

Attendance, Lost and Missing

Child Policy

At Ringle Rainbow we take the upmost care of every child and make sure that they are safe when in our care. This policy is to cover procedures in the unlikely event a child goes missing in our care.

Attendance and Registration

Ringle Rainbow Nursery uses BabysDays to record and monitor children's attendance throughout the day. Accurate attendance records are essential to ensure that children are accounted for and that the nursery can identify and respond promptly when a child is absent or cannot be located.

Staff are responsible for ensuring that:

- children are signed in promptly when they arrive;
- children are signed out promptly when they leave;
- BabysDays accurately reflects which children are present;
- staff remain aware of the number and whereabouts of children in their care;
- headcounts are undertaken regularly throughout each session; and
- additional headcounts take place at key transition points, including when children move between rooms, go outside, return indoors, leave the nursery premises and return from outings.
- The Nursery Manager is responsible for ensuring that attendance records are maintained accurately and that any concerns about attendance are followed up.

Unexplained Absence and Attendance Checks

Ringle Rainbow Nursery recognises that an unexplained absence may be an indicator that a child or family requires support or that there may be a safeguarding concern.

Parents/carers are expected to inform the nursery if their child will be absent from a planned session. Where a child is expected to attend but has not arrived and the nursery has not received prior notification, the following procedures will apply.

Morning sessions

If a child has not arrived for their expected morning session and the nursery has not been notified of their absence, a member of staff will contact the child's parent/carer at 9:00am.

Afternoon sessions

If a child has not arrived for their expected afternoon session and the nursery has not been notified of their absence, a member of staff will contact the child's parent/carer at 2:00pm.

The contact will be made using the telephone number recorded on the child's BabysDays record.

Staff will:

- Attempt to contact the parent/carer.
- Record the attempted contact and the outcome on BabysDays.
- If the parent/carer cannot be contacted, consider contacting the child's emergency contacts.
- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL if the absence remains unexplained or there are any concerns about the child's welfare.
- Consider the child's individual circumstances, vulnerabilities, previous attendance patterns and any existing safeguarding concerns.
- Where appropriate, seek advice from or make a referral to Children's Social Care or request a police welfare check.
- If a parent/carer informs the nursery before the child's expected session that the child will be absent, the 9:00am or 2:00pm contact will not normally be required.

However, where the nursery has concerns about the reason for the absence, the pattern of absence or the child's welfare, the matter will be referred to the DSL and managed in accordance with the Nursery's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

All attempts to contact parents/carers and emergency contacts will be recorded on BabysDays.

There is no single period of absence that automatically determines that a child is at risk. Staff and managers will use professional judgement, taking into account the child's individual circumstances and any known safeguarding concerns.

The following systems are in place to minimise the risk of a child going missing from Ringle Rainbow:

Security and Site Safety

- Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the nursery and surrounding areas are secure at all times.
- The main door into the nursery are kept always locked. Parents, carers and visitors must use the doorbell to request access. A member of staff will then open the door and allow them into the nursery.
- When a member of staff is available at reception, they will monitor access to the front door. When reception is unattended, the front door remains locked and the doorbell must be used.

- All garden gates are kept securely locked. Outdoor areas have high fencing to prevent children from climbing over or leaving the designated areas.
- Staff are responsible for signing children in and out using BabysDays and the paper register located in the paper file rack on the wall.
- Parents and carers are reminded that they must supervise their children at all times, particularly during arrival and departure. They must ensure that a member of staff is aware when their child arrives and leaves the setting.
- Parents and carers will be accompanied by a member of staff to the exit. The main door must be securely closed after they leave and locked.
- A password system is used when someone other than the child's parent or carer is collecting the child.
- Staff must greet and confirm the identity of the designated person collecting or bringing a child to the setting.
- The setting holds contact details for all parents and carers, including two emergency contact numbers for each child.
- Every member of staff is responsible for being aware of the number of children present. Regular headcounts are carried out throughout each session.
- The key person for a new child will take extra care to know the child's whereabouts and help them understand the boundaries of where they can and cannot go within the setting.
- Parents and carers are informed about the setting's security procedures. They are given opportunities to discuss any concerns during the settling-in period, particularly where their child may be more adventurous or likely to explore.

In the event of a missing child at the setting, the following procedure will be implemented:

The safety and welfare of children is our highest priority. If a child is found to be missing from the setting or cannot be accounted for, staff will act immediately and follow the procedure below.

Immediate Action

The member of staff who identifies that a child is missing must inform the Nursery Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.

The Nursery Manager will establish:

- when the child was last seen;
- where the child was last seen;

- who was supervising the child;
- the child's clothing and any distinguishing features; and
- whether the child has any additional needs, medical conditions or vulnerabilities that may increase the risk to them.

The Nursery Manager will ensure that all other children remain safely supervised. A member of staff must remain with the other children at all times.

Searching the Setting

Staff will carry out an immediate and thorough search of the setting, including:

- all rooms and play areas;
- toilets and changing areas;
- cupboards and storage areas;
- sleep areas;
- outdoor areas;
- garden areas;
- behind or underneath furniture and equipment; and
- any other place where a child may be hiding or could have gained access.

Staff will check the BabysDays register to confirm the child's attendance and ensure that the child has not been incorrectly recorded as having left the setting. Staff will check all doors, gates, entrances and exits to establish whether the child may have left the setting. The Nursery Manager will organise a coordinated search of the setting and any immediately surrounding areas that are safe for staff to search. Staff must not place themselves or other children at risk while carrying out the search.

Contacting Parents/Carers and Emergency Services

The child's parent/carers will be contacted as soon as practicable and kept informed of the situation.

If there is any immediate concern for the child's safety, or if the child cannot be located promptly, the police will be contacted immediately by calling 999. Staff must not delay contacting the police in order to complete a 30-minute search.

The Nursery Manager will provide the police with all relevant information, including:

- the child's name, age and photograph;
- a description of the child;
- clothing worn;
- the child's last known location;
- the time the child was last seen;
- any medical conditions, additional needs or vulnerabilities;
- information about people who may be known to the child; and
- any other information that may assist the search.

Where appropriate, the Nursery Manager/DSL will contact Children's Social Care and follow the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Partners.

Once the Child is Found

When the child is found, staff will ensure that they are safe and well. First aid or medical assistance will be provided if required.

The parent/carers will be informed immediately that the child has been found.

The Nursery Manager/DSL will establish the circumstances of the incident and record:

- the time the child was reported missing;
- where the child was last seen;
- the searches undertaken;
- staff involved;
- who was contacted and when;
- when and where the child was found; and
- any actions taken following the incident.

An incident/accident record will be completed and shared with the parent/carers as appropriate. The parent/carers will be asked to sign the record to confirm that they have been informed.

Reporting and Follow-Up

The Nursery Manager will consider whether the incident meets the criteria for notification to Ofsted and will make any required notification within the required 14-day timescale.

The DSL will consider whether the incident raises any safeguarding concerns and will make any necessary referral in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

Following the incident, the Nursery Manager will carry out a full review of what happened, including:

- supervision arrangements;
- staff deployment;
- attendance procedures;
- security of doors and gates;
- the effectiveness of the search;
- any environmental or individual risks; and
- whether changes are needed to prevent a similar incident occurring again.

Outings

In the event of a child becoming separated on an outing the following procedure would be implemented immediately:

- The staff member who notices the child missing will check with other staff members whether they have seen the missing child and initiate a search of the immediate area.
- The staff will gather all other children together in one place so that a thorough search can take place.
- The staff on the outing will alert the Nursery Manager at the setting that a child is missing and the nursery manager will notify the parents/carers of the situation.
- In the unlikely event that neither of the above results in the safe return of the child within a reasonable space of time (30 minutes), then staff will call the police using 999 give your name, location, name and description of the child, name of the nursery and any other relevant information.
- Notes will be made of the circumstances surrounding the disappearance, details of clothing worn and any distinguishing features, in order to help police with their investigations.
- An investigation will take place. Staff must remain calm and focussed on the other children in their care and not discuss the incident in front of them. Staff should reassure them at all times.
- The Nursery Manager will speak with parents. The management team will complete written statements from all staff who were on the outing.
- The Nursery Manager will complete an incident report, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing, signed by the parent / carer with a copy given to parents /carers.
- The Nursery Manager will inform Ofsted within 14 days and follow any advice/instructions given.

Ringle Rainbow Nursery uses BabysDays to log children's attendance and monitor their whereabouts throughout the day. Accurate records are essential to ensure children are always accounted for and to support reporting if an incident occurs.

If a child is identified as missing, staff must immediately alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Charlotte Baldock, or Deputy DSL Penny Reidy or Safeguarding Officer Jack Nash. A missing child is treated as a safeguarding emergency in accordance with KCSIE 2025.

All incidents involving a missing child will be reported to Ofsted and relevant external agencies following statutory procedure