


Learning in Nature CIC & Beccles Forest Schools



Missing Persons Policy

Safeguarding and Welfare Requirement:

3.35 Staffing arrangements must meet the needs of all children and ensure their safety. Providers must ensure that children are adequately supervised, including whilst eating, and decide how to use staff to ensure children's needs are met. Providers must inform parents and/or carers about how staff are organised, and, when relevant and practical, aim to involve them in these decisions.

This policy was adopted by:	Learning in Nature CIC & Beccles Forest Schools
Date of adoption:	4th August 2025
Date to be reviewed:	4th August 2026
Signed, on behalf of the provider:	
Name of signatory:	Rach Whitwood
Role of signatory:	Co-Director

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Old School House, Barsham, Beccles, Suffolk, NR34 8HA

Company Number: 11747933

Ofsted URN: 2610910 Setting ref: 2610909



Policy Statement

At Beccles Forest Schools, keeping children safe is our utmost priority. In order to ensure their safety, children are not permitted to leave the site unless given express permission to do so by a Forest School Leader (in case of emergency, for example.) The main gate to the site is clearly visible from the Forest School and Early Years areas. If children venture unaccompanied outside the EY area or along the path to the gate, they must be closely observed by Forest School staff and called back/intercepted if necessary.

Parents/carers of children aged 8 years and older need to let leaders know in advance if their child is to make their way home independently at the end of a session. All other children must be collected by a named adult.

Please see Appendices for the legal framework and definitions upon which this policy is written.

Procedures

How we make sure we know where everyone is:

- Ensure site boundaries are clear and that children know not to cross these unless they are accompanied by or have permission from and have informed a Forest School adult - remind children of boundaries at the start of each session (and during if necessary)
- High staff-child ratios to facilitate vigilance, usually 1:5
- Always at least 2 staff members in attendance during drop-off sessions
- Staff allocation to designated areas and key workers keeping track of children's movements and engagement.
- Direct communication between staff (for example, using walkie talkies) to check all areas are covered if staff movement is required (for example, to support 1:1) and ratios are maintained.
- Constant observation, communication and flexible staff roles - if a child is seen to be leaving the main learning area, staff to call on management for back-up so the child can be observed, supported and re-engaged, if needed.
- Rapid response procedure if the whereabouts of any child is not immediately known (walkie talkie check).

If a child is thought to be missing (if no Leader knows of their whereabouts):

- Leaders walkie-talkie all staff to redo head-count and register
- If a child is still missing, call '123 where are you (name)' and adults search areas where they are working. If there is no answer, do wolf call to gather all children at a meeting point and sit down

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- Repeat head-count
- Leader to ask all other people present when and where the child was last seen.

The rest of children stay by the central area under supervision of staff while:

- The 1st delegated adult runs and checks the last place seen, then checks areas of greatest risk on site (areas with access to dyke, under trees, through reeds, by main gate, areas with deadwood, etc.), calling the child's name - other adults present also called on to search, where possible.
- Check site perimeters & areas on Beccles Common by the main gate.
- If appropriate and staffing allows, 3rd delegated adult to check on Beccles Common.
- Call 999 for police support.
- Contact parents using emergency contact procedure, and ask if they have any idea where the child might go if they ran away.
- Ask parents to check these places, come to the site or head home - whatever police advise as the best course of action.
- Rest of children to resume play (with no 'risky' activities) under staff supervision.
- Non-supervising staff to continue searching and speak to parents and police, issuing updates and notifying others as soon as the child is found.

After the event:

Forest School Leaders and any other adults involved work together to complete an Incident Report. In this event, we would re-assess policies and procedures to prevent future incidents.

Ongoing Commitment to Preventing Missing Persons

At Beccles Forest Schools, the safety of children is our utmost priority. We regularly review our approach to issues such as missing persons to ensure we have the procedures in place should an incident like this occur.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Statutory Guidance and Legal Frameworks

Department for Education (2024) *Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for group and school based providers*, Available at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf (Accessed 4th August 2025)