

# **Safeguarding: Lost or Missing Children Policy**

September 2016



### KEY FACTS

- ✦ **This policy enables schools to deal promptly and professionally in a “worst case scenario” of a lost or missing child.**
- ✦ **It emphasises the responsibility for attendance, registers and keeping children safe.**
- ✦ **It requires schools to demonstrate collection and handover arrangements specific to the school.**
- ✦ **Procedures to follow should a child go missing or become lost are given.**
- ✦ **A SIRF (Serious Incident Report Form) must be completed.**
- ✦ **With regards to early years children who become lost or missing, Ofsted and Local Authority Children’s Services must be informed.**

## 1 Purpose

- 1.1. It is essential that Cognita as the Proprietor ensures that positive steps are taken to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The safety and welfare of all of our children at school is our paramount responsibility. Any child going missing from education or learning is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, particularly on repeat occasions.
- 1.2. The procedures outlined in this policy will be followed alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, Whistleblowing Policy, Staff Disciplinary Procedure and any other relevant school policy or procedure.
- 1.3. All staff and volunteers understand what to do in the unlikely event that a child were to be lost or go missing either from the school building, site or during an off-site visit.
- 1.4. It is the Headteacher’s responsibility to ensure that this policy is understood and followed.
- 1.5. It is the responsibility of all staff to read the policy and to act at all times accordingly.

## 2 Introduction

- 2.1. This policy has been adopted in respect of any child who goes missing from our premises or wanders off from our care, even if they remain on site.
- 2.2. This policy will be used in respect of all cases in which it is found that a child is lost or missing. It should be read in conjunction with our policy and procedure for uncollected children (late collection) and the school Safeguarding Policy including managing allegations of abuse against staff and other adults.
- 2.3. At all times we will treat very seriously any evidence which shows that any member of staff has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for definition of harm).
- 2.4. Any consequent disciplinary matter against staff will follow our separate disciplinary procedure, in consultation with the School’s Human Resources Business Manager.
- 2.5. Due consideration will be given by the Headteacher as to whether referral may be made to children’s social care. For example, where the child is in need of protection, early help or in need of other support.

- 2.6. Staff are responsible for completing the attendance registers, including at after school clubs and activities. The register must be completed accurately and promptly. The law requires schools to have an attendance register which is compliant with the Regulations.

### 3 Steps to Keep Children Safe

- 3.1. Our procedures will always be managed with common sense and sound judgement. If a member of staff takes a child out of school they are responsible for informing the parents and the school office.
- 3.2. For children in the early years, we must only release children into the care of individuals who have been notified to us by the parent/carer(s) in advance, and we must ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised. We must take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises, and have an agreed procedure for checking the identity of visitors.
- 3.3. At all times, parents can be assured that all children remain within the safe environment of our school/setting, including attendance at any outings. We ensure that proper precautions are taken to prevent children going missing.
- 3.4. If any child is found to leave the premises without permission of the school and parents, they will be deemed to have broken the school's code of conduct and the application of appropriate and proportionate sanctions will be considered by the Head accordingly.
- 3.5. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure they provide correct and updated information on a timely basis and know the procedures for handover of their child.
- 3.6. It is the responsibility of the Director of Education, on behalf of Cognita, to ensure that the Assistant Director of Education is aware of the school's procedures and that they will provide challenge and support to the school in the review of this policy.
- 3.7. Particular care will be taken to register all children in each and every club or out-of/after school activity. A register will be taken of each child's attendance at every club or out of school activity. As a minimum, any unexplained absences will be reported immediately to the school office and to the Headteacher by the responsible teacher so that swift and immediate action will be taken. In the absence of the Headteacher from the premises at the time, the designated member of the Senior Leadership team will always assume such responsibility. In the case of incidents occurring while children are learning outside the classroom on school visits, the visit leader will assume such responsibility, as agreed with the Educational Visits Coordinator on behalf of the Headteacher.
- 3.8. No child leaves our supervision and care without an appropriate adult. In order to achieve this aim, we operate the following procedures at our school:

#### ***Supervision Before School***

*Pupils do not arrive simultaneously on the school premises. Time is made available within the agreed directed time for supervision of children before school. Our responsibility begins when the children arrive at school.*

- *The school will inform all parents of the starting time of the school day and indicate that no arrangements are made for the supervision of the children earlier than 8.00 am on a school day.*

## **Lost or Missing Children**

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- Supervision of children before school begins will form part of the school's rota of supervision. Staff are on duty from 8.00 am. Nursery to Year 2 go to the Nursery to be supervised and pupils from Years 3-11 go to the dining hall until 8.30am to be supervised.
- Signs are posted on all entrances to the buildings reminding pupils to attend the dining hall if they arrive before 8:30am.

### **Responsibility During the Day**

#### Unexplained Absence:

The responsibility to ensure that a pupil attends school regularly is that of the parents and guardians. The school will seek to contact parents when children are absent from school without notification. This will be flagged up when the registers are taken by form tutors. Parents are asked to contact school, early in the morning, if their child is unable to attend school.

#### Leaving the school site:-

Children should not be allowed off site during school hours unless there is clear evidence of a request (in writing, by email, in person or by telephone) from the parents or guardian. All pupils are required to sign out at reception prior to departure if leaving school during the day.

#### Errands:-

Children should not be sent off site on a personal errand on behalf of a member of staff. This includes children collecting items from cars parked in the school car park.

#### Illness:-

When children are taken ill during the school day the school will contact the parents or guardian whether at home or at work. Information about contacts is kept in the school office.

#### Emergency:-

No class of pupils should be left unsupervised for any reason. In the case of an emergency please send a child to the school office or to the Deputy Head / Head of Prep

#### Lesson Time:-

Children must be supervised at all times. Children should not be left in classrooms without supervision. Children attending clubs and extra-curricular activities should not be left in school unattended. It is acceptable to use a TA to supervise a class if a teacher needs to leave the classroom.

#### Undesirable People:-

All visitors to the school are expected to sign in and out. Visitors are required to wear a visitor's badge. All staff should check strangers on the premises and report to the school office if there is a concern. Parents are not allowed to approach children from other families to sort out disputes or arguments. Staff should report any concerns to the school office.

### **Supervision during Break times**

- There must be adequate supervision both indoors and outdoors throughout school break times.

- A duty rota for break time supervision will be displayed in the staff room.
  - For the senior school there will be 3 LBSs plus a member of SLT
  - For the Prep School there will be one LBS and a member of teaching staff
- Duty teachers and other duty staff, if appropriate, will "patrol" around the school.
- Part of the induction of new staff will include explanation of supervisory responsibilities.
- Duty teachers should begin supervision promptly
- Staff should leave the staff room promptly to supervise the children back into class.
- There are clear routines to supervise children from break time back into class. Staff should work as a team to support one another in this process. We expect children to enter school in the appropriate manner to ensure a positive start to the next lesson. Particular attention should be paid to supervising children in the locker room and other congested areas.
- Children should not be left in classrooms during break times unless a member of staff is present.
- Staff should support each other in maintaining adequate levels of supervision during wet break times.

### **Wet Break-Times :-**

- All children will stay in their designated areas at the time of their normal break-time and behave sensibly.
  - Prep School – Prep Hall
  - Y7-9 – Senior Hall
  - Y10-11 – Humanities classrooms
  - Y12-13 – Sixth Form Common Room
- The teachers on duty will patrol and form staff will supervise the pupils.

### **Morning Break:-**

The members of staff on duty must be in the play area from 10.30-10.50am (Prep School) or 10:45-11:05am (Senior School) and remain there until break ends. It is not possible to supervise a large number of children without vigilance and concentration and, to this end the members of staff on duty should not indulge in protracted conversation with other members of staff. A duty member of staff will ring the bell (Prep) outside at the end of break and together with other duty members of staff will ensure that all pupils are moved on promptly to lessons. Other staff will also be used for duties at morning break and at other times. These other staff need to be aware of their responsibilities.

### **Lunchtime Supervision:-**

- The legal duty of care over pupils who remain at school during the lunch break still exists.
- The level of supervision provided will ensure the health and safety and welfare of the children.
- Supervision will consist of designated staff who are on lunchtime duty and Prep School teachers supervising on a rota in the Dining Hall
  - For the senior school there will be three LBSs plus a member of SLT
  - For the Prep School there will be one LBS and a member of teaching staff
- Where the behaviour of a pupil during the lunch break threatens the health and safety and welfare of others, the child may be suspended for lunchtimes.

### **Supervision after School:-**

- Teachers should be satisfied that children have left the school site appropriately. Staff are on duty at the Senior School gate at the end of the school day.
- Any child left at school at the end of the school day is the responsibility of the parents. If they neglect to make provision for their safe return home, school would contact the parents, register and note the concerns.
- Senior pupils and staff using cars are not permitted to leave school site until 4pm to avoid potential accidents whilst pupils walk down the drive.

Parents should be given notice of children who will be late home through participation in after school activities or revision lessons. They should be given adequate notice of any changes to arrangements such as cancellations of school clubs and fixtures. Every effort should be made to contact the parents during the day. If for any reason a parent cannot be contacted the child must remain at school until the agreed time of collection. Minibus drivers must not accept information about a pupil's intention to not use the minibus from anyone but the adults with parental responsibility.

### **Senior School gates:-**

- The vehicle gates will be closed between the hours of 08.30 – 16.00 in order to restrict access of vehicles to the site during the day.
- The pedestrian gate will be open between the hours of 08.00 – 08.40 and 15.40 – 18.00.
- If pupils arrive late they will need to press the intercom in order to achieve access to the school.
  
- Pupils must at all times use the pedestrian gate.
- Pupils are prohibited from accessing or egressing the site via the vehicle gate.
- Pupils are not permitted to climb on the gates or at any time.
- If at any time pupils feel there is an issue or a fault with the gate they must report it immediately.
- Pupils must access and egress the school via the pedestrian gate in a safe manner.

### **Supervision of Special Activities**

#### **Physical Education:-**

PE staff should familiarise themselves with the guidance given in "Safe Practice in Physical Education and Sport," pp49-

The same general principles of care apply during PE as to other school activities. It is very important that the teacher should consider factors, such as:

- safety of apparatus being used
- condition of the floor
- suitability of pupil's clothing
- whether the exercises and activities are within the capability of the children
- whether the activity is being taught properly, in particular gymnastics
- The weather conditions

Please follow the procedures listed below:

- Staff should wear appropriate clothing.
- Children should not be allowed to wear watches.
- If valuables are handed in to a member of staff for safe keeping the school is accepting responsibility for them.
- Children should not be allowed in the hall before the start of a PE lesson without direct supervision.
- Children should not be handling PE equipment without direct supervision.
- Children should be trained to work quietly and to leave the hall in an orderly way.

Children not taking part in games or PE remain the responsibility of the teacher taking the lesson.

In the event of an accident any action for damages would be unlikely to succeed if the teacher could show that he/she had employed reasonable care.

### **Art and Craft/ Science and Technology:-**

Teachers should consider the organisation of the children involved in practical activities. Consideration should be given to the number of children who can be reasonably controlled and supervised when organising practical activities. Teachers should take all necessary precautions including:

- wearing masks and goggles
- training in the use of tools
- carrying glass objects
- carrying hot substances

Please follow the procedures listed below:

- Children should be supervised carefully when using sharp equipment such as scissors and craft knives.
- All craft knives should be accounted for at the end of the activity and stored in a safe place.
- Children should not have direct access to craft knives and sharp tools.
- Teachers should make sure that children know how to use tools correctly.
- Teachers should ensure that there is an appropriate level of supervision when using glue guns.
- Children should be supervised directly when handling glass objects.
- Where at all possible the use of glass containers should be avoided.

### **Being Alone with a Child:-**

Of all circumstances this is the one which carries the greatest risk. In an environment such as ours, where the levels of trust are so high and taken as the normal course of events, there is a greater statistical opportunity for things to go wrong. These are some of the contexts where it is, at least, sensible to consider the associated risk:-

- Running an extra class outside the curriculum, possibly in an isolated or quiet part of the building.
- Running a private detention under similar circumstances.

- *Calling a child to an office for disciplinary or administrative reasons.*
- *Offering a lift home to a stranded child at the end of the day or after an extra- curricular activity.*
- *Visiting the toilets as part of a duty responsibility.*

*All of these are circumstances that many of us operate in daily and we are rarely concerned about them. Practically, a good degree of the risk can be reduced by having doors open in rooms, giving other colleagues and support staff an easy access to your working environment and informing others of your timing and plans for any given appointment. If anyone has concerns after taking account of the risk, then it is entirely correct to discuss the matter with the Deputy Head, as appropriate.*

*In addition there are circumstances where individual children may give cause for concern, usually because they have problems of their own; they may have special physical and/or educational needs, be distressed or perhaps violent. Such situations are rare but not unknown.*

*Staff can reasonably expect to be advised of any special arrangements in this respect. This means adults should:-*

- *avoid meetings with pupils in remote, secluded areas of school.*
- *ensure there is visual access and/or an open door in one to one situations.*
- *inform other staff of the meeting beforehand, assessing the need to have them present or close by.*
- *avoid use of 'engaged' or equivalent signs wherever possible. Such signs may create an opportunity for secrecy or the interpretation of secrecy.*
- *always report any situation where a child becomes distressed or angry to a senior colleague.*
- *consider the needs and circumstances of the child/children involved.*

### **Changing:-**

*Young people are entitled to respect and privacy when changing clothes.*

*However, there needs to be an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people, satisfy health and safety considerations and ensure that bullying or teasing does not occur.*

*This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment. Staff, therefore, need to be vigilant about their own behaviour, ensure they follow agreed guidelines and be mindful of the needs of the pupils.*

*This means that adults should:-*

- *avoid any physical contact when children are in a state of undress.*
- *avoid any visually intrusive behaviour where there are changing rooms.*
- *announce their intention of entering.*
- *avoid remaining in the room unless pupil needs require it.*

### **After School Clubs:-**

*Staff should take particular care when supervising pupils in the less formal atmosphere of an after-school activity. During school activities that take place off the school site or out of school hours, a more relaxed discipline or informal dress and language code may be acceptable.*



Staff are required to keep an “after school” register in case of fire /emergency.

However, staff remain in a position of trust and need to ensure that their behaviour cannot be interpreted as seeking to establish an inappropriate relationship or friendship. Health and Safety arrangements require members of staff to keep colleagues/employers aware of their whereabouts, especially when involved in an out of school activity. Staff must be aware of and follow guidance.

This means that adults should:-

- always have another child present in out of school activities, unless otherwise agreed with senior staff in School.
  - undertake risk assessments.
  - have parental consent to the activity.
  - ensure that their behaviour remains professional at all times.
- 3.9. Permission from parents is obtained generically at the beginning of each academic year for any educational visits which are deemed as part of the school curriculum, and once again specifically for any other visit.
- 3.10. School mobile phones are taken on every school visit and the contact numbers are left at the school office. Pupils are instructed to contact the responsible teacher in the event of any unexpected incident or undesirable behaviour in the first instance before contacting their parents directly. This is because it is the school’s responsibility to safeguard the pupil’s health, safety and well-being while they are in the care of the school staff.
- 3.11. While staff are supervising children off-site, the Learning Outside the Classroom Policy will apply at all times.
- 3.12. After school clubs will only take place when a completed register of pupils is taken, the situation has been risk managed and the school has obtained written consent from parents with contact numbers and details of how the pupils are to go home and who with.
- 3.13. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity in accordance with the school’s practice in maintaining confidentiality and our obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

#### **4 Procedures following a Child Reported Missing or Lost**

- 4.1. If a teacher suspects that a child is missing from a lesson or activity, they will contact the nearest member of SLT and school office immediately.
- 4.2. All remaining children will be kept safe in a secure place with adequate adult supervision, including assistance from other school staff if necessary.
- 4.3. A full headcount will be taken by the teacher-in-charge and matched against the register; usually the class teacher or nominated person.
- 4.4. A senior member of staff will make a thorough search of the building and/or site and immediate surroundings including storage areas and toilets. A thorough check of all exits will be made, to ensure all gates/doors are locked and there is no other way a pupil could have left the site. If something is discovered, the SLT member must be immediately informed.
- 4.5. The following list held in the school office will be checked: attendance register, off site records, and other school clubs.

- 4.6. If the child is not found after this initial search and/or approximately 10 minutes from the initial report of them deemed missing, the school office will inform the Headteacher and Assistant Director of Education (Cognita Head Office), including where a child is found wandering or at risk of being lost or missing. The designated safeguarding officer in school will be notified immediately and they will ensure that the parents have been informed by the responsible teacher. The Headteacher, or SLT member in the absence of the Head, will decide at which point the police will be called.
- 4.7. All relevant emergency contacts for children will be used to inform parent/carer(s) accordingly. However, until such time as the child is safely returned to the care of the parent/carer(s), the Headteacher remains responsible for the care and welfare of the child, including off-site.
- 4.8. As soon as is practicable, the Serious Incident Reporting Form (SIRF) will be completed by the Headteacher and sent to the PA to the Head of Facilities. The visit leader (off site) or responsible form/class teacher will make a contemporaneous record to provide full details of the incident in the school's incident report book. A note will also be made on the school's attendance register accordingly.
- 4.9. Near misses will also be recorded and reported to the Assistant Director of Education and details fully provided in writing to the school's safeguarding governance committee (SGC). This Report must outline the steps being taken to avoid any repeat incident, communication with parents and actions to be taken following the risk assessment process to mitigate future risk. Any relevant policy and procedure must be reviewed by the school and submitted to UK compliance committee for approval, via Head of Education Compliance.
- 4.10. All incidents will be reported to the Head of Facilities, Head Office, for the attention of our insurers, as appropriate. Staff must try to remember and write down a description of what the child was wearing and any distinguishing features.
- 4.11. If a missing child has any special medical or learning needs then these need to be noted to be disclosed to the police or other agencies.
- 4.12. A thorough search of the premises should continue until the child is found.

## 5 Following the Incident

- 5.1. It is in everyone's interest to resolve what has happened as quickly as possible, consistent with a fair and thorough investigation.
- 5.2. The written findings of the investigation must be reported by the Headteacher to Cognita Head Office within 48 hours of the occurrence of the incident.
- 5.3. Where the child is under two years of age, Ofsted/Estyn must be informed of the incident under our separate registration arrangements. Local authority children's social care should also be informed of any missing child in the early years, and our usual local authority safeguarding and child protection arrangements followed.
- 5.4. All relevant policies and procedures will immediately be reviewed and revisions presented formally to the Assistant Director of Education for approval within 5 working days.
- 5.5. The parent/carer(s) will be involved at all times.

- 5.6. Following receipt of our investigative report, the Director of Education will report his conclusions as to the next steps to further safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the care of the school to the UK compliance committee.
- 5.7. Where the parent/carer(s) remain concerned despite reassurances informally by the school, they may choose to use the school's complaints procedure accordingly.

### 6 Procedures following a Child Missing from an Off Site Location

- 6.1. The visit leader must ensure the safety of remaining pupils. At least two adults must stay with them.
- 6.2. One or more adults should immediately start to search for the child.
- 6.3. If the child is not found within 5 minutes, the visit leader must then contact the police by telephoning 999 (within the UK or similar equivalent number if overseas).
- 6.4. The visit leader should alert the school office, or in the case of out-of-hours, the nominated school contact for the trip, that the police have been contacted. The school will make arrangements to notify the parents accordingly. The remaining procedures outlined above in sections 4 and 5 will then be followed.
- 6.5.

### 7 Monitoring & Evaluation

- 7.1. This policy and our procedures will be reviewed annually and more frequently following a near miss or missing child incident. **Compliance with this policy is reported formally to the Safeguarding Governance Committee (SGC) with the Head reporting any changes including management actions accordingly.**
- 7.2. If, as a parent, you are not happy with the way that you or your child is treated by any member of staff you should consider raising your concern with the Headteacher. You may find it helpful to refer to our formal complaints procedure for guidance. This procedure emphasises the importance of resolving any concerns informally and at the earliest possible opportunity. We expect our parents to share any concerns informally with us so that we can continuously improve the quality of education at our school.
- 7.3. Our school's leadership team ensure that we monitor the quality and compliance of our accident and incident reports at our compliance committee meetings. The Headteacher ensures that staff are sufficiently trained and experienced to be compliant at all times; particularly during school trips and visits.
- 7.4. The Safeguarding Governance Committee (SGC) is chaired by an Independent Chair who will maintain an overview of the effectiveness of this policy and local school practice in this regard, providing appropriate governance scrutiny and challenge

## Lost or Missing Children

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<b>Ownership and consultation</b>	
Document sponsor (role)	Director of Education
Document author (name)	Rosalind Vahey – Head of Education Compliance
Specialist Legal Advice	n/a
Consultation	n/a

<b>Compliance</b>	
Compliance with	ISSR 2014, Keeping Children Safe in Education, The Education (Pupil registration)(England) Regulations 2006c. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences RIDDOR 2013, Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014, Incident Reporting in Schools HSE 10/13.

<b>Audience</b>	
Audience	Heads, DSLs

<b>Document application</b>	
England	Yes
Wales	Yes
Spain	Yes

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<b>Related documentation</b>	
Related documentation	Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedure, Supervision Policy, Health and Safety Policy, After School Clubs and Activities, First Aid Policy, Learning Outside the Classroom, Special Educational Needs, Data Protection, Complaints Procedure, SIRF Form and Guidance, Critical Incident Management Plan, School Compliance Committee terms of reference, Safeguarding Governance Committee terms of reference