

Missing Child Policy Prep School & Nursery (EYFS)

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Responsible for Initiating Review of Policy	Assistant Head Prep School
Committee to Review	Prep School SLT
Last Review Date	August 2026
Review Period	Annual
Approved by (Committee and Date)	Prep School SLT
Effective Date of Policy	August 2026
Next Review Date	August 2027
Related Policies	Safeguarding Safer Recruitment Prevent Crisis Management Plan

The welfare and safety of all our children 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.

If a child does not arrive for school at the beginning of the school day the Prep School reception team will contact parents to establish the reason for absence. Outside of the normal school term time the main reception will call parents. (Nursery staff to inform Nursery Manager/Deputy Manager)

Having checked to establish a child is 'missing' the follow procedures will be implemented:

Procedure

Child going missing during the school day.

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the Nursery staff member or Class teacher alerts the Assistant Head Prep School and the Nursery Manager. (Out of normal school term time the nursery manager will inform the duty SLT member of staff.)

The Assistant Head Prep School will alert, all School Offices, via a call to main reception, School Nurse and Whole School SLT. Out of normal term time the Nursery Manager will alert all school offices and the duty member of SLT.

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. Gates and ponds are the first areas to check.

- Tea/breakfast registers
- Prep/After School Club registers
- Clubs running after school/lunch time
- Medical centre / Nurse
- Sports fixture list
- Music or Speech and Drama lessons
- Minibuses register
- Issue a brief description of child and/or circulate recent photograph of pupil.
- All buildings will be searched by staff.
- CCTV will be checked to ascertain if the child has left the site

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 Assistant Head Prep School or Nursery Manager 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 Assistant Head Prep School (or duty SLT member outside of term time) will be responsible for meeting the police and the parents and will coordinate any actions instructed by the police.

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.

Staff may 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. The Assistant Head Prep School will ensure that any staff under investigation are fairly treated and receive support while feeling vulnerable.

The parents may 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 Head will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

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.

The investigation

The Head will request a full investigation is undertaken, taking written statements from all our staff and any volunteers who were present.

The Assistant Head Prep School, together with the Head, will speak with the parents and explain the process of the investigation.

The parents may also raise a complaint with us or the Governors.

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.

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 Exec SLT & Estate's Bursar who will also report the incident if it is deemed necessary.

Link to other policies:

- Child Protection – Safeguarding and Welfare of Pupils Policy
- KCSIE
- Site Risk Assessment