

St Margaret's Preparatory School



Safeguarding: Lost or Missing Children Policy

Date Policy Reviewed	Policy Reviewed By	Reason/Outcome	Next Review Due
August 2016	Callum Douglas	Review	August 2017

KEY FACTS

- ✦ **This policy enables our school 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 SIRC (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.**

- We want... every child to love coming to school and to love learning.
- We want... all children to feel secure and cared for.
- We believe... in teaching the whole child and finding exciting ways to enhance their learning experience so that when they leave St. Margaret’s, they say what a fantastic school it is in every way.

And this is what we aim to do

- Provide a high quality education, where children can grow in knowledge and understanding.
- Equip all children with appropriate skills, attitudes and values.
- Create an environment where every child can fulfil their potential.
- Encourage every child to benefit from our caring staff and fine facilities.
- Enable every child to communicate with confidence in every situation.
- Treat every child with the highest standards of courtesy, loyalty, honesty and fairness, and expect the same from them in return.

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:

Early and Late Waiters

A rota for the supervision of Early and Late Waiters is published in the Staff Room and is on the school system. Early Waiters is from 8.00 a.m. to 8.30 a.m. in Transition classroom. Late Waiters is from 4.00 p.m. (3.50 p.m. for Pre-Prep) to 5.20 p.m. in Reception classroom. EYFS classroom ratios apply to both Early and Late Waiters. (Please see our Pre- and Post School Care Policy and Parents' Information Booklet)

Normal Dismissal Procedures

Nursery/Transition : From Conservatory doors. Staff hand over child to parent or named adult collecting.

Reception : From the front door of the Reception wing to parent or named person. Any children attending After School Club (ASC) or Late Waiters (LW) wait in class and then are taken to respective room by teacher or Nursery Nurse.

Pre-Prep : From LAF Building exits with class teacher or, on occasion, TA. Children are dismissed when teacher and child see parent or named adult. If there is an arrangement between parents to take another child home, this is often communicated in diaries and, if not, a 'phone call will be made to check permission. Any children attending After School Club or Late Waiters wait in class and then are taken to respective room by teacher or TA, and handed to the Club Leader who will dismiss them. Any messages, etc, needing to be passed on to parents will also be given.

Prep : Year 6 dismissed from Conservatory; Year 5 from the Music Room; Year 4 from the East Door; Year 3 from the West Door – all accompanied by the form teacher or another member of staff. If there is an arrangement between parents to take another child home, this is often communicated in diaries and, if not, a 'phone call will be made to check permission. Any children attending After School Club or Late Waiters wait in class and then are taken to respective room by teacher or TA, and handed to the Club Leader who will dismiss them. Any messages, etc, needing to be passed on to parents will also be given.

Procedure for Non-Collection of Child by Parent or Carer

1. Take child to the School Office.
2. The Office will contact parent, carer or named adult on child's records.

3. Establish why child has not been collected. If due to traffic, etc, keep child safely in School and feed, reassure and care for appropriately.

4. If no contact can be made with any named adult, School will inform Social Services.

At all times, reassure the child that they are to be cared for and that they are safe.

We strive to look after each child safely throughout the time he or she is under our care

SECURITY – TERM TIME

Morning Security Procedures

Any security problems which occurred the previous night are logged and reported to the Bursar and the Headmaster. Serious incidents are reported to the Police.

The gate to the overflow car park remains open overnight so that the Cleaner can access the building in the early morning.

During term time, the Caretaker unlocks the main car park gate no earlier than 7.00.

The Cleaner de-activates the alarm in the LAF Building.

The Early Waiters classroom and the rooms used for morning clubs are opened at 08.00am. Access for parents to leave their children at early waiters and clubs is via the main car park or the overflow car park.

All parents/carers dropping children off at Early Waiters are required to accompany their child(ren) into the Early Waiters Classroom and to sign to confirm that they have dropped their children off. A register is taken of all children being dropped off for morning clubs.

The doors are opened to all other parents and children not attending Early Waiters or clubs at 08.30. All parents are required to leave site by 08.50am at the latest and the gates are closed and padlocked at that time unless there is an Assembly or other function taking place when the gates are closed and locked as soon as the last parent has left.

All staff know the code to the padlocks and are instructed not to divulge it to anyone.

Staff are not permitted to leave site during the day except in exceptional circumstances. Any member of staff who needs to leave the School by car during the day must make sure that the gate is immediately closed and padlocked after them. Anyone leaving the premises during the day must have permission from the Head and sign out in the office.

All access into School after 08.50 is through the main entrance in the Courtyard. Visitors must ring the doorbell for admission and be signed in in accordance with the Visitors and Contractors on Site Policy.

Parents bringing children late into School must bring them in through the Office. The Head's PA will then ensure that they are entered on the Register and, if appropriate, she will accompany them to their classroom.

Lunchtime Security Procedures

The gate to the main car park is opened at 12.50. This is to allow parents to park in the School grounds to collect children from Nursery and Transition. The Caretaker stands by the gate to ensure that no unauthorised access or egress is allowed.

The gates are closed and padlocked again at 1.10.

Anyone arriving to collect children after that time is required to go to the Office for entry into the School.

Afternoon and Evening Security Procedures

The gates to the main car park and the overflow car park are unlocked at 3.15 to allow parents to collect their children from School.

The normal times for dismissal from class are 3.30 for Early Years and Pre-Prep and 3.55 for Prep. T

he procedure for dismissal from class, late waiters and clubs - and collection by parents/carers - is set out in the Supervision of Pupils Policy.

The gate to the main car park is closed and locked by 7.00.

VISITORS AND CONTRACTORS ON SITE

The procedure for accepting and supervising visitors and contractors into School is covered in the Visitors and Contractors on Site Policy.

- 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 LT 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 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.

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

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

Compliance	
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.

Audience	
Audience	Heads, DSLs

Document application	
England	Yes
Wales	Yes
Spain	Yes

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Related documentation	
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