Kew Green Preparatory School

Procedure for a Missing Child (including the Early Years Foundation Stage)

1. Child Missing on School Grounds during the school day

If a child appears to be missing *while he/she should be on school grounds,* (and following a check of the toilets and other areas where the child may be) the Class Teacher will immediately check with the school office to see if the child has been sent home/signed out. If this is not the case and the child appears to be genuinely missing, office staff will immediately notify members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the site manager. The relevant Head of Section or, in their absence, one of the Deputy Heads, will take overall responsibility for the further actions listed below:

- The SLT member will allocate staff specific areas of the school to check for the missing child, including speaking to children and staff;
- The SLT member will inform the Head of the situation;
- If a child is not found following a thorough check of the school premises, the SLT member will contact parents to check if the child is with them, and if there may be any reason the child may be hiding, and finally to let them know their child is missing. A contact number will be confirmed at this point with the parent and they will be told that the authorities below will be notified;
- Immediately following the notification of the parents, the SLT member will call the local police (Tel 999), who will be notified with a description of the child. A photograph of the child should be printed out from the School Information System, together with any specific medical or other relevant details.
- The SLT member involved and other senior staff as appropriate will liaise with the police and other authorities as required. They will also liaise with the parents as directed by the police. If the child is not found within one hour, the Critical Incident Plan will be invoked.

2. Child Missing on School Grounds at dismissal time

At dismissal time, all pupils are signed out at handover to parent or carer. If, at this point, there is uncertainty as to a child's location then the teacher dismissing the class will investigate what has happened and call the child's parents to find out if the child is already with them. The office staff will immediately notify members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the site manager. The relevant Head of Section or, in their absence, one of the Deputy Heads, will take overall responsibility for the further actions listed below:

- Immediately following the notification of the parents, the SLT member will call the local police (Tel 999), who will be notified with a description of the child. A photograph of the child should be printed out from the School Information System, together with any specific medical or other relevant details;
- The SLT member will inform the Head of the situation;
- The SLT member involved and other senior staff as appropriate will liaise with the police and other authorities as required. They will also liaise with the parents as directed by the police. If the child is not found within one hour, the Critical Incident Plan will be invoked.

3. Child Missing when Off-Site at a Specific Venue

NB Staff will take photos of each child with them on every off-site trip.

If a child appears to be missing *when off-site,* a register will immediately be called by the person in charge of the group with eye contact replies.

- If the child is still missing, members of staff from the venue will be notified, by the person in charge of the group, with the name and a description of the child, to help search for him/her. It will also be requested at this time that all exits, including fire exits, from the venue are monitored.
- The areas just visited will be re-checked by an adult from the school group, nominated by the Trip Group Leader.
- If the child is not found in the next 10 minutes, the School Office will be notified by the Trip Group Leader and the office will immediately notify the Head of Section or, in their absence, the Deputy Head. The Head will also be informed of the situation. A contact mobile number will be confirmed and the time will be noted by the office staff.
- If, after quickly and fully re-searching the venue, the child is not found, the local police will be informed with the name and a description of the child by the trip leader. Parents will be contacted by the Head of Section or Deputy Head managing the situation from school at this time, giving the following information:
  - time the child went missing
  - the place
  - what is being done and by whom.

  A parent contact number will also be taken at this time.
- Regular contact will be maintained between the trip leader and with the school (at least every 30 minutes).
- If none of these actions finds the missing child, and the police have not arrived, the police will be re-contacted and asked to take charge. The school will be notified of this action and the SLT member will nominate a contact person for the police at the school.
- If the child has not been located within one hour, the Critical Incident Plan will be invoked.

4. Child Missing when Off-Site in a non-specific venue

- If the child is found missing when a group is 'outside of school', for example on Kew Green, walking in a line from place to place, attending a sports fixture, etc., a register will immediately be called by the person in charge of the group with eye contact replies.
- Whilst the following actions take place, the safety of the remaining group is of paramount importance.
- If the child is still missing, the surrounding area will be checked quickly calling out to the child for a response.
- If the child is still not found immediately the School Office will be notified by the person in charge of the group and the office will immediately notify the relevant Head of Section or, in their absence, the Deputy Head. A contact mobile number will be confirmed and the time will be noted by the office staff.

- If, after quickly and fully re-searching the area, the child is not found, the adult in charge of the group will ask the School Office to make appropriate telephone calls to the local police (Tel 999) and the coach company (depending on where the group is). The name and a description of the child will be given with time and place the child went missing.
- Parents will be contacted by the SLT member at this time, giving the following information:
    - time the child went missing
    - the place
    - what is being done and by whom.

  A parent contact number will also be taken at this time.
- The SLT member will speak with the person in charge and decide what action will take place with the rest of the group.
- The person in charge will meet with the police at the place where the child appeared to be missing and ask the police to take charge. The school will be notified of this action and the SLT member will nominate a contact person for the police at the school.
- If the child has not been located within one hour, the Critical Incident Plan will be invoked.

5. Children absent or missing from education

All staff should be aware that children being absent from school, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so-called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.

Independent schools have a legal duty to report certain attendance issues to their Local Authority: ten days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence), failure to attend regularly, and deletion from the school register when the next school is not known. In this last case, independent schools are required to report the circumstances as soon as possible to the Local Authority in which the pupil lives. Failure to report children missing education, when this is a requirement, would be non-compliance with the regulatory requirements set out by the Department for Education.

Any concerns relating to the above issues should be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in the first instance in line with our Safeguarding Policy and Attendance & Children Missing or Absent from Education Policy.

6. Investigation following a Missing Child

Following a missing child incident, a thorough investigation will occur, led by the Head along with the GSG Directors.

- The Head will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all staff present at the time, or who were on an outing.

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- The key person/ staff member writes an incident report detailing:
    - the date and time of the report
    - what staff/ children were in the group or 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 is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR agreements and is recorded in the incident book; the local authority health and safety officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.

Written by: DDSL

LAST REVIEW: September 2025

NEXT REVIEW: September 2026