



WALTHAMSTOW HALL
SEVENOAKS

Missing Child Policy & Procedures – Junior School and the Early Years Foundation Stage including:

- 1. Pupils missing during the School day, on a School visit or not collected on time at the end of the School day.**
- 2. Pupils missing from education.**

In drawing up this policy, assistance has been sought from documents drawn up by The ISBA, The Department for Education (DfE), The Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) and The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

References:

- Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021.
- 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', statutory guidance Sept 2020.
- General Inspection Queries, but with particular reference to EYFS, Independent School Association (ISA) guidance (www.isaschools.org.uk).
- Independent School Standards Regulations (paragraph 7 and 15), Early Years Statutory Framework (paragraph 3.73) and Department for Education guidance Children Missing Education (September 2016).
- ISBA Missing Child Policy (April 2017).

INTRODUCTION

We acknowledge that as a School with Early Years children within an EYFS framework we are legally required to have:

- A policy for the procedures to be followed in the event of a child going missing.
- A procedure to be followed in the event of a parent failing to collect the child at the appointed time.

Our other related policies include:

- Child Protection.
- Information for Parents of EYFS and Early Years Children.
- Educational Visits for EYFS Children.
- Risk Assessments for EYFS Outings.
- Policy for Induction of New Staff, Governors and Volunteers in Child Protection.
- Checking Employees, Temporary Workers, Governors, Proprietors, Volunteers Helpers and Contractors Policy.

MISSING CHILD POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The welfare of all of our children at Walthamstow Hall School is our paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the School has been trained to appreciate that they have a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that they are in our care.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Our companion document, “Information for Parents of EYFS and Early Years Children” describes:

- The arrangements for handing over children to the care of their parents at the end of the day.
- The qualifications of our staff and the arrangements for supervising the children while they are in School.
- The arrangements for registering the children in both morning and afternoon.
- The physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to or exit from the building.
- The supervision of the playground and the physical barriers that separate it from the rest of the School.

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for visits involving our youngest children are set out in a detailed policy document: “Educational Visits for EYFS Children.” Both documents are on our website and can be provided to parents on request. We review these policies regularly (at least once a year) in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive, through induction, advice on the importance of effective supervision of very young children.

I. ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM THE SCHOOL

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children were present.
- Inform the Teacher in Charge of the parallel class or neighbouring teacher.
- Inform the School Office.
- Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child.
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom by reading to them.
- At the same time, arrange for all other adults in the class or nearby to search everywhere, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms where a small child might hide.
- Check the doors and gates for signs of entry/exit.

If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Inform the Assistant Head of the Junior School who will organise a further search involving all available staff.

- If the child is still not found after a thorough search of the School building and grounds, the Assistant Head of Junior School will inform the Headmistress.
- The School's Major Incident Procedure (MIP) will be followed.
- During the course of the MIP, the child's parents will be contacted and told what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. They should come to the School at once. Other agencies will be contacted e.g. Police as appropriate during the MIP and the Chairman of the Governing Body will be informed.
- If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with her.
- If the child is not found, the Headmistress (DSL) will inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board.
- The School will cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care.
- The Insurers will be informed.
- If the child is injured, a report will be made under RIDDOR to the HSE if required.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

2. ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING ON A VISIT

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present.
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity thoroughly and alert staff/manager of the venue.
- The remaining children would be taken back to School.
- The Assistant Head of the Junior School will be contacted by mobile phone; the Assistant Head of Junior School will inform the Headmistress.
- The Major Incident Procedure (MIP) will be followed.
- During the course of the MIP, the child's parents will be contacted and told what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. They will be asked to come to the School/venue. Other agencies will be contacted e.g. Police as appropriate during the MIP and the Chairman of the Governing Body will be informed.
- The Headmistress (DSL) would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board.
- The School would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care.
- The Insurers would be informed.
- If the child is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE, if required.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

3. ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF ONCE THE CHILD IS FOUND

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child.
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on a visit.
- The Assistant Head of the Junior School will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
- The Assistant Head of the Junior School will undertake to arrange a full investigation, if appropriate, involving Social Services/ Local Children Safeguarding Board.
- Media queries should be referred to the Headmistress.

- The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements.
- The report should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened, the purpose of the visit, the length of time that the child was missing and how they appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.

4 PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED ON TIME

If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed collection time, the Assistant Head of Junior School will be informed. The Assistant Head of Junior School will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, we will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child.

During this time, the child will be safely looked after.

If there is no response from the parents or carers contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a -hour period, the Assistant Head of the Junior School will contact the Headmistress. The Social Care Duty Officer will be contacted. Social Care will make emergency arrangements for the child and will arrange for a visit to be made to the child's house and will check with the Police. We will make a full written report of the incident.

We undertake to look after the child safely throughout the time that they remain under our care.

5 PUPILS MISSING FROM EDUCATION

There are a number of instances where a pupil might be missing from education in School, for example, through long-term serious illness. In these circumstances, close and regular communication with parents/carers is maintained and supporting professional information is required if relevant. Furthermore, the School has safeguarding duties under section 175 of the 2002 Education Act in respect of our pupils and, as part of this, we are required to investigate any unexplained absence. A pupil may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect, or are at risk of serious harm. In particular, we are mindful of the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Sept 2020) with regard to child sexual exploitation (CSE) and female genital mutilation (FGM). If there is evidence or suspicion of any form of abuse or FGM, the School will activate the School and local safeguarding procedures for multi-agency liaison with Police and children's social care.

This policy has regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Walthamstow Hall policies are approved, ratified and reviewed regularly by the Governing Body in the light of statutory requirements.

Reviewed May 2021
Next Review Date October 2021

Signed: Date:

Mrs J Adams
Chairman of the Governing Body