

## Procedures for lost children in Early Childhood to be used in conjunction with SDSS Missing Child Policy

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**Approved by:** ECD

**Reviewed by:** Anja Toddington in consultation with ECD  
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### On the premises within the school buildings or grounds:

#### Gathering information

Once it is established that a child is missing from the group (e.g. out of sight for more than 5 minutes) all staff in the vicinity are informed and all children remain, or are taken, inside to wait with staff. Staff endeavour to maintain staff ratios of adults to children.

One staff member will leave the group to look for the child, inform the office (by phone if appropriate) and engage other available staff in the search (such as office and maintenance staff.) The member of staff searching will question any other pupils or adults who are immediately to hand and who might be able to provide reliable information.

#### Searching the site

**The office will** (as per main school guidance) assign two people to initiate a search. **The principle is to start at the most potentially hazardous area, the main road, and work their way back in through the school grounds.** One person goes to the eastern extremity, the white gate, the other to the western extremity, the Old Totnes Road.

#### Both searchers will:

Start by looking along the road to see if the child can be seen. They will question anybody around to ask if the child has been sighted. Then work their way in towards the southern perimeter (ECD and Horseshoe area) whilst keeping a long and short range lookout and asking anyone they meet. Both will then report back to the office. If the pupil is still not found an office staff member will go and inform the teacher who reported the missing child, to discuss the matter further.

**If the child has not been found within 15 minutes**, a staff member from the office will call the emergency services, and the missing child's home, or the emergency contact numbers given to the school.

If the situation demands it, all parents will be called and children might need to be collected early. Staff proceed on the basis of Police advice and will cooperate fully with Police and school investigations.

### **Off premises - on a walk or outing:**

Once it is established that a child is missing from the group (e.g. not present at a head count) all the staff in the group must be informed, all remaining children are taken to a nearby safe place together, to wait with staff. Staff endeavour to maintain staff ratios 1:8. The staff will question the pupils and each other, then search the immediate area around them, ensuring safe supervision of the remaining children.

**If the child is not found within about 10 minutes**, a staff member will phone the school office **01803 897377** and request an additional staff member to come and help. The office will call the emergency services and the child's home, or the emergency contact numbers given, as appropriate.

**A mobile phone and register will always be carried on all outings off-premises.** The office is informed when a class leaves the premises and the class teacher ensures that the register for the class is with reception. In the event of a phone not working, a staff member will go to the nearest private house to phone for help.

Emergency cover will be arranged, if necessary, to take the remaining children back to school. The group will return to kindergarten together, or follow police advice.

If situation demands it, all parents will be called and children might need to be collected early, or they will be informed if the class is likely to return later than expected.

Staff will co-operate fully with Police and school investigations.

### **After an incident in which a child is lost, on or off the premises:**

The incident is recorded on a Serious Incident report form. The incident is reviewed in the Early Childhood Department and with the H&S officer, and the relevant policy and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated.

### **Information/advice/guidance:**

- <http://www.southdevonsteinerschool.org/school-policies.html>

### **Compliance:**

- Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE 2016

### **References:**

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- ECD – Policy for Walking outside the School Grounds
- SDSS Missing Child Policy