

Missing Child Policy and Procedures

Introduction

The safety and welfare of the pupils of Chiswick & Bedford Park Preparatory School Nursery (“the Nursery”) is paramount at all times from the time that pupils are delivered to school until the time that they leave the teacher’s care at the end of the day, whether that is at the official school finishing time, or at another time.

Registration

The main door of the Nursery is opened at 8.30am. The door is manned, usually by the Head of Nursery, while it is open, to prevent a child who enters the Nursery from leaving again. There is also a member of staff on the Nursery white gate. The door is closed at 8.45am. The register is taken by 9.00am, usually by the Head of Nursery. Children not present are marked as ‘a’ (no reason yet provided for absence) unless a reason has been given for their absence. Children arriving after registration are marked in the register by a member of staff. A second register is taken at the beginning of the afternoon session.

Children are counted when moving between the Nursery site and the Church Hall or Rocks Lane. Children going on visits are marked in the Register in the usual way; if a visit is due to leave school before 8.55am then the Register will be taken before the group leaves. Children are counted frequently during outings (see *Educational Visits Policy*).

Procedure if a child goes missing from the Nursery

If, during the Nursery day, any member of staff has reason to believe that a child is missing the following actions should be taken in this order:

- The Head of Nursery should be informed (they may know where the child is);
- Staff working with the children, and the children should be asked if they know the whereabouts of the missing child, or when they were last seen;
- The School office should be informed;
- The Headmistress should be informed;
- A search of all the Nursery building should be carried out by available staff and all staff should be informed that a child is missing;
- **The police should be called and the child’s parents/guardians informed;**
- A second search of the Nursery should be undertaken and a search made of the neighbouring streets;
- A search should be made of neighbouring streets by two available members of staff using a car – one driving and the other searching;
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead should inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board;
- The Governors should be informed;

- Ofsted should be informed; and
- If appropriate, the insurers should be informed and the HSE under RIDDOR.

As soon as the child has been found, everyone who has been informed that the child is missing should be told that the child has been found but in particular the police and the parents should be informed as soon as possible. If the child is found early in the process, there is no need to continue down the above list of actions.

Procedure if a Child goes missing Off-Site (e.g education visit, Rocks Lane, Church hall)

- The teacher in charge should be informed;
- All adults supervising the children and the children should be asked if they know the whereabouts of the missing child, or when they were last seen;
- Staff at the off-site venue should be informed;
- The teacher in charge should telephone the School/Nursery and inform the Head of Nursery and Headmistress;
- Members of staff should help in searching the site, ensuring that there is adequate supervision of the rest of the group;
- It may be appropriate for members of the Nursery staff to search streets around the site;
- The police should be called; and
- The parents of the child should be informed and the member of staff at the site should be given contact details for the parents for follow-up information.

As soon as the child has been found, everyone who has been informed that the child is missing should be told that the child has been found but in particular the police and the parents should be informed as soon as possible.

Procedure if a Child goes missing during an off-site Visit

Adult: child ratios off-site, including EYFS adult: child ratios are decided on a case by case basis and take into account the ages of the children, whether there are any children with special educational needs in the group, the experience and qualifications of the adults, the destination and activities to be undertaken and the length of the visit (see *Educational Visits Policy*).

If a child is thought to be missing when a group is off-site, the following procedures should be followed:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the group leader on the outing will ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child is missing;
- All adults supervising the children and the children should be asked if they know the whereabouts of the missing child, or when they were last seen;
- At any venue, the group leader will contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found;
- One designated staff member will search the immediate vicinity whilst the other

- adults supervise the remaining children;
- The Head of Nursery will be informed as soon as possible, if she is not present on the outing;
- The Head of Nursery will make her way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff;
- The Head of Nursery will contact the child's parents/guardians and liaise with the police; and
- Staff will take the remaining children back to the Nursery.

As soon as the child has been found, everyone who has been informed that the child is missing should be told that the child has been found but in particular the police and the parents should be informed as soon as possible.

Action to be taken after a Child has been found

- If the child is found to have been in the Nursery or at the off-site location and to have been thought "missing" due to a misunderstanding, then no further action needs to be taken.
- If the child is found to have been signed out by a member of staff, and the class teacher was aware of this, then no further action needs to be taken.
- If the child was reported missing at an off-site location and is found safe before parents have been informed, but somewhere that they should not have been, the Headmistress (Designated Safeguarding Lead) should be informed. Members of staff should review the reasons for it happening and implement measures to ensure that it does not happen again.
- If the child is found to have left the School premises, or to have been in an area of the School that should not be accessible to children, the Headmistress (Designated Safeguarding Lead) should conduct a full investigation, making recommendations for future changes in procedure if necessary.
- If the child's parents have been informed that their child was missing and the child was reported missing due to a misunderstanding, the parents should be telephoned by the Head of Nursery for an apology and explanation.
- If the child's parents have been informed that their child was missing and the Headmistress (Designated Safeguarding Lead) has conducted an investigation, then the parents should be provided with a summary of the investigation's findings. An incident form will be completed and signed by the parents and the Headmistress and a record of the incident will be filed in the Safeguarding file and the child's file.