

Policy Issues and Updates

<i>Pages</i>	<i>Issue Number</i>	<i>Date</i>
Whole Document – New	1	September 2023
Updates to new staffing	2	September 2024

This Policy has been approved by the Senior leaders and Director.

The policy will be reviewed annually unless circumstances arise requiring an early review.

Approved: September 2024

Signature:



Planned Review Date: August 2026

MISSING CHILD POLICY

Purpose

To as quickly as possible, locate a missing child, return them to safe custody, inform the relevant parties of the situation and invoke a review of the incident.

Prevention

Every effort is made to ensure the safety of the pupils whilst they are in the school's care. To prevent a child going missing all children are registered at the start of the day and the appropriate member of administrative staff will follow up any absences and call parents as soon as possible.

Annually a risk assessment is completed regarding the safety and security of children on the school's premises. Doors are secured and do not allow children independent access; regular reminders are given to parents of the critical role they play.

When there is a trip away from school premises we follow the relevant adult/ child ratio, it is then the responsibility of the staff taking the trip to ensure that a regular register is taken or head count made This will depend on the nature of the trip, the mode of transport used and the location of the trip.

The children are supervised at all times, whether during lesson time, break time, lunchtime, PE lessons or in after-school care.

Pupils are not allowed to leave the school premises on their own during the course of the school day. It is the responsibility of the member of staff on duty whether teaching or supervising break and lunchtime to ensure that the children remain safe. Any visitors to the school are recorded arriving and leaving. Visitors without a current DBS certificate, who can be identified by a red lanyard, are escorted by a member of staff whilst on the premises.

Children should never be allowed to leave the premises during school time without the permission of a member of the Senior School Management Team (SSMT).

However, it is possible that a child may leave the premises without the knowledge or permission of the relevant member of SLT. This policy is put in place to ensure that every action possible is taken to ensure the quick and safe return of that child.

In the event of a child becoming lost while in the care of Chances Mentoring the school will put into practice the following procedures. These ensure that a systematic approach to find the child is taken and consideration is given to the levels of risk to the child.

Lost child on school visit procedure

We attempt to minimise the opportunity of lost children by ensuring they are properly supervised by a member of staff, parent or carer.

- Staff take a list of children's contact details with parent/carer details, numbers and emergency numbers, a mobile phone as well as a mini first aid pack.
- If coach travel is part of the outing, a head count will take place and will be double-checked on the coach prior to leaving.
- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing will ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One member of staff will search the immediate vicinity. If necessary, the teachers will ask all adults and children to return to a meeting point, and will dispatch staff to search for the child.

- Adults will be asked when they last saw the child and what clothes he/she was wearing. Adults may be asked to look for the child, with a member of staff remaining at the meeting point so that if the child is found, this can be reported to the party leader.
- In the event that a child cannot be located, the Head of Centre must be informed.
- In an indoor venue, the staff will contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- If necessary, where possible, at the end of the visit a member of staff will remain at the venue to assist in the search, and if successful, to bring the child back. If the parents are not on the visit, the school will telephone the parents and advise them of the situation.
- In any event, and before leaving the site, the trip leader will ensure appropriate reassurance and comfort is provided to children, parents and staff, and where necessary shall seek assistance in this from a member of SLT.
- Police will be informed as appropriate.
- Staff will bring remaining children back to school.

The investigation

Following the trip in the case of a missing child, the member of staff in charge will write an incident report to include:

- the date and time of the report;
- which staff/ children were in the group or outing;
- when the child was last seen in the group/ outing and the time it is estimated that the child went missing;
- what took place in the group/outing since that time.

Child Missing or lost from school

- The member of staff discovering the loss will inform the Head of Centre.
- A member of staff will make an initial search for the child. The search will start with the school grounds. This will be undertaken as soon as possible
- While the initial search is made another member of staff will make enquiries of all relevant adults and the child's friends at Chances Mentoring to establish the last sighting and time and the emotional state of the child (happy, upset etc).
- If the child remains missing a member of staff will telephone the police, report the situation and follow their advice. . If a child is still missing after 30 minutes (unless stated in EHCP or Risk assessment otherwise) the child is to be reported missing to the police.
- Safe staff / pupil ratios will be maintained for remaining children.
- A member of staff will also telephone the parent(s) or carer(s) and report the situation.
- A member of management will delegate a member of staff to follow, normally on foot, the child's route home, taking a mobile phone with them.
- If possible a parent will be asked to remain at home in case the child has managed to make their way home. The parent will be asked to telephone the relevant member of staff as soon as the child is located.
- Chances Mentoring activities for the remaining children will continue as normal and staff not involved in the search will give the children proper attention.

In all cases, the Head of Centre will carry out a full investigation.

- After the incident a full written report of the incident will be recorded, and copies given to all relevant parties involved.
- A full review of security procedures will be carried out, guidance and procedures will be developed and implemented as required.
- The investigation will involve taking written statements from all the staff present at the time. The appropriate staff will write an incident report detailing the following as necessary:
 - the date and time of the report;
 - what staff/children were in the group/outing;
 - when the child was last seen in the group/outing;
 - what has taken place in the group/outing since then; and
 - the time it is estimated that the child went missing
 - a conclusion will be drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a safeguarding children issue to address. If the child had suffered a qualifying injury a report would be submitted under RIDDOR.

When the child is found

- An appropriate member of staff will care for and talk with the child, bearing in mind that he/she may be unaware of having done anything wrong or, alternatively, may also have been afraid and distressed and may now be in need of comfort.
- Other adults present will take the opportunity to speak to the remaining children to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises and why.

After the incident

An appropriate member of staff will sensitively discuss with the child's parents the events surrounding the disappearance of the child. If appropriate, a short meeting will be held at the end of the session/start of the following session or a note sent home to give parents brief, accurate information about the incident, as soon as possible, for reassurance. Liability should not be discussed until the incident has been fully investigated by the school and Social Services if relevant. Staff and parents should be asked to refer any enquiries they have or any enquiries from the media, about the incident, to the Head of Centre.

Policy for Uncollected Children

There may be an occasion when an emergency occurs, and a parent is delayed and a child remains uncollected.

If a child is not collected from school within 15 minutes of the appointed time:

- The 2 emergency contact numbers will be called to find out the reason.
- The child will be placed into aftercare until he/she can be collected.
- If the parents or emergency contacts cannot be contacted after a reasonable length of time a member of management will be informed and if not on the premises will return to school.
- If no contact with parents has been established by 4.00pm – close to the school building – Oldham's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub will be informed.