



MISSING CHILD (ON & OFF SITE) & UNCOLLECTED CHILD POLICY

POLICY DETAILS

Policy title:	Missing Child (on & off site) & Uncollected Child Policy
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Organisation:	Archibald Primary School
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POLICY REVISION AND APPROVAL HISTORY

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1	September 2026	September 2027	Newly adopted policy from Safeguarding Matters	Headteacher

CONTENTS

Foreword, Introduction & Purpose & Aim	<u>3</u>
Preventative Action	<u>4</u>
Missing Child – On Site	<u>4</u>
Missing Child – Off Site	<u>6</u>
Uncollected Child	<u>7</u>
References	<u>7</u>

Foreword

This policy has been created by Helen Hogan: Safeguarding Matters to provide clarity to all stakeholders in school around the expectations of actions that will be taken if a child should go missing in school or during a school excursion. Alongside this, details are included of actions the school will take if a child is not collected from school.

Introduction

This policy is in place in respect of any child who goes missing or is lost on the school premises. It should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy, Attendance & Punctuality Policy and Whistleblowing Policy. At all times school 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. Consideration will be given by the Headteacher as to whether any further support for the child may be required.

Purpose and Aim

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the direct action that needs to be taken by all staff in the event of a missing child and the next steps should a child be uncollected at the end of the school day (inclusive of after school clubs).

Staff are responsible for completing attendance registers, including at after school clubs and activities. The register must be completed accurately and promptly.

Preventative Action

Procedures for the protection of children will always be managed with common sense and good judgement. Preventative steps are imperative in reducing the risk of a child going missing. The following actions can reduce risk:

- If a member of staff takes a child out of school, they are responsible for informing the parents and the school office.
- For children in the early years, they must only be released to the care of individuals who have been notified to school by the parent/carer(s) in advance, and school must ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised.
- School must take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises and have an agreed procedure for checking the identity of visitors.
- 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 Headteacher accordingly.
- 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.
- 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.
- No child will leave school supervision and care without an appropriate adult.
- Children are made aware of all boundaries around the school and which areas of the school are accessible.

Missing Child - On Site

It is our Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that children do not go missing.

Children must be kept safe at all times and the safety and welfare of children is paramount. Therefore, staff will always be extremely aware of the potential for children to go missing during sessions of the school day.

Systems are in place to register attendance during the school/setting day/sessions. Staff are responsible for those young people in their care and should undertake periodic head counts/visible laminated sheets at classroom doors to ensure all young people are accounted for. There are occasions when young people may leave a learning environment to carry out a task, visit the toilet, receive specialist support and are unsupervised. These children are still the member of staff's responsibility, particularly should an evacuation of the building occur.

If for any reason a member of staff cannot account for a child's whereabouts during a session the following procedure should be activated:

- The member of staff will inform the Headteacher and the rest of the staff team that the child is missing. A check of the electronic register will be made to see if the child is sick, has gone home, temporarily left the site for an appointment or is known to be somewhere else.
- Office staff to check emails and/or phone messages for any recent information from parents.
- Information will be notified to all staff immediately (use of emails/walkie talkie/tannoy) may be employed. Use of a code for example CODE RED - Missing

Child can be used. This message directs all staff to activate the procedure to ensure that all pupils on site will be safely supervised while facilitating the Missing Child search. At this time, with a missing child still not found, the remaining pupils will be escorted to a centralised area by supervising staff as per the CODE RED instruction.

- A thorough search of the entire premises will commence. The staff team will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.
- If the child is not on the premises the search will be widened to include the surrounding area.
- If after 10 minutes of thorough searching the child is still missing, the Headteacher or delegated person will inform the police and then the child's parents/carers.
- CODE RED - Missing Child found. The priority of all search staff on finding the missing child is to reassure and comfort the child then immediate notification of finding the missing child should be given to the office/Headteacher via the school walkie talkies/email/tannoy system. This will then be communicated to all other staff conducting the search and supervising children in the centralised area. The Headteacher will ensure the parents, and the police are informed. CODE RED - Missing Child not found. At the point at which a missing child is not found, the police will lead the investigation, and the school will cooperate with their investigations. All search staff will be recalled back to the school and given instructions accordingly.
- While waiting for the police and the missing child's parents/carers, searches for the child will continue. During this period other members of staff will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children. The correct adult to child ratios will be maintained at all times.
- The Headteacher will be responsible for meeting the police and the missing child's parent/carers. They will co-ordinate any actions instructed by the police and do all they can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers.
- Once the incident is resolved, the Headteacher and the staff team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes (paying particular attention to reviewing security on site). This will include completing a Critical Incident Review and an Internal Lessons Learnt Proforma.
- The Headteacher will inform all relevant stakeholders of the findings, implications and outcomes of the review.
- All incidents of children going missing from the setting will be recorded on an incident form, Ofsted will also be informed within 14 days if an Early Years provision.

Missing Child - Off Site

It is the Visit Leader's responsibility to ensure that children do not go missing. In order to do this, the school must ensure that:

- There is a regular head count of children when on trips, particularly when moving from one place to another.
- Children are informed of what to do in the event that they become separated from the group school /setting party e.g. a centralised meeting point, the seeking of an adult from the venue's support.
- Children are reminded to stay close at all times and with a partner/another child.
- Children are informed of where they can and cannot go without permission.

- Children are distinguishable from others by means of hats/clothing e.g. high visibility vests or bands e.g. with school name or number on etc. Children should not be identified with name badges.
- There is a regular register or name call if there is a concern that a child may be missing.

If a child goes missing off-site the following procedures will be activated:

- A member of staff will inform the School/Headteacher immediately who will co-ordinate any action required at the school site e.g. contacting parents.
- All of the staff on the visit will be coordinated with to check if the child is with them and if not a search of the area will be instigated (as per missing child on site Code RED).
- There will be suitable supervision in place for the other children and staff ratios will be maintained at all times. Remaining children should be kept together in a centralised place for safety.
- After 10 minutes of thorough searching, if the child is still missing, a staff member will inform the local police and request the school to contact the child's parents/carers (or emergency contact if they are unobtainable).
- One member of staff will remain at the scene whilst others return to the setting with the children.
- The remaining member of staff will meet the police and parents/carers when they arrive at a designated point.
- Once the incident is resolved, the Headteacher and the staff team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes (paying particular attention to reviewing security on site). This will include completing a Critical Incident Review.
- The Headteacher will inform all relevant stakeholders of the findings, implications and outcomes of the review.
- All incidents of children going missing will be recorded on an incident form, Ofsted will also be informed by telephone within 14 days if an early years provision.
- The full workforce will be advised not to talk to the press/media and not to share any information of the incident with anyone other than directly in school.
- The school will be prepared for press interest and a script for the whole workforce will be provided in conjunction with the press office and other critical incident support.

Uncollected Child

If a child is not collected within 15 minutes of the agreed collection time, school will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, the school 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 two-hour period, the school will contact the Social Care Duty Officer. Emergency arrangements for the child will be made through social care and a visit to the family home will be arranged and contact with the Police will be made.

References

Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2026
Local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures
KCSIE 2026

Statutory Framework EYFS

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

SCR/NPR's return to school interviews

Policy for children and young people in our care and previously in care (CLA and PCLA)



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