



# Missing Child Policy

Bramley Church of England (VA) Infant and Nursery School

**Policy effective from** March 2019

**Approved by** Headteacher

**Last reviewed on** September 2023

**Next review due by** May 2025

## Version history

Version	Description of change	Author	Approved
3.0	Adoption of trust policy	Amanda Johnston	Director of education
2.0	Reformatted and language standardised. Removal of managing people revised with supporting others.	Shona Taylor	Headteacher
1.0	Original policy.	Elaine Spick	Governors

## Missing Child Policy

### **Aims**

- To minimise the possibility of a child being lost/missing at the school.
- To minimise the possibility of a child being lost/missing on an educational visit.
- To outline the procedure that should be followed in the event of a child being lost on an educational visit.
- To follow up a child having been lost at school or on an educational visit.

### **Minimising the possibility of a child going missing at the school**

The majority of children are brought to the school by their parents. Very few arrive independently and this minimises the possibility of them becoming lost/going missing on the way to the school.

Children enter the school via their external classroom door or through the main entrance if late. This reduces the possibility of children arriving at the school unnoticed. Children are marked onto a register as they enter the doorway, if they are late parents are expected to sign them in at the office.

All children must be accompanied to the entrance doors or office by an adult, they must not be left at the school gates.

All children are registered between 8.35am and 8.45am and registers are returned to the office immediately (electronically) after being taken via Arbor. Parents are asked to telephone the school in advance if their child will be absent and they haven't already given notice about this through an approved leave of absence form. The registers are checked by the school secretary and any unexplained absences are followed up with a phone call home by 10am, to ensure that the school and parent knows the whereabouts of the child. If parent is not contactable other contacts will be called in order of priority.

Registers are formally taken again at the beginning of the afternoon session. Class Teachers should immediately check with the school office if a child is unexpectedly not present for the afternoon session. Any children who goes in and out of the school during the course of the day for appointments etc, must be signed in and out by the parent. If the child cannot be accounted for, follow the procedure outlined below.

Staff should check whether all children are present at the beginning of each session (which need not be done with a formal register) and if a child is not, establish whether the child has been in the school that day. If necessary, send an LSA/HLTA or a red help card via a responsible child to the school office to check.

All children are told that they must not open any of the doors or gates that create an exit to the premises. All staff are asked to be vigilant about any open doors and gates and ensure that they are closed and where necessary, padlocked immediately. If a child is waiting to be collected from the main entrance, they must be reminded not to open the doors, even if they see someone they know come to the door. Any child seen leaving the premises unaccompanied at any time of the day, should be challenged.

Class Teachers should all be present on the classroom exit door, to see their class out at the end of the school day. Any children not collected should be taken to the school office and NOT permitted to leave unaccompanied or with another parent, unless prior notice has been provided by the parent to the class teacher/school office. If the school office is closed classteacher will contact the parents by phone.

No child will be released to another adult/ parent without first having confirmed this with the parent. The adult collecting will be required to give the agreed password.

All after school clubs and after school care should check that the expected pupils are present at the beginning of the activity. The office must be informed promptly that all the children are present or whether anyone is missing. If the office is closed club staff should check whether the child was present in school with class teacher or headteacher and the contact parents directly.

Office staff must check the whereabouts of the child as outlined below, but checking first with the class teacher as to whether they saw the child being collected after school that day and by whom. It is often the case that the child has been collected instead of attending a club but this must not be assumed. At the end of the club, the club leader is responsible for ensuring that the child is collected by their parent. If a child is not collected after an after-school club, they should be taken to the school office, who will telephone their parents. If the office is closed club staff contact parents directly.

### **Minimising the possibility of a child being lost on an educational visit**

Please refer to the staff handbook and Offsite Activities Guidance for further details. The teacher in charge of the visit will have an accurate list of all children on the visit. All children need to be counted frequently throughout the visit, especially when they are re-grouping after a visit to the toilets or a shop etc. Depending on the nature of the visit, group leaders will also take responsibility for ensuring that their group is accounted for. Children should also be encouraged to take responsibility for each other and notice if someone is missing. [ID tags](#) with the school/group leaders phone number on them, should be considered for children at an age appropriate level.

All the children and adults are given an important briefing before an educational visit. All children should be reminded about remaining with their group leader or within designated area.

### **Procedure if a child goes missing at the school**

- Establish whether the child has been in school that day or whether they have gone on a legitimate visit and have been signed out. Check with the office to see if there is a message from the parent about collecting them early etc.
- Check with the office whether they know if the child has left the premises.
- Check that the child is not in an intervention, ELSA session or other activity or in Breakfast/After School Care.
- Without causing undo alarm, establish where the child was last seen; try to verify this with an adult rather than just a child's word.

- Ensure that the rest of the children are safe whilst a thorough search is conducted of the school premises, inside and out by all non-teaching staff. Walkie Talkies will be distributed and areas designated by the school office. Check everywhere, including unlikely areas, in cloakrooms, under coats, toilets, etc, anywhere a child could hide.
- Check all available exits and alarms.
- If all possibilities have been explored and the child cannot be accounted for, the Headteacher must be informed (or senior teacher in his/her absence) and the parents must be phoned. If the parents cannot account for the whereabouts of the child it will be necessary to phone the Police. It will be helpful to know when and where the child was last reliably seen.
- Where an adult sees a child leave the school premises, they must not follow the child off-site or cause them to run away, although if possible, retain a line of sight. In this instance, the Police should be called first and then the parent informed.
- If the Police have been called, the attached Director of Education must be notified.
- The School Emergency Plan should be followed with regards to possible media interest. Further guidance can be provided by your Director of Education.

#### **Procedure if a child goes missing on an educational visit**

- Establish where the child was last seen and with whom.
- Inform group leader.
- If in groups, check with all the other groups to see if the child has joined a different group.
- Ensure that the rest of the children are safe whilst a thorough search is conducted of the area.
- Retrace previous steps/areas visited.
- Depending on the location of the visit, the group leader should inform any relevant authorities for their assistance in locating the missing child. E.g. An information point, Centre Staff etc.
- The group leader should inform local Police or other authority e.g. Coast guard.
- The group leader should contact the Headteacher at the school to inform of the situation and the action taken. The Director of Education should be informed at this point.
- The group leader should liaise with the Headteacher about contacting parents and should inform the Headteacher immediately the child is found.
- The School Emergency Plan should be followed with regards to possible media interest. Further guidance can be provided by the Director of Education.

#### **To follow up a child going missing in the school or on an educational visit:**

Once a child has been found it is necessary to establish how the child was lost to minimise the likelihood of the event recurring. An incident form must be completed and changes to risk assessments etc may be required

If the child was lost in the school, the Headteacher will conduct an investigation into how this occurred and will address any matters arising from this.

If the child went missing on an educational visit the Group Leader will need to prepare a report for the Headteacher on the circumstances regarding the incident. The Headteacher will address any issues arising from this and will liaise with the Educational Visits Co-ordinator regarding any amendments that may need to be made to the Offsite Activities Guidance.

If the Police have become involved the Trust may conduct an investigation.