



Sidcot
Live Adventurously

Policy Name: Missing Child Procedures – Junior School

Policy Number: 1.2a

Date: September 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 At Sidcot we work closely with the children, parents and the community to ensure that all the children have the very best start in life and are kept safe. The welfare of the School's children is its paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the School has undergone training to appreciate their responsibilities to keep the children safe. Our staffing ratios are generous and ensure high levels of supervision.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy relates to the Junior School including the Pre-school.

2.2 A separate policy relates to children who are not collected on time (1.4) and to children in the Senior School (1.2).

3. Procedure for a Missing Child

3.1 Missing on School Premises during school hours

3.1.1 If a child goes missing on school premises during school hours whilst in our care; the person in charge will take the following action immediately:

- Gather all the children safely together and take the register/head count to ensure no other child is missing;
- Check with Reception who will check the signing in / out book;
- Conduct an initial sweep of the immediate area without causing undue panic amongst the other children, and without leaving the children alone at any time. If the child is missing in the Pre-School; check all spaces, cupboards, washrooms, etc where a small child might hide;
- Ask adults, and children (depending on their age) calmly if they remember seeing the child;
- Occupy all of the other children in their classrooms(s) with a relevant activity;
- Check doors and gates for signs of entry / exit;
- When it is confirmed that a child is missing, the person in charge at that time should call for additional help from any other member of staff;
- Maintain staff ratios if necessary by calling on another staff member to make up the required number;
- Instigate a more thorough search of the premises and immediate surrounding area;
- Advise Reception in the Senior school that there is a missing child so that all staff in the School can be asked to check their immediate area, and so that a wider search of the campus can be carried out (buildings and grounds);
- A photo of the child may be shared with staff to enable them to identify the child;
- Contact should be maintained at all times with a senior member of staff;

3.1.2. The Junior School Head will be informed immediately (always within 15 mins) on noticing a child is missing. If the Junior School Head is not available then one of the Junior School Deputy Heads should be informed, they will communicate with the DSL and the Head regarding steps required and communication with parents and/or the police. If the child is not found after 15 minutes the child's parents and the police should be informed.

3.13 A full search will be carried out of the grounds by all available staff.

3.14 If the child is not located; the Junior Head shall inform the Chair of Governors or the Governor with responsibility for safeguarding that a student is missing.

3.2 If a child goes missing off site

3.2.1 The educational trips and visits policy applies when children are being taken away from the School on outings 3.2.2 As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing on site, staff will bring the children in their care together and conduct a head count to ensure that no other child has gone astray.

The procedure is as follows:

- Staff will conduct an initial sweep of the immediate area including any pre-arranged meeting points, without causing undue panic amongst the other children, and/or leaving the children alone at any time;
- Staff will summon assistance (i.e. site security) to carry out a wider search of the area;
- If after 15 minutes the child has not been found, contact the Junior school Head (term time) or Out of School Care Manager (holidays), to advise of a missing child;
- The Junior School Head (or staff member deputising), or the Out of School Manager will contact the missing child's parents to advise;
- The Junior School Head (or staff member deputising) or the Out of School manager will contact the Police;
- Staff will take the remaining children back to the School if practicable.

3.3.3 Procedure once a child has been located

3.3.1 When a missing child has been located, all those previously notified (parents, police, SLT / SMT) must be notified immediately;

3.3.2 The staff member with the closest relationship with the child will talk to, and if necessary comfort the child;

3.3.3 The other children will be spoken to ensure that they understand why they must never leave the premises or group on a school outing;

3.3.4 The Head of the Junior School, or if this is not possible, a member of staff deputising for her, will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an initial account of the incident;

3.1.3.5 Once the child has been found, a full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file by the member of staff who was responsible for the child at the time that they disappeared;

3.1.3.6 An investigation into the incident will be carried out by the Junior School Head. The incident report will detail:

- The date and time of the incident;
- Which staff/children were in the group to which the missing child belonged;
- When the missing child was last seen;
- The length of time that the child was missing for;
- Circumstances surrounding the child's disappearance – what was the child doing/saying prior to going missing;
- Whether follow up with any other agency or internal support is necessary;

- Statements will be taken from all staff members significantly involved in the incident.

3.1.3.7 If the incident warrants police investigation, all staff are required to 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 child protection issue to address please refer to paragraph 4 below.

3.1.3.8 Any media queries should be referred to the Head in accordance with the Critical Incident Management Policy and Procedure (1.1).

3.1.3.9 Following the event, a review will be made of security procedures and all relevant parties will be informed of the findings, implications and outcomes of the review.

4. Safeguarding and Child Protection Matters

4.1 A child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow safeguarding procedures in cases where children go missing and there is a concern, particularly when children go missing on repeat occasions. They should act to identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse, risk of being drawn into terrorism, or exploitation. Consideration will be given to entering a child who repeatedly goes missing on the vulnerable students' register.

4.2 The School's responsibilities to notify the Local Authority are outlined in the safeguarding and child protection policy.

5. Information to be provided to the Police

5.1 When the School contacts the Police; the following information should be provided:

- The child's name;
- The child's age;
- An up-to-date photograph if possible;
- The child's height and physical description;
- Any disability, learning difficulty or special educational needs that the child may have;
- The child's home address and telephone number and details of his/her parents/guardians;
- A description of the clothing that the child is thought to be wearing.

The information will then be passed to the various police stations through police channels and no further notifications from the School should be necessary.

6. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Deputy DSL based in the Junior School and the Board of Governors at the Annual Safeguarding Review, or sooner if legislation or guidance dictates, and whenever a child has been missing for more than one hour or when concerns for his/her welfare have been raised.

7. Related Policies

1.1 Critical Incident Policy and Procedures

1.2 Missing Child – Senior School

1.4 Uncollected Child – Junior School Policy

2.1 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

8. Relevant Regulation and Guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE, September 2023
- The (Education) Independent Schools Standards 2019
- The Handbook for the Inspection of Schools – Commentary on the Regulatory Requirements 2023
- The Prevent Duty – Advice for Schools – June 2015

9. Document Change History

Date of Change	Detail significant changes and any new legislation / guidance taken into account
06.08.2016	Reordered in line with Senior school policy which was Board approved on 18.06.2016
08.10.2016	Adopted by Board of Governors
07.10.2017	Reviewed and adopted by Board of Governors at the Annual Safeguarding Review, references updated.
06.10.2018	Reviewed and adopted by Board of Governors at the Annual Safeguarding Review in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018.
05.10.2019	Reviewed and adopted by Board of Governors at the Annual Safeguarding Review
31.01.2020	3.14 Additional paragraph inserted, "If the child is not located; the Junior Head shall inform the Chair of Governors or the Governor with responsibility for safeguarding that a student is missing."
10.10.2020	Reviewed and adopted by Board at Annual Safeguarding Review. Additional paragraph inserted re measures in the event of school closure or absence due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
10.10.2021	Paragraph 3.1.2 amended to read: 3.1.2. The Junior School Head will be informed immediately (always within 15 mins) on noticing a child is missing. If the child is not found after 15 minutes the child's parents and the police should be informed. Reviewed and adopted
17.10.22	Reviewed and updated by the Head of the Junior School Minor changes, references to Nursery changed to Pre School
01.09.2023	Reviewed, no major changes
10.10.2023	Reviewed and adopted by Board at Annual Safeguarding Review.
09.07.2024	Clarification on communication in the absence of the Junior School Head added to clause 3.1.2

