



Missing Child Policy

March 2025

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Governor signature	W.Wills
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Introduction

The Lightyear Federation takes the safety of children very seriously and will take every precaution necessary to ensure that children in our care are safeguarded. This policy has been written and should be read in conjunction with the school health and safety policy.

Purpose and aims of the policy statement

The purpose of this policy statement is to give all staff a clear understanding of how to respond and who to inform should they discover a child is missing.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Provide a clear procedure which is understood and effectively implemented by staff;
- Enable a missing child is located as quickly as possible and that the appropriate level of safety and security is maintained as appropriate to the pupil's age and emotional/developmental maturity.

Staff need to be mindful that a child can go missing at any time of the day. The following times are examples of occasions providing opportunities for a child to go missing:

Occasions when a child could go missing:

- From indoor lessons; for example, when a child is allowed to leave the classroom to go to the toilet
- From an outdoor lesson; for example, during PE lessons or Outdoor learning
- Travelling around the school; for example between assemblies or playtime.
- On a school trip
- Times when the school/nursery site are busier such as at the start or end of the school day

Preventative Measures

On-site checks are made on a daily basis to ensure the safety of our children. Class registers are taken first thing in the morning and afternoon sessions. On completion, registers are checked by the Attendance and Admissions Officer and a call is made to parents/carers if a child is missing from the morning register and no communication has been received as to why the child is absent from school. All absence is followed up with in line with our federation attendance policy.

At the end of the day, children are dismissed directly to parents/carers at the classroom door/gate unless permission has been received for the child to be added to the walking home list. Class Teachers are responsible for dismissing children from the classroom at the end of the day. Children will only be dismissed to an adult listed as having 'permission to collect' on the child's Arbor account (unless a direct message is received from a parent/carer about an alternative pick-up arrangement). Children who are in after school clubs will be delivered to the club by a class adult and a register will be taken by the club leader. Any children missing from the club will be immediately communicated to the school office who will check whether the child has been collected by a parent/carer. If the child has not been collected, the missing child procedure will be followed.

Our Educational Visits are all individually risk assessed as part of our procedure for taking children off-site. On arrival, all children are gathered into one place and the register will be checked against the children present. A safe meeting area will be identified and explained to all children and adults. Explicit reminders about staying with the group/with trip adults will be given. Registers and headcounts will occur throughout the trip and always at key transitions such as moving on/off coach and moving between areas. There will be consideration as to whether badges with a school contact number are to be worn by children.

Children who pose greater risk of going missing during an educational trip will have their own specific risk assessment and appropriate support measures put in place to minimise any risk.

In the unlikely event that a child should go missing, the following procedures will apply. This applies to all situations where:

- Having arrived at the school, a child goes missing.
- A child goes missing whilst on a trip organised by the school.

In this instance, the most senior member of staff on site is responsible for co-ordinating the following procedure, either directly, or by phone if the children are on a trip.

Missing Child Procedure:

If, in the unlikely event of a member of staff not being able to account for a child's whereabouts after having arrived at school, the following action will be taken:

- Identify which child/children are missing using the register and inform the most senior member of staff at the school.
- Check all exterior doors and gates are secure (if in the school/nursery).
- Check the immediate area.
- Ask the children, without alarming them, if they have seen the child that is missing.
- Ensure all adults in the building are aware of the situation.
- Establish who last saw the missing child; where and when.
- At least one member of staff will stay with main group of children in their location while others are dispatched to continue to search all areas that the child may have gone to. All rooms and outdoor areas to be checked.
- If the child cannot be located, the police and parents/carers will be contacted following an appropriate immediate search.
- A senior member of staff will coordinate study of CCTV.
- Allocated staff will continue to search, ensuring that they are in telephone communication with an identified senior member of staff.
- Identified senior member of staff to gather the relevant information on the child; including D.O.B, where last seen and a basic description. Senior member of staff to remain sole point of communication.
- Whilst waiting for the police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. If the child lives within walking distance of the setting, at least one adult will make the journey on foot in order to try to catch up with or intercept the child if they have walked towards their home address.
- The identified senior member of staff will inform the Executive Headteacher who will communicate with Chair of Governors. There will be consideration as to whether the Area Education Officer (Lee Round) and Social Services need to be contacted.
- The Executive Headteacher will initiate the Emergency Plan Team.

For School Trips:

If the incident happens whilst on a trip, the trip leader will inform the most senior member of staff at the school as soon as possible and the following procedure will be followed:

- Identify which child is missing and inform the most senior member of staff at the school.
- Ask the children, without alarming them, if they have seen the child that is missing; establish who last saw the missing child, where and when.
- Check the immediate area.
- Keep the safest appropriate ratio of adults including a staff member (not a trip volunteer) with the main group of children and dispatch any other staff to search the vicinity.
- The school will be contacted immediately following an appropriate immediate search. The police will be contacted by the senior member of staff (see below)

- Allocated staff will continue to search ensuring that they are in telephone communication with the trip leader.
- Most adults and all children to return to the school as soon as safe to do so.
- **The most senior members of staff in the school will:**
 - Gather the relevant information on the child, D.O.B, where last seen and a basic description and remain sole point of communication.
 - Inform Police on 999 and hand over all relevant details of the child/children.
 - Call the parents/carers to inform them and let them know what actions are being taken.
 - The identified senior member of staff will inform the Executive Headteacher who will communicate with Chair of Governors and the Area Education Officer (Lee Round) and Social Services where necessary.
 - Initiate the Emergency Plan Team.

Any contact between the school and parents of other children will be dealt with by a designated person from the school. No other member of staff is to communicate with any parents or engage in any form of social media regarding the missing child except to refer them to the correct person.

Any contact between the school and any media will be handled by the Chair of Governors, either on-site or remotely. No other member of staff will discuss anything with any media or engage in any form of social media regarding the missing child.

Any incidents must be recorded in writing by all staff involved.

Following resolution of the incident a brief summary should be circulated to all staff and governors.

Emergency Contact Details:

Police – 999 or 101

Ashford Police Station - 01622 690690

Folkestone and Hythe Police Station - 01622 690690

Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway - 01797 362 353

Network Rail - 03457 11 41 41

Kent Safeguarding (Front Door) - 03000 41 11 11 Out of hours (after 5pm / Urgent calls only)
please contact: 03000 41 91 91