



Missing Child Policy

The safety of pupils is our priority whilst they are at Busbridge Infant school and every care is taken to ensure that all pupils are accounted for at all times when they are in our care. This policy sets out our procedures for dealing with the unlikely event of a child going missing. Every adult who works at the school has received safeguarding training and has been trained to appreciate that they have a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times.

The aim of this policy is to:

1. provide a clear procedure which is understood and effectively implemented by all staff
2. enable the missing pupil to be located as quickly as possible, given the appropriate level of safety and security

Staff are mindful that, in the unlikely event, a child can go missing at any time of the day and “it could happen here”.

Responsibilities

It is the Headteacher’s responsibility to:

- ensure that all staff are aware of this policy
- ensure relevant staff are aware of their responsibilities and what is expected and the procedures to follow
- ensure that the policy is reviewed on an annual basis or as appropriate

It is the responsibility of all Staff to:

- read the policy and act at all times according to its guidance
- complete Attendance Register accurately and promptly
- Registers must be completed twice a day;

- for morning registration by 9.00 am
- for afternoon registration by 1.00pm
- After the morning registration, a member of the school office staff will begin the process of following up late arrivals and absences and will telephone home from 9.00am and before 9.30am
- Children arriving after the gate has been closed at 8.55am must report to the Reception area in the school office
- A member of office staff will email the headteacher with a total number of absences and attendances with a summary list of explanations
- Both sets of gates are supervised by adults wearing high visibility jackets to welcome families, ensure the safety of pupils and to remind parents about the use of mobile phones
- Children requiring 1:1 support are met by the designated adult at the appropriate gate to welcome them, holding their hand if appropriate
- In the morning, staff on duty in the designated play areas will ensure their safety and signal the time to go into class, by raising a hand
- At the end of the day, every child must be handed over to their designated parents/carers by the class adult at the designated area closest to the classroom
- It is the responsibility of parents to ensure they provide correct and updated contact information and know the procedures for handover of their child at the beginning and end of the day
- The office staff will ensure that any alteration to the collection arrangements are conveyed to the relevant adults from 3.00pm
- If a parent takes a pupil out of school during the day, the parents must ensure they sign out their child out at the School Office and sign them in if they return back later, after their appointment, in the main office
- Children who are not collected by the close of the gates at 3.30 are brought to the main office and a call to the named adult is made
- If an unexpected adult comes to collect a child from school, the member of staff i.e Class Teacher or Teaching Assistant would take the child to the office and call the child's parent for confirmation of the adult who has arrived to collect the child
- If the unexpected adult does not consent/have parental responsibility the member of staff would inform the DSL
- The adult who is known to be a potential risk to the child would be asked to wait until further advised was received from the Police/Social Care/C-SPA as appropriate
- **'Busbridge Key'** is the code message for the original member of staff to say to other members of staff to raise a concern that the presenting adult who has come to collect a child does not have parental responsibility or is an adult who is not authorised to collect a child or is a known adult who poses a risk to a child (i.e a court order is in place)
- The code message of **'Busbridge Key'** will indicate that the child needs to be away from the adult whilst the DSL clarifies the arrangements
- Woodland School sessions are all carried out on the school site so the potential for getting lost or going missing is very low due to the site being secure, locked and gated
- Additional head counts are carried out in smaller groups frequently during Woodland Schools due to the nature of being outdoors
- There is an Educational Visits policy which should be referred to before any trip is organised which takes children off site. Children at this school do not attend residential trips due to their age.

It is the responsibility of Parents/Carers to:

- ensure they provide correct and updated contact information on the 'Pupil Information Form'
- know the procedures for handover of their child at the beginning and end of sessions
- ensure any child arriving after 9.00am reports to the office for registration
- enter the school grounds via both sets of school gates, sited at Hambledon Road (main entrance) and Chestnut Way (alternative entrance)

It is the responsibility of Governors to:

- ensure they are aware of the school's procedures
- challenge/support the school in its review of this policy.

Additional precautions to prevent a child from going missing:

All children are supervised at all times, whether in the classrooms before school starts, during a learning break time, in PE lessons, at after school clubs, or attending wrap around care and holiday clubs.

Any visitors to the school, including parents, may only enter and leave the building via the Main Entrance where they must sign in and out and wear a visitor's red (unchecked DBS) or green lanyard (checked DBS) / badge at all times while on the premises. They must not be left unsupervised with children at any time. This is explicit in the guidance which is shared when visitors arrive.

When a child is collected from school during the school day whether due to illness or a pre-arranged appointment, they must ALWAYS be collected from the Reception Desk so that they may be signed out to record the fact that they are no longer on the premises.

Procedures aimed at reducing risk of a missing pupil:

- School gates are locked at all times during the school day
- There is a secure perimeter fence around our site which is checked daily
- The fire exit doors in the hall are to remain shut at all times unless the hall is attended. On these occasions, staff maintain high levels of vigilance to ensure children stay in the hall
- Adults do a head count before and after break and check the child are all present
- A bell is rung 5 minutes before the end of break to ensure that children begin to transition into class efficiently

During break times:

- Adequate staff are on duty in line with recent rota
- External gates remain closed
- Staff 'patrol' / 'circulate' all areas in the playground /field throughout break times

On Educational visits:

- Risk assessments are in place with adequate staff / pupil ratios
- Permission from parents is obtained generically at the beginning of their time at the school and this covers all trips
- The school mobile telephone is available for staff to be taken on education visits

At After School Clubs:

- Risk assessments are in place
- A register of pupils is taken and returned to the office for safe keeping

If a child insists on leaving the premises:

- If a child insists on leaving the premises with the knowledge of the Staff, reasonable force to keep the child on the School premises should be used and parents will be contacted immediately (see separate restraint policy)
- If the child leaves the premises then call the police on 999

Procedures in the event of a child going missing

In the event of a child identified as missing while at school:

- ◆ The member of staff who has noticed the missing child will calmly inform the nearest member of staff.
- ◆ One adult to tell the office and most senior member of staff on site, the rest of available adults to start search. Note time
- ◆ Establish who is missing and any details about what they were wearing.
- ◆ One member of staff will promptly, but calmly round up the children.
- ◆ Staff will count and name check all the pupils present against the register and sensitively question the children about the missing child e.g. asking if they have gone for first aid, to the toilet

AT THE SAME TIME all other available staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises – indoors and out and notify the Headteacher if the child is found.

- ◆ A thorough check of all exits to be made to make sure all gates/doors were locked/bolted and there are no other ways a pupil could have left the school.
- ◆ If something is discovered this needs to be drawn to the attention of the staff immediately.
- ◆ The safety and care of other pupils is paramount so the security of the school and the number of staff remaining to supervise the other pupils in the school must be adequately maintained while the search continues.
- ◆ If the child has not been found after 10 minutes from the initial report of them as missing then parents should be notified. The Headteacher or next most senior member of staff on site will decide at which point the police need to be contacted
- ◆ Whilst searching shout for the child since they could be hiding.
- ◆ Remember to search undergrowth and dens, particularly if applicable during a Woodland Session.
- ◆ If searching the location does not find child after 10 minutes then, the Headteacher will inform the police and continue searching. Police will want to know, location, next of kin, detailed description (age, clothing etc), circumstances – what triggered the disappearance, who is searching where, your contact details.
- ◆ Headteacher will inform the parents.
- ◆ Allocate an adult to document incident throughout
- ◆ Headteacher to designate a member of staff with a car to travel to surrounding areas to continue searching for the child

When child is found:

- ◆ Ensure welfare needs are met for the child.
- ◆ Ensure everyone is informed, parents, police, staff
- ◆ If a member of the public finds the child then obtain contact details of the member of the public and where the child was found
- ◆ Advise them not to talk to press /media or mention the incident on social media for 24 hours to enable family to be informed and for the details of the incident to be established
- ◆ Headteacher to arrange an immediate debriefing session for staff
- ◆ Ensure support is offered to any adults who require it
- ◆ After the incident complete an incident form and amend risk assessments as necessary.

If the missing child has any special medical or learning needs then these need to be disclosed to police or other agencies as appropriate

- ◆ Do not admit liability of any sort to anybody.
- ◆ Keep a written record of what happened.

In the event of a member of staff fearing that a child has gone missing while off school premises:

- ◆ Visit leader must ensure safety of remaining pupils. At least 2 staff must stay with them.
- ◆ One or more adults should immediately start searching for the child.
- ◆ The venue / centre staff should be informed immediately.
- ◆ Visit leader should contact school to alert them.
- ◆ If the child is not found within 10 minutes Visit Leader must contact police by phoning 999.
- ◆ Visit leader should alert school that the police have been contacted and school will make arrangements to notify parents, after which procedures above to be followed.

Reviewed: Summer 2023

To be reviewed Summer 2024