



Caversham Preparatory School

Policies and Procedures

219 Missing Child Policy

Missing Child Policy

Policy Statement

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out our established procedures correctly to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Collection Policy and the Trips and Outings Policy.

Purpose and Aims of this Policy Statement

To give all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, a clear understanding of how to respond and who to inform should they discover a child is missing. The aims of this policy statement are to:

- provide a clear procedure which is understood and effectively implemented by all staff
- enable the missing child to be located as quickly as possible and given the appropriate level of safety and security commensurate with the pupil's age and emotional/behavioural maturity.

Occasions when a child may go missing

Staff need to be mindful that a child can go missing at any time of the day. Examples are:

From an indoor lesson

This could happen when a child is allowed to leave the classroom unaccompanied by an adult and fails to return, e.g.

- to go to the toilet
- to collect something from his/her bag in the cloakroom
- undertaking errands for the teacher such as taking the register to the office
- going to a different classroom for a lesson

From an outdoor lesson

This could happen when the class are outside with the children spread out and/or engaged in a variety of activities that make it is easy for a child to wander away unnoticed:

- during games lessons on the playground or at Queen Anne's field
- during other outdoor lessons such as a science of art lesson
- during an outdoor club such as gardening
- at the beginning or end of outdoor lessons when children are getting changed or using the toilet, going for a drink, etc.



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Travelling about the school

This could happen when the children are spread out and beyond the teacher's direct supervision:

- going to and from the Reception Classroom before and after assembly
- going to and from Lamda lessons, music lessons, extra support lessons, lunchtime clubs
- going to and from the classroom at the beginning/end of lunch/break times
- going to and from Queen Anne's School for sports, swimming, chapel or theatre

Forest School

- in the woods and not listening for instructions
- moving beyond the 'imaginary' boundary
- walking to and from Balmore Park and straggling behind and unable to catch up

Other Times

- on a school trip
- on Outward Bound

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the staff alerts the Head Teacher.
- The Head Teacher and other staff who are free will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- The Head Teacher talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this. If this initial search does not find the child the teacher shall begin a wider search of the school buildings and grounds including searching public areas in other parts of the school e.g., library, toilet and cloakroom areas, etc. The task of undertaking this search can be done either by the teacher personally or they can delegate this to a member of the support staff depending on the teacher's knowledge of the child including their emotional and behavioural characteristics.
- At all times the rest of the class must be supervised by either the class teacher or a member of the support staff. If appropriate a neighbouring teacher can be asked to supervise the class (as well as their own) to enable both the teacher and the support staff to conduct the search. If this search does not discover the missing child within a reasonable time the teacher must inform the Headteacher (directly or via the school office) of the missing child and the facts surrounding the child's disappearance.
- When the Headteacher is satisfied that the child is not on the premises s/he will instruct the office staff to contact the child's parents and inform them of the situation and to enquire if the child has returned home.
- If the parents cannot be contacted at home the Headteacher (or other adults as directed by the Headteacher) will begin a search outside of the school's immediate premises. This may include a visit to the child's home if this is near the school.



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- If the child is not found within 30 minutes the Head teacher (or other staff if so, directed by the Headteacher) will inform the police and, as appropriate, the social services and the Bursar of the child's disappearance.
- Thereafter the Headteacher will follow the instructions of the police regarding the continuation of the search for the child.
- If the child is at home the parents will be informed by telephone of the known facts surrounding the child going missing.
- If the child is not at home the Headteacher will, in consultation with the parents, begin a search outside of the school premises.
- The Head Teacher reports the incident to the Chairman.

Early Years Foundation Stage

The indoors and outdoors premises are safe and secure. The outside play areas are fenced in, and the children are supervised at all times. The staff have relevant qualifications and are present in adequate numbers for safe supervision and more staff are available nearby. The department produces risk assessments for playtime, and these are revised annually or more often if necessary.

Duty staff have appropriate induction on supervision and also talk to the children to remind them of our playtime rules, see Playtime Rules.

No unauthorised person must be able to enter the Early Years premises and steps are taken to prevent intruders entering the premises. There are security systems in place such as a double lock on the external door and there are signing in/out procedures and name badges for visitors. Any staff, parent or child arriving and departing outside the usual times is recorded in a separate signing in/out book.

Parents have additional information regarding security in the Handbook for Parents. The children are only released into the care of individuals named by the parents. Except where there is reasonable excuse, written permission from parents is requested where children are to be picked up by another adult.

Children do not leave the premises unsupervised, for example music and LAMDA staff collect from and return children to their teacher when giving individual lessons.

In the event that a child is missing, EYFS staff follow the guidance given in the whole school Missing Child Procedures. For children not collected on time see the procedures stated in the whole school Collection Policy.

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are set out in our School Trips Policy, which is available to parents on request from the school office. We review these policies regularly (at least once a year) in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of very young children



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Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff members have taken a group on an outing, leaving the Head Teacher and/or other staff back in the setting. If the Head Teacher 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 Head Teacher is contacted immediately, and the incident is reported.
- The Head Teacher contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The Head Teacher contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the Head Teacher. 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 members take the remaining children back to the setting.
- In an indoor venue, the staff members contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The Head Teacher contacts the chairman.
- The Head Teacher, or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The investigation

- Staff members keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Head Teacher together with Chairman speaks with the parent(s).
- The Head Teacher and SLT, carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the area 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 and 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 (Reporting of Injuries Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences) arrangements; the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- Disciplinary action may be taken.
- The insurance provider is informed.



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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 children may also be sensitive 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.
- Parents should be informed of any incident involving a missing child by a member of the Head Teacher.
- Staff may feel vulnerable during this process and will need support. There should always be two members of staff present who are members of SLT when handling the situation with parents.
- 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 Chairman will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Members of staff, volunteers and Trustees must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without permission from the Head Teacher who will have taken appropriate advice before appointing a spokesperson for the school.



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Policy Administration

Linked Policies

This policy also needs to be in line with other school policies and therefore should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Trips and Outings Policy
- Outdoors Policy
- Collection Policy and Procedures
- Safeguarding Policy
- Major Incident Policy

Quoted Legislation and Guidance

None

Review Schedule

This policy is subject to annual reviews by the Head Teacher or a member of the SMT unless circumstances require an earlier review.

Update and Review Log

Updated/ Reviewed By	Date	Notes
Caroline Kidao, March 2018	March 2018	Head of EYFS and SENCO Date
N Williams	October 2020	
J Lawson	August 2022	Reviewed for staff CPD at the start of the new term
A Lawson	Sep 2022	Updated Formatting