

EARLY YEARS MISSING CHILD POLICY

Updated September 2021

Every effort is made to ensure the safety of every child whilst they are in our care at school. This policy sets out our procedures. *Please also refer to the Child Protection Policy in the Staff Handbook.*

RESPONSIBILITIES

- It is the Headteacher'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 the child at the beginning and end of sessions.
- It is the responsibility of Governors to ensure they are aware of the school's procedures and to challenge/support the school in its review of this policy.

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF A CHILD BEING LOST:

START OF THE DAY AND BEFORE SCHOOL CLUB:

- 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.
- Front and Back Gate entrance to be used between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm.
- Staff mark registers promptly and accurately – mornings (8.40am), afternoons (1.15pm), at the end of the day or at the start of after school sessions (3.45pm) and when the child is collected to go home.
- There is an EYFS risk assessment in place for BSC.
- EYS ratios are adhered to at all times and the children are fully supervised at all times.

DURING THE DAY

- Regular headcount of children throughout each session, particularly on entering and exiting the building prior to and following outdoor play.
- Early Years children are fully supervised at all times, including free-flow sessions and travelling between different school locations.
- Updated contact information for parents and carers is sought and maintained.
- External class doors leading onto the playground areas are shut before and after playtime and lunch time. The external doors (in to the play areas) in the Early Years classrooms are open throughout the day, to allow the children to go outside during continuous provision. All outdoor play areas are completely secure. The children are fully supervised at all times.

OUTSIDE TIME/LUNCH/PLAYTIME

- When children are outside they are protected by fencing and gates and are supervised by adults, according to appropriate ratios.
- Early Years children are fully supervised at all times.



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HOMETIME

- Early Years staff hand children to the adult collecting them.
- All parents are to inform the class teacher or school office in the event of their child being collected by someone other than themselves. This information is recorded on the end of day register. The school secretary will email this information to the class teacher if the parents report in to the school office.

VISITS

- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff/pupil ratios are put in place/provided when pupils leave the school premises.
- Contact details are taken on visits out of school.
- Staff ensure that thorough written risk assessments are completed. Staff also complete a preliminary visit at least two weeks before the visit. Early Years staff take the school mobile on trips and visits.

AFTER SCHOOL CARE

- All exits from the premises are locked/guarded in a way which makes it impossible for a child to leave unobserved/unattended, while allowing rapid exit for the whole group in the case of an emergency.
- An accurate and up-to-date register is kept.
- Special care is taken to ensure that children know where they may and may not go.
- All children in the group are told the rules, and the reasons for them.
- Prominent notices alert any visitors to the need to keep doors closed and to the reason for this.
- Parents and staff work together for the safety of all the children in the group. New parents are helped to take an active role by being made aware of the group's safety procedures and by being encouraged to alert a member of staff if they notice a child whose behaviour suggests that they might be thinking of trying to leave.
- EYFS ratios are adhered to at all times.

PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF AN EARLY YEARS CHILD GOING MISSING

In the best regulated situations, however, accidents can and do happen. These are the procedures that are followed if we cannot find a child:

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 inform the nearest class teacher or senior member of staff.
- Staff will promptly but calmly round up all pupils and take them into the Year One classroom and a designated member of staff will supervise the group.
- Staff will count and name check all the pupils present against the register while the group are assembled in one place.
- Classmates and friends should be asked of the child's whereabouts and any relevant information noted. Also, where and when the child was last seen.
- **AT THE SAME TIME** all other available staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises and notify the class teacher if the child is found immediately. A check is to be made with the



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school office for any further information which may have arisen as a result of a recent phone call to explain the absence.

- The CPO, Head teacher or Heads of Juniors should be informed and an incident form opened and the time recorded by them.
- A base will be made in the school office from which the search will be co-ordinated, and will include the assistance of the maintenance and grounds staff. Phones will be taken by all searching staff. The JLT will decide on search areas for appropriate staff.
- A thorough check of all exits to be made to make sure all gates were shut 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 staff immediately.
- If the child has not been found after 15 minutes from the initial report of them as missing then parents should be notified. The Head of Juniors or next senior member of staff on site will decide at which point the police need to be contacted, remembering that speed is important. When contacting parents or carers please ask them to bring with them a recent photograph of their child.
- Staff must try to remember and write down a description of what the child was wearing and any distinguishing features.
- 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 the remaining pupils.
- One or more adults should immediately start searching for the missing child.
- Visit leader should contact school to alert them.
- If the child is not found within **5 minutes** the visit leader must contact police by phoning 999.
- Visit leader should alert school that the police have been contacted and the school will make arrangements to notify parents/carers, after which procedures above to be followed.

In the event of a member of staff fearing that a child has gone missing **from After School Club**:

- The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child's absence is soon discovered. Know how many children should be present and make someone responsible for regular counted checks.
- Search Systematically - The after school club staff are responsible for the missing child and also for the other children in the group. Gather the remaining children into one large group – having a story, perhaps, with one adult – while the rest search. Inform the duty member of JLT immediately.
- Without alarming them, ask the children whether they have seen the child who is missing. They can sometimes be a useful source of information.
- Check that all the adults are present and that all know the problem. It is useful to establish, if you can, who last saw the child, when and doing what.
- Check every room in the building and also any accessible outside area.
- Alarming them as little as possible, call the child's parents to warn them that the child may be attempting to get home.



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- If the above steps do not locate the child, the police must be called. They have the resources to conduct a search and speed is important.
- The Accident and Incident Book - This is important, even if, as is likely, the child is found safe within a few minutes. The Accident and Incident book provides an invaluable ongoing record of potential hazards as well as actual accidents. Include in the record the last definite sighting of the child and anything unusual that day about the behaviour of that child or of any other children.

When the child is found:

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 all these emotions when the child is found. It is important to remember:

- That the child also might have been afraid and distressed and might now be in need of comfort.
- That the child may be completely unaware of having done anything wrong.
- That the incident provides a good opportunity to talk to all the children to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises, and why.
- Record & report the incident to the HOD.

September 2022

Ryan King

Head of Early Years



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