to alert a member of staff if they notice a child whose behaviour suggests he/she may be thinking of trying to leave.

Spire pre-school will continuously seek advice from the local authority and OFSTED regarding issues within the group.

 \* The group will also regularly make its own risk assessments in consultation with parents so that all the adults in the group are aware of any potential dangers and can work together to avoid them.

In the best regulated situations, however, accidents can and do happen. These are the procedures that our pre-school will follow if a child cannot be found:

1. Check the sessions register by bringing the whole group back to the registration area and recheck the records.

2. Ask all present when the missing child was last seen and by whom. Collect any details regarding clothes the child is wearing to provide and accurate description of the child.

3. One member of staff to check all rooms, cupboards and obvious hiding places.

4. Put into place CODE RED

5. Contact parents - using contact details held on file, check information collected as described in (2) above with parent.

6. Inform the police using 999 of the situation providing all contact details of parents, pre-school and to provide description of child.

7. Inform social services & Ofsted of situation, contact details of which are held in our records.

In the event that this situation arose whilst on an outing our adult/child ratio would be higher and, depending on the location of the visit, a pre-determined convening point in which to meet would be agreed before the group split.

Up to point (2) above we would also, if appropriate, involve the management/security of the area/facility that we were visiting to assist in a full search of the area, which when completed would lead us to (5-7)

**When a missing child is found**

Spire pre-school understands that during the time a child is missing, however briefly, all the adults involved - parents and others - suffer great fear, guilt and distress. It is not always easy to control these emotions when the child is found. It is important for all involved to remember the following:

 \* The child may also be afraid and distressed and need of comfort.

 \* The child may be completely unaware of having done anything wrong.

 \* That the incident provides a good opportunity to talk to all the other children to ensure that they must not leave the premises and why.