

## **Response Procedure NO 1 – Missing Child**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

When a child is lost the first few minutes are vital since the longer they are missing before a search is initiated, the larger the initial search area has to be. Fortunately, they tend to wander to areas that they are familiar with. It is important for someone who knows the child best to predict where they may have gone (e.g. do they have an allotment, grand-parent's house, fascination for water).

The same principles and actions can be carried out if a child is lost during local walks from the Pavilion, forest school or on a major outing. For a major outing, a specific risk assessment should have identified specific arrangements for that location, however the same principles apply.

- Confirm the details and identify the missing child
- Ensure the safety of the remaining children, move them to a place of safety as soon as possible
- Search the immediate areas properly but swiftly
- Raise the alarm as soon as possible after it is confirmed that the child is missing
- Continue to search whilst waiting for emergency support
- Provide assistance to the emergency support

**Annexes A, B and C** can be used for any location.

### **2. RISKS**

We have identified that the biggest risk is the river and traffic on the main road (B6521).

### **3. RESPONSE**

**Annex A** details a simple and logical response methodology, for incidents in Grindleford at the pavilion and in the village away from the pavilion. This response is supported by **Annex B and C**.

### **4. EMERGENCY SUPPORT**

4.1. Police. Once called out, it is likely that the nearest community police officer will be sent round to the pre-school. This could take anything from 10 – 30mins. He will then assess the situation and call for support. It could take another 30 - 60mins for back up to arrive. They will not automatically call out mountain rescue.

4.2. Edale Mountain Rescue Team (EMRT). Once called out, team members who live locally will often arrive within 10 minutes. It will take 90 minutes for a full team

## Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup - procedure

response, and for them to be ready to complete a full search, often including search dogs. EMRT have agreed that we can call them directly, rather than relying on the police to call them.

### 5. WORKING WITH PARENTS

If the parent of the missing child arrives, they must be given utmost attention, but this shouldn't be allowed to have a detrimental effect on the search plan. Ideally a member of the committee should host the parent and keep them updated at every stage. Ideally, they can assist with **Annex C** (i.e. assessing where the child may have gone). Their wish to also search for themselves must be respected and accommodated.

### 6. DEALING WITH REMAINING CHILDREN

If the search extends for more than 30 minutes and requires the attention of all the staff, the Coordinator may seek advice from the Police and EMRT whether it would be prudent for the parents to be notified and asked to collect their children as soon as they are able.

### 7. PREPAREDNESS

The following should be ready for use by the Co-ordinator:

- Annex A, B and C available on a clip board
- Mug shot photos of all children for Annex C
- Fully charged Pre-school mobile phone with emergency contact numbers and committee members numbers stored in the contacts list
- Map of local area

Committee members should ensure that the pre-school mobile phone number and other committee members phone numbers are stored in their mobile should they need to contact them as part of this procedure.

This procedure should ideally be exercised on an annual basis. This should include staff and committee member training including dealing with parents in stressful situations and what to do if you find a child in a potentially dangerous position (for example on the other side of a steep river bank).

### 8. SUMMARY

In our location, the response times of any agencies are not quick enough to find a child before they can get into trouble. This is why it is vital that the pre-school is pro-active and initiates our own search whilst waiting for assistance.

This procedure was adopted at a meeting of Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup.

## **Grindleford and Eyam Playgroup - procedure**

Held on:

Date to be reviewed:

Signed on behalf of the committee:

Name of signatory:

Role of signatory:

All staff, volunteers and committee members will sign to indicate they have read, understood and agreed with the above policy.