

Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School

# Missing Child Policy

Issued by	School Lead
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## Introduction

A missing child ***must take priority over all other activities.***

Members of staff who are not teaching will be expected to immediately take part in looking for the missing child. 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.

### 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, for example a child if a child is 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 office staff will try all alternative numbers, and consider seeking out siblings in school for explanation
  - If there is no reply from the above further efforts will be made to contact parents/carers, or the child by email or text
  - The DSL will be informed
  - If there are particular reasons for concern, the DSL will consider going to the child's address to investigate
  - Related policy: School Absence
3. Children absent at Afternoon Registration who were present in the morning and have not signed out of school:
  - Office staff to check signing in and out sheet at reception for reasons
  - Ask classmates/siblings/subject teachers
  - Office to initiate search as per procedure below

### 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 present at registration:

1. Inform office and DSL immediately with full details.
2. Office staff or others as appropriate will:
  - Telephone all parent/carer home numbers and/or ask siblings in school if there is any reason why the pupil should be off site.
  - If there is no explanation, or where there is immediate reason to think the child is missing the
  - office will 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.
  - All available staff should be used to search for the pupil.
  - Mobile phones (personal or school) should be taken by staff looking for a missing pupil so that the office/others searching can liaise effectively.
  - Those searching should concentrate on grounds, buildings, toilets and unused areas, giving priority to last known sighting, and report back as soon as possible.
  - After ten minutes, if the child has not been found, continue search of grounds. Send up to four staff in their cars to search local streets and the local park/recreational areas.
  - Keep parents informed of the situation. They may wish to go to their home in case the child turns up.
  - Inform the police after no more than 20 minutes of absence being noticed, and immediately if there are serious concerns.
  - The person coordinating the search should take into account child's age, state of mind, length
  - of time missing and the situation leading up to the absence. For example, if an Early Years child is missing and suspected to be off site, police should be informed immediately. Police to be provided with a photograph of the missing pupil, if available.
  - Once the police have been called and have arrived at the school, all staff who are searching the local area may be asked to return to the school premises, if the police wish to take over the coordination of the search. Office staff are to remain in contact with police and parents.
  - If the pupil is found but is refusing to return to School, staff should stay with the pupil where possible and immediately contact the office. It is not appropriate to use any form of physical coercion or restraint other than situations as described in the Physical Intervention Policy.

### **End of School Day: Report of pupil not returned home by parents:**

- Check with After School Care
- Check with home and ask parents to check homes of classmates
- Contact class teacher/guardian for clues, last know sighting details.
- Institute a search of the grounds

- If child not found after 20 minutes phone police. Police to be called sooner if there are any suspicious/unusual circumstances – or with younger pupils.
- Once the police are notified the responsibility is handed over to them, but a member of staff must stay on site and answer the phone/assist the police as necessary until the pupil is found.

### **Important issues:**

- Subject teachers must check they have all of the students they are expecting at the beginning of each lesson and notify the office if this is not the case. Teachers carrying out cover must follow the same procedure.
- All staff must take responsibility for passing on to the office any updated contacted numbers that they receive for any reason.
- Registers MUST be returned to the office by 9:30am in the morning and by 2.00pm in the afternoon.
- If a pupil leaves the school premises during the day, he/she must be instructed to sign out at Reception.