

Missing Child Procedure (incl. Early Years)

Written by: Marcus Link **Date:** February 2018
Approved by: College of Management **Date:** February 2018
Council of Trustees **Date:** -

Review info: Created in Feb 2018 by ML to meet gap in Attendance and Punctuality Policy and combined with pre-existing "Missing Pupil - Searching the Site Procedure". Minor corrections of language in March 2018 by ML. Adaptions in Early Years aspects after discussion with Early Years Manager in April 2018 by ML.

Date for next review: September 2019

Procedure

These arrangements are in place to ensure a rapid and effective response to a report of a missing pupil during school time.

The above actions should be the school's No.1 priority at that time - urgency of response is the key.

A missing child normally **must take priority over all other activities**. Members of staff who are not teaching will be expected to immediately take part in assisting. If none are free, then depending on the risk involved for the child, it may be that teachers will need to put classes together or release assistants in view of the greater risk to the individual child.

All staff must take responsibility for passing on to reception staff any notification of updated contacted numbers that they receive from parents.

Child absent from school at registration:

1. Mark register with relevant code
 - a. If you are aware of any unusual circumstances make a very visible note for reception staff – or consider sending a child with a note for FAO reception staff (e.g.: child reported to have left home but not arrived, or child's situation / behaviour gives rise to concern about absence)
2. Reception staff will phone home to report absence and ask for explanation.
 - a. Where an urgent message is sent this will be given priority.
 - b. Whether particular concern has been conveyed to reception staff or not (e.g. younger child, child at risk), reception staff will try contact alternative phone

- number followed by mobile phone numbers and emergency contact number. If there is still no response, reception staff will seek out siblings in school.
- c. If no response from the above or no clarity about whereabouts of child, reception staff to consult the Designated Safeguarding Lead or Deputy DSL or School Business Manager whose responsibility it is to escalate the matter accordingly to MASH/ police.
3. Children absent at Afternoon Registration who were present in the morning and have not signed out of school, teachers to:
- a. Ask class mates
 - b. Tell reception staff immediately to start search following the below routine.

Missing child search procedure:

This applies where a child was present at registration and subsequently found to be missing from class – or where there are reports that s/he came to school but was found not to be here at registration:

Teacher - Actions to be taken and completed within 10 minutes:

1. Question known friends or any other pupils or adults who are immediately to hand and might be able provide reliable information.
2. Alert the Reception Office - either by phone or by sending a 'runner', giving all your information on the missing pupil's last known whereabouts.

Office - Actions to be taken & completed within 15 minutes (before ringing the police):

1. Take a note of the time
2. Assign one or more people to check the relevant toilets. While parents may be available and offer to help, staff should always be used wherever possible for child protection reasons.
3. One member of staff to remain in the office to coordinate search.
4. Assign two people to initiate a search:
 - 4.1. one to the eastern extremity, the white gate
 - 4.2. the other to the western extremity, the Old Totnes Road /Bus Lane leading to Velwell Lane and post box
5. Both these searchers will:
 - 5.1. start by looking along the road to see if the pupil can be seen
 - 5.2. question anybody around to ask if they have been sighted
 - 5.3. then work their way in towards the southern perimeter (Early Years and Horseshoe) whilst keeping a long and short-range lookout
 - 5.4. Both will then report back to the office
6. If the pupil is still not found, a member of staff from the office shall go to the teacher who initially reported the missing pupil, and to their class teacher if available, to discuss

the matter further.

Teacher to let office staff know if pupil returns to the class.

7. Once it is clear there is no knowledge of the pupil's whereabouts, the office shall then:
 - 7.1. Talk to a parent of the pupil to check whether they have any information;
 - 7.2. Keep parents informed of the situation and ask for them to go to their home in case the child turns up;
 - 7.3. If anything arises, consider running the information by the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, if not available, another member of the Safeguarding Team.
8. Then contact the police: dial 999 and take actions as they advise.
9. Inform the police after no more than 15 minutes of absence being noticed, or immediately if there are serious concerns taking into account child's age, state of mind, length of time missing and the situation leading up to the absence. (For Early Years children: Police must be contacted no longer than 10 minutes after the child has disappeared.
10. For example, if an Early Years child might be off site, police should be informed immediately. Police to be given photo of child.
11. If staff off-site, staff to return to school premises.
12. Reception staff to remain in contact with police and parents.
13. If the child is found but is refusing to return to school, attempt to stay with the child but contact Reception. It is not appropriate to use any form of physical coercion other than situations as described in the Use of Physical Force Policy; i.e. to prevent a more serious event.
14. Staff will proceed following Police advice.

If on a school trip or Early Years KG walk day:

1. One adult (or more) to stay with the group, keeping them safe whilst one (preferably two) search for the child. KG teachers will phone reception and request support to be sent out. (KG walks are within the vicinity of the school.)
2. Inform any relevant security personnel.
3. Follow the same process as above for informing the Police and parents.
4. Inform the school.

End of School Day: Report of child not returned home

1. Check with After School Sessions / clubs
2. Check with home and ask parents to check homes of classmate, contact class teacher / guardian for clues, last know sighting details
3. Immediate search of grounds
4. If child not found after a further 20 minutes phone Police.
5. Police to be called sooner if there are any suspicious / unusual circumstances – or with children Class 3 and below.

6. When police are notified responsibility is handed over to them.

Important issues:

- Subject teachers must ensure that there are no missing children at the beginning of each class.
- Teachers doing cover must follow the same procedure.
- Photos should be required with application forms.
- Photo must be taken to reception before child starts trial period at the latest.
- When a child goes home during the day Reception staff must SIGN THEM OUT in the log book.

After the incident:

- Any such incidents must be recorded in the incident book and passed on to the HSO.
- A full investigation of the incident will be undertaken immediately.
- Relevant policies and procedures, risk assessments will be reviewed and updated.
- The incident will be reported accordingly (MASH, insurance, DfE, SWSF).
- If relevant, all staff, trustees and parents will be informed of the incident by letter or email as soon as possible after the incident.

Related policies:

- Attendance & Punctuality Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force Policy
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Health & Safety Policy