




South Lee Prep School
Bury St Edmunds

Missing Child Policy

September 2024

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Signed: 	Steve Honeywood, Chair of Governors 3/9/24
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Missing Child Procedure

The following is the procedure to be followed in the event of a child going missing.

For EYFS Children (Nursery to Reception) and children in Yr1 – Yr2:

Electronic gates/doors are used to enter EYFS. EYFS and Pre-prep children are usually kept within sight and hearing at all times, and always within one or the other. In the very unlikely event that a child went missing there would be immediate identification of the situation by staff, due to the high child to teacher/assistant ratio and the constant interaction, observation and monitoring of the children by the staff. This ratio is evident in all aspects of school life. This situation would also be identified through the registration procedure at the start of the day and at the start of afternoon lessons.

Once this situation was identified, the following procedure would be implemented:

- Staff would remain calm and ensure that all pupils remain in adequate supervision.
- The premises would be searched, including key areas where the child might be found (toilets, playgrounds, and cloakrooms).
- The Senior Management Team would be informed immediately.
- Staff would be questioned to find out when and where the child was last seen.
- The sign in and sign out sheets would be checked.
- A check would be made with the School Secretary that the child did not have an authorised absence
- The Nowton Road area would be checked, including areas where parents generally tend to park.
- The decision would be taken with the Headmistress to carry out a full roll call and fire drill.
- The child's parents would be called.
- In the highly unlikely event that the child was not found after 15 minutes, the Police would be informed.

We would ensure the safety and calm of the other children through our normal routines and procedures.

There are many precautions in place to minimize this risk, including:

- The high child to teacher/teaching assistant ratio, including training of staff in vigilance of gates when on break duty
- Regular reminders to the children about the use of the gate keypad locks as well as what to do if they find themselves outside the school gates with no adult

For Children in Yr 3 – Yr8:

Electronic gates are used in the playground. Children must be signed out by their parents and the list would be checked in the first instance. In the very unlikely event that a child went missing during the school day, appropriate staff would be contacted to ensure that the child is not absent with permission. Senior Management would be informed immediately. Once this situation was identified, the premises would be searched, including key areas where the child might be found (toilets, playground, changing rooms, Music Rooms, Art Room, Science Room, Library and cloakrooms). Relevant staff would

be informed immediately, once a search had been undertaken, and a decision made about whether to do a full roll call (fire drill). In the highly unlikely event that the child was not found the child's parents and the Police would be informed.

If a child is missing after school, the process would be slightly different:

- All club registers are checked.
- Check the club again in case the child has arrived late and quietly check with any of the child's friends who may know where the child is.
- Ring the child's parent.

- Inform a member of SMT and search the school, including deciding on whether a full roll-call (fire drill) is carried out.
- Contact the police.

Procedure for if a child goes missing from the Sports Hall:

- The children are signed out of the main school site when they go to the sports hall.
- If a child goes missing over at the sports hall, the member of staff in charge must ring the school office immediately. The office staff will check the sign out list to ensure the child left the school. They will also check the register to ensure the child was in school that morning. Finally, they will check the peri teaching lists and the appointments list to ensure the child is not at a music/drama lesson or at an appointment.
- If the child is still missing, Senior Management will be informed immediately and staff will be deployed over to the Sports Hall to do a thorough search.
- A search will also take place at the main school site in case the child came back to school.
- If the child is still not found, ring the child's parent.
- Inform the police.

If the Police need to be called:

- While waiting for the Police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, staff will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children at the school.
- A senior member of staff will be responsible for meeting the Police and the missing child's parents/carers. He/she will co-ordinate any actions instructed by the Police, and do all she/he can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers.
- Once the incident is resolved, the SLT and the staff team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes.

Procedures for if a child goes missing from a trip or a visit (this includes the Victory ground/Nowton Park/Astroturf):

When a member of staff or parent volunteer notices a child is missing, after an initial search, they must notify the Group Leader and where possible a member of staff on the site of the trip. The Group Leader will alert all members of staff on the trip and contact the Headmistress.

- All pupils will be brought together in a safe and sheltered place to be supervised by the Group Leader and an additional member of staff so that the remaining staff can conduct a search. A thorough search of the site, both indoors and outdoors will be conducted.
- Staff and, if appropriate, peers will be questioned in a calm manner about when and where the child was last seen.
- A full roll call of pupils on the trip will be taken.
- In the unlikely event that the child has still not been found then at this stage the child's parents/carers will be telephoned. Further action beyond this shall be taken in consultation with the parents/carers, the Head, or other SLT members.
- The search will include a thorough check of exits, doors and gates to see that there has been no breach of security.
- If the child is still not found after 15 minutes, the Police should be informed, at which point the group leader would assume the role of dealing with the appropriate authorities.

There are many procedures in place to minimize this risk including:

- High pupil to staff ratios
- Regular head counts to ensure that all children are present and always when leaving or arriving at a venue / section.
- Reminders about behaviour to children so they know who their nearest adult is and how to find help.
- Designated meeting points on school trips/visits pointed out to pupils and staff in case a child gets lost.