



# Missing Child Policy

Updated  
October 2021

## Procedure in the Event of a Missing Child

This Policy applies to the entire setting including the EYFS.

The safety of our pupils is our priority whilst they are in our care at school. This policy sets out our procedures for dealing with the unlikely event of a child going missing.

### Responsibilities

**It is the Headmaster's responsibility** to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of this policy, to ensure relevant staff are aware of their responsibilities, what is expected and the procedures to follow and to ensure that the policy is reviewed on a timely basis.

**It is the responsibility of all staff** to read the policy and act at all times according to its guidance.

**It is the responsibility of parents** to ensure they provide correct and updated contact information on a timely basis and know the procedures for handover of their child at the beginning and end of sessions.

**It is the responsibility of Directors** to ensure they are aware of the school's procedures and to challenge/support the school in its review of this policy.

### Procedures aimed at reducing risk of a missing pupil

Updated contact information for parents and carers is sought and maintained.

#### Start of the day

- Ensure parents are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of their child passes from staff to them and vice versa.
- Clear procedures for welcoming pupils into the early rooms and school.
- Pupils can check in to a 'Drop off' session in Guilford Hall between 7.40-8.00 and will then be escorted to Study Skills, clubs and early morning care on the court or in Kerruish Hall if the weather is inclement. All children attending from 8.00am should be handed over by the parent directly to the Headmaster who is waiting to welcome the children and from there they go onto the court or to study skills. Pupils arriving after 8.05 am and too late for study skills should be handed over to the teacher on duty on the hard court.
- Registration begins at 8.30am and closes at 8.40am. Both Junior and Infants pupils are escorted from the playground, Study skills, cross country, fencing and music practice to their classrooms by the staff in charge of the activity or duty.
- On rainy days pupils should be escorted directly to Kerruish Hall if arriving before 8.30, and their classes if after 8.30am
- Nursery pupils are escorted to their classrooms by parents/carers.
- Reception children arriving between 8-8.30 am are to be handed over to the Headmaster and then escorted by older children to their classes
- The side gate is always locked from 8.45. The main entrance gates are locked at 8.45am.

#### During lesson time

- Class teachers register their classes promptly and accurately - mornings and afternoons.
- All staff must ensure that the external gates to any outside area are locked at all times.
- If pupils leave the classroom to work in other parts of the school teachers ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times and all pupils are accounted for on return to the classroom.

#### Play time

- Duty staff are in the playground before pupils come out to play.
- External gates are locked.
- Staff patrol areas in playground.

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- We have an appropriate staff ratio for play time.

### **Dinner time**

- As above.
- All staff to sit with their classes at lunch until they go out to play
- Two members of staff on lunch break duty.
- SMT available at lunch time if required.

### **Home time**

- Gates opened at 3.00pm to allow access for parents.
- Pupils in EYFS Nursery class are collected by their parents from outside the Nursery.
- Pupils in EYFS Reception class are collected by their parents from the classroom and this is monitored by the class teacher.
- Staff (Years 1-6) have sight of parent before they release a child.
- Parents will park and go to collect their child from OUTSIDE the classroom and pupils (Years 1-6) inform staff that their parent has arrived so staff are aware that they are leaving.
- After ten minutes, staff escort pupils who are not collected to after school care or clubs
- Any uncollected children still unaccounted for by parents and not in clubs or after school care are to be escorted to office where parents will be phoned.
- With written permission from parents, Year 6 may leave school unaccompanied
- Children involved in after school activities like sport or clubs will be handed over to parents by the member of staff managing the activity.

### **Visits**

- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff/pupil ratios (no less than one staff member to ten pupils- see policy for Off Site Visits for staff ratios - section 6.4) are provided when pupils leave the school premises.
- Adequate communication contact and a list of pupils/groups to be taken on visits out of school.
- Mobile phones taken on every visit and mobile contact numbers left at school.

### **After School Clubs**

- Register of pupils with contact numbers and details of how the pupils are to go home and who with are provided for the Club organiser from the reception.
- Pupils not collected from clubs should be escorted to the office.

### **Procedures in the event of a child going missing.**

#### **In the event of a member of staff fearing that a child has gone missing while at school**

- Member of staff who has noticed the missing child will calmly check with the office who might have knowledge of the missing child and then inform the nearest member of the SMT.
- Staff will promptly but calmly round up all pupils to a pre-arranged area (NAME THE AREAS) and a designated member of staff will read the group a story.
- Staff will count and name check all the pupils present against the register while the group are assembled in one place.
- AT THE SAME TIME all other available staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises and notify the SMT member if the child is found immediately.
- A thorough check of all exits to be made to make sure all gates/doors were monitored and there are no other ways a pupil could have left the school. If something is discovered this needs to be drawn to the attention of the staff immediately.
- CCTV will be reviewed.
- If the child has not been found by the time the register check is completed the SMT member will notify the Headmaster or next most senior member of staff.

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- The safety and care of other pupils is paramount so the security of the school and the number of staff remaining to supervise the other pupils in the school must be adequately maintained while the search continues.
- If the child has not been found after a thorough search, then parents should be notified by the most senior member of staff left in school. The Headmaster or next most senior member of staff on site will decide at which point the police need to be contacted, but no more than one hour. When contacting parents or carers please ask them to bring with them a recent photo of their child.
- **INFORM THE POLICE**
- Staff must try to remember and write down a description of what the child was wearing and any distinguishing features.
- Emotional support should be available to all children during this difficult time.
- If the missing child has any special medical or learning needs then these need to be noted to be disclosed to police or other agencies.

### **In the event of a member of staff fearing that a child has gone missing while off school premises:**

- Visit leader must ensure safety of remaining pupils. At least one staff must stay with them and a parent if attending.
- One or more adults should immediately start searching for the child.
- Visit Leader should contact school to alert them.
- If the child is not found within five minutes, Visit Leader must contact police by phoning 999.
- Visit leader should alert school that the police have been contacted and school will make arrangement to notify parents, after which procedures above to be followed.

(To be used in conjunction with the Crisis Policy. NB contacts with media).

### **Sandcastles Nursery - Missing Child Policy**

Please note that the term 'parents' also relates to carers and those with legal guardianship of children.

This policy applies to Sandcastles Nursery, including 'early', 'late' and 'wrap around care' and all staff, volunteers, children and visitors to Sandcastles Nursery Setting.

At Sandcastles Nursery children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the outings procedure and the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedures are followed.

#### **Child going missing on the premises**

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff member alerts the setting manager (Mrs Sarah Reynolds) and the Headmaster (Mr Lawrence Groves).
- The setting manager and Headmaster will carry out a thorough search of the buildings, gardens, toilets and field.
- The register is checked to make sure that no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If the child is not found, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.
- The setting manager and Headmaster talk to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The Headmaster carries out an investigation.

#### **Child going missing on an outing**

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the setting manager, Headmaster and/or other staff back in the setting. If the setting manager or Headmaster has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person 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 setting manager or leader contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The setting manager or Headmaster contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the setting manager/Headmaster. The setting is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the setting.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- If absent, the setting manager contacts the Headmaster and reports the incident and an investigation is carried out.
- The setting manager, Headmaster or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

### The Investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried. The setting manager together with the Headmaster speaks with the parent(s).
- The Headmaster carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing
  - The date and time of the report
  - What staff/children were in the group/outing
  - The name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child
  - When the child was last seen in the group/outing
  - What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing
  - The time it is estimated that the child went missing
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements. The local authority and Safety Office may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is also informed.

### Managing People

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible
- The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or designated carer responsible for the safety of that child. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of the time the child is missing increases.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Setting leaders need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the setting manager. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the setting manager and the other should be the Headmaster. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
- The other children are also sensitive as to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The Headmaster will use their discretion to decide upon which action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press or media without taking advice.