



Missing Child Policy

Approved by	Coral Snowden - Principal		
Date	01.09.2026	Next review due	01.09.2027

Summary of Changes

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Approved By
1	01/09/2024	Final	New policy
2	01/09/2025	Reviewed - new DSL listed	C Snowden
3	01/09/2026	Reviewed - no changes	C Snowden

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To ensure the safety, security, and well-being of all pupils by establishing clear, rigorous, and rapid procedures to prevent a child from going missing during the school day or at dismissal, and to act swiftly, calmly, and decisively should a child become unaccounted for.

Procedure for a Missing Child during the School Day

1. Immediate Response

- **Stay Calm:** Ensure all staff remain calm to manage the situation effectively and prevent panic.
- **Initial Verification:** The teacher responsible for the class should check the attendance register and the list of children leaving early to confirm that a child is missing.

2. Notification

- **Inform Leadership:** The teacher must immediately inform the Principal (Coral Snowden) and/or Deputy Principal (Heather Kearney). If both are unavailable, notify a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

3. Search Procedure

- **Organised Search:**
 - Release staff to search all accessible areas, such as classrooms, toilets, cloakrooms, welfare rooms, cupboards, and storerooms.
 - For older children, ensure the class is supervised while initiating a search.
- **External Search:**
 - Notify the Premises team to secure the site and assist in the search.
 - Extend the search to the immediate vicinity outside the school, including roads at the front and back of the school.

4. Communication with Students

- **Ask Other Children:** Inquire if any students have seen the missing child recently.

5. Contact Authorities

- **Police Notification:** If the child is not found within 20 minutes, and there's reason to believe the child may have left the premises, contact the local police to report the missing child.
- **Provide Details:** Supply the police with a description of the child, their attire, and any additional relevant information.

6. Contact Parents/Guardians

- **Immediate Contact:** The Principal, Deputy, or Safeguarding Officer (Jessica Costelloe) should contact the child's parents or guardians to inform them of the situation and check if they have any information.

7. Cooperation and Communication

- **Cooperate with Authorities:** Work closely with the police in their ongoing search and with any subsequent safeguarding investigation by the Police and/or Social Care.
- **Update Stakeholders:** Keep parents, staff, and other relevant parties updated on any developments.

8. After the Incident

- **Debriefing Session:** Conduct a debriefing session with all involved staff to review the incident and identify improvements for future protocols.
- **Support Services:** Offer support to the child and their family, addressing any emotional or psychological needs.
- **Review and Update Protocol:** Use the incident as a learning opportunity to refine and enhance the missing child protocol.

9. Documentation

- **Incident Report:** Prepare a comprehensive incident report, documenting the situation, actions taken, and outcomes.
- **Communication with Academy Council:** Update Chair of Governors, Simon Carter and Claire Pearce, Safeguarding Governor, of the incident sharing the incident report.

Procedures for a Missing Child at Drop-off or Collection Times

1. Immediate Response

- **Stay Calm:** Remain composed to manage the situation effectively and prevent panic among parents and staff.
- **Initial Verification:** Confirm with the parent or guardian that the child has not been dropped off or collected as expected and explain the situation.

2. Notification

- **Inform School Leadership:** Immediately notify the Principal (Coral Snowden), Deputy Principal (Heather Kearney), or another member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) about the situation.
- **Alert Staff:** Use the internal communication system (radios) to inform all staff members of the missing child. Ask Premises Team to secure the site

3. Search Procedure

- **Organised Search:** Assign staff members to check all accessible areas within the school premises, including classrooms, toilets, playgrounds, and cloakrooms.
- **External Search:** Extend the search to the immediate vicinity outside the school, such as the car park, nearby streets, and any common collection points.

4. Communication and Cooperation

- **Reassurance:** Keep the parents informed and reassured that all efforts are being made to locate their child.
- **Updates:** Update staff keeping them informed of any developments

5. Contact Authorities

- **Police Notification:** If the child is not located within 20 minutes, and there's reason to believe the child is off-site, contact the local police.
- **Provide Details:** Supply the police with a description of the child, their attire, and any additional relevant information. Work closely with the police during their investigation and search efforts.

6. After the incident

- **Debriefing Session:** Conduct a debriefing session with all involved parties to evaluate the incident and identify areas for improvement.
- **Support Services:** Offer support to the child and their family, addressing any emotional or psychological needs.
- **Review and Update Protocol:** Use the incident as a learning opportunity to refine and enhance the missing child protocol.

8. Documentation

- **Incident Report:** Prepare a detailed incident report, documenting the situation, actions taken, and outcomes.
- **Communication with Academy Council:** Update Chair of Governors, Simon Carter and Claire Pearce, Safeguarding Governor, of the incident sharing the incident report.

Procedures for a Missing Child during an Off-Site Visit

1. Immediate Response

- **Stay Calm:** Ensure all staff remain calm to manage the situation effectively.
- **Head Count:** Conduct an immediate head count to confirm the missing child and identify the last known location.

2. Notification and Initial Search

- **Inform Trip Leader:** Notify the trip leader immediately about the missing child.
- **Organised Search:** Assign staff to search the immediate area where the child was last seen. Designate specific areas for each staff member to check thoroughly.

3. Communication with Venue and Authorities

- **Alert Venue Staff:** Inform staff at the venue about the missing child so they can assist in the search and secure exits if necessary.
- **Contact Local Authorities:** If the child is not found quickly, contact local authorities (e.g., police)

for assistance and provide them with details about the child, including a description and last known location.

4. Contact the School and Parents

- **Inform School Leadership:** Contact the Principal (Coral Snowden) or Deputy Principal (Heather Kearney) at Western House Academy to inform them of the situation.
- **Notify Parents:** The school should immediately inform the child's parents or guardians about the situation and any steps being taken.

5. Continued Search and Cooperation

- **Coordinate with Authorities:** Continue to cooperate with local authorities and venue staff during the search.
- **Update Communication:** Maintain open lines of communication with the school, parents, and authorities, providing regular updates on any developments.

6. Reassure and Monitor Other Students

- **Calm and Reassure:** Keep other students calm and reassured. Ensure they are supervised and accounted for throughout the incident.
- **Monitor Emotional Well-being:** Be attentive to the emotional well-being of all students, offering support as needed.

- **Arrangements:** Arrangements made to take the remaining children back to school or be looked after somewhere safe with the appropriate levels of staffing.

7. After the Incident

- **Debriefing Session:** Once the child is located, conduct a debriefing session with all involved staff to review the incident and identify any improvements for future procedures.
- **Support Services:** Provide support to the missing child and their family, addressing any emotional or psychological needs.
- **Review and Update Protocol:** Use the incident as a learning opportunity to refine and enhance the off-site visit missing child protocol.

8. Documentation

- **Incident Report:** Prepare a comprehensive incident report, documenting the situation, actions taken, and outcomes, including any lessons learned.
- **Communication with Academy Council:** Update Chair of Governors, Simon Carter and Claire Pearce, Safeguarding Governor, of the incident sharing the incident report.

If the missing is classed as vulnerable whether that be subject to child protection or not, inform the Safeguarding officer (Jessica Costelloe) or a member of the safeguarding team immediately so that they can inform Children's Services of the situation and possibly contact the police sooner.