

EYFS Missing Child Policy

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This policy is Reviewed by	The Head of EYFS
Group	EYFS
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Tick which category this document refers to:

ISI requirement to be made available	
ISI requirement to be on website	✓
Internal staff only	✓
Internal students only	
Internal staff and students	
Statutory requirement to have on website (non ISI)	

Introduction

The welfare and safety of all our children at Great Walstead School is our paramount responsibility, both within the school building and within the school grounds. Every adult who works at the school appreciates that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. Our staff ratios follow statutory guidelines, which are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he/she is in our care. There are clear links between this policy and policies on Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment, issues of potential exploitation, abuse or neglect and the 'Prevent' duty.

In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is as follows.

Procedure

Child missing from education

The procedure for dealing with an EYFS child missing from education is clearly laid out in our Child Protection – Safeguarding and Welfare of Pupils Policy and Attendance Policy

Child going missing during the school day

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the Nursery teacher or Reception Class teacher alerts the Head of EYFS.
- The Headmaster, School Office and School Nurse will be informed.
- Any available staff will be mobilised to search the premises and grounds. Care will be taken during this time that other children are not left unattended or put at risk.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray. Staff will be careful to remain calm and to ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.
- 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 Head of EYFS or Headmaster calls the police and reports the child as missing. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police are informed of this.
- The parents are then called and informed.
- A recent photo and a note of what the child is wearing are given to the police.
- The Headmaster or Head of EYFS will be responsible for meeting the police and the parents. The Headmaster will coordinate any actions instructed by the police.

The investigation

- The Headmaster or Head of EYFS will carry out a full investigation, taking written statements from all our staff and any volunteers who were present.
- The Headmaster, together with the Head of EYFS, will speak with the parents and explain the process of the investigation.
- The parents may also raise a complaint with us or the Governors.
- CCTV footage may be monitored.
- Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the incident.
 - Where the child went missing from.
 - Which staff/children were on the premises and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - What has taken place since the child went missing.
- The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff will co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff and parents. Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The insurance provider will be informed if necessary.
- The incident may need reporting under RIDDOR. This decision will be made by Terry Chandler, Estates Manager, who will also report the incident if it is deemed necessary.

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.
- Our staff will feel worried about the child, especially the Key Person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise with the length of time the child is missing.
- They may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Our Head of EYFS will ensure that any staff under investigation are fairly treated and receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry and upset. They may want to blame our staff and may single out one staff member over others. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff present, one of whom is a senior member of staff.

- The other children are also 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.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, our 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 his discretion to decide what action to take.
- Our staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press or any other person outside of the school. Confidentiality must be upheld at all times.

Link to other policies:

Child Protection – Safeguarding and Welfare of Pupils Policy
Attendance Policy