



## Missing Child

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 the office any notification of updated contacted numbers that they receive for any reason.*

### Child absent from school at registration:

1. Mark register with relevant code
  - If you are aware of any unusual circumstances make a very visible note for the office – or consider sending a child with the note. Eg: child reported to have left home but not arrived, or where the child's situation / behaviour may give rise to concern
2. Office staff will phone home to report absence and ask for explanation.
  - Where an urgent message is sent this will be given priority
  - Office staff will phone home for explanation of absence. If there is no reply there will normally be no further action.
  - Where there is *particular* concern conveyed to the office (e.g. younger child, child at risk), office staff will try all alternative numbers, and consider seeking out siblings in school for explanation
  - If there is no reply from the above, there will be no further immediate action, unless particular reasons for concern have been raised. Teacher will ask for written explanation from parent / guardian after child has returned to school.
  - Related policy: School Absence
3. Children absent at Afternoon Registration who were present in the morning and have not signed out of school:
  - Ask class mates
  - tell office immediately to start search
4. Subject teachers to ask other pupils about any missing children

### Missing child search procedure

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

1. Inform office immediately with full details.
2. Office staff will:
  - Check home numbers and / or ask siblings in school if there is any reason why the child should be off site.
  - If there is no explanation, or where there is immediate reason to think the child has run off send available free staff in different directions to look for the child while ensuring one member of the office staff remains centrally based to act as a referral point. At least four staff should be used. They

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***Always check online for the most recent policy.***

should concentrate on grounds, buildings, toilets and unused areas and give priority to last known sighting and report back within 5 minutes. They should be given mobile phones to maintain contact.

- While parents may be available and offer to help, staff should always be used wherever possible for child protection reasons
- Ensure one office person remains in the office to co-ordinate search and contact other sources of help e.g. bookshop.
- After ten minutes, if the child has not been found, continue search of grounds. Send up to four staff in cars to search local streets and park for up to 15 minutes.
- Keep parents informed of the situation and suggest they become involved if the child is not found within 20 minutes. It may be more appropriate for them to go to their home in case the child turns up.
- Inform the police after no more than 25 minutes of absence being noticed, and 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 example if an EYD child might be off site, police should be informed *immediately*. Police to be given photo of child. At this point staff to return to school premises. Office to remain in contact with police and parents.
- If the child is found but is refusing to return to School, attempt to stay with the child but contact the office. It is *not* appropriate to use any form of physical coercion other than situations as described in the Restraint Policy; ie to prevent a more serious event

#### **End of School Day: Report of child not returned home**

- Check with After School Care
- Check with home and ask parents to check homes of classmates
- Contact class teacher / guardian for clues, last known sighting details.
- If child not found after 20 minutes institute search of grounds
- If child not found after a further 20 minutes phone police. Police to be called sooner if there are *any* suspicious / unusual circumstances – or with children Class 3 and below.
- When police are notified responsibility is handed over to them

#### **Important issues:**

- Subject teachers must check at the beginning of each class by asking about missing children.
- Teachers doing cover must follow the same procedure.
- Photos will be required with application forms. Photo must be taken to the office before child starts trial at the latest, another reason why teachers **MUST** inform office of trials. Children on trial should be marked at the bottom of the register.
- Registers **MUST** be sent to the office in the morning
- When a child goes home during the day they must be reminded to SIGN OUT.

Policy last reviewed August 2017

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