

Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School
"Nurturing curiosity and inspiring imagination"



2024-25

Missing Child Policy and Guidance

DOCUMENT STATUS

Produced By	Version	Date	Action
Sandy Lane Nursery and Forest School <i>(with acknowledgement to Evelyn Street CP School)</i>	1	13.03.14	Adopted by school's Premises, Health and Safety Committee
	2	2017	Updated
	3	24.02.25	Ratified by school's Teaching and Learning Committee

Approval

Governing body free to delegate to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the headteacher

Frequency

Whenever any changes

Amendments

v3

- Policy title changed from 'lost' to 'missing' child
- Reference to uncollected child removed as policy, separate policy created
- Policy rewritten to reflect arrangements for each room

Links to other policies

The Missing Child Policy and Guidance relates to other policies including:

- Safeguarding Policies
- Risk Assessments
- Critical Incident Policy
- Educational visits and LOTC Policy

Rationale

The safety of our pupils is our priority whilst they are in our care at school. This policy sets out our procedures for dealing with the unlikely event of a child going missing.

Purpose

- To ensure a search is made for the child as soon as possible
- To ensure parents and authorities are notified at the appropriate stage
- To ensure a high level of care is maintained for other children in the group while procedures are followed

Broad Guidelines

1. It is the headteacher's responsibility to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of this policy, to ensure relevant staff are aware of their responsibilities, what is expected and the procedures to follow and to ensure that the policy is reviewed on a timely basis.
2. It is the responsibility of all staff to read the policy and act at all times according to its guidance.
3. It is the responsibility of all parents to ensure they provide the correct and updated contact information on a timely basis and know the procedures for handover of their child at the beginning and end of sessions.
4. It is the responsibility of governors to ensure they are aware of the school's procedures and to challenge/support the school in its review of this policy.

Beginning and End of the Day – Garden Room

- Parents are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of their child passes from staff to them and vice versa
- Staff update Class Mark (digital registration) promptly and accurately as children arrive in to the classroom – mornings and afternoon sessions
- All staff ensure that the external gates, providing access to any nursery outside areas, are locked at all times
- If pupils leave the security of the classroom to work or play in other parts of the school, staff ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times
- At the end of the nursery session, once the children have collected their coats and returned to their rooms (any new children are supported in this routine), the following procedures are carried out:
 - ✓ Two staff are assigned to each room, one will be with the children and the other stood by the door monitoring children leaving and returning to the group
 - ✓ The children's names are called out one by one to ensure all children are accounted for and is as recorded on Class Mark (any children unaccounted for will be located and returned to their correct room)

- ✓ The person opening the main entrance door to parents will check with staff in the classroom that all children are accounted for and they are ready for parents to arrive and then open the door to them
- ✓ Parents will enter the classroom and each child will be handed over to their parent/carer from their room doorway
- ✓ The person opening the main entrance door will remain in the entrance and closely monitor to ensure that no unaccompanied children leave the building

Beginning and End of the Day – Sunshine Room

- Parents are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of their child passes from staff to them and vice versa
- Staff update Class Mark (digital registration) promptly and accurately as children arrive in to the classroom – mornings and afternoon sessions
- At the end of the nursery session, once the children have collected their coats, they will sit on the carpet with an adult and the following procedures are carried out:
 - ✓ The children's names will be checked on Class Mark to ensure that all children are accounted for
 - ✓ The person opening the main entrance door to parents will check with staff in the classroom that they are ready for parents to arrive and then open the door to them
 - ✓ Parents will be encouraged to enter the classroom. One staff member will open the classroom door (SR door) and call for each child as their parent arrives.

Beginning and End of the Day – Rainbow Room

- Parents are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of their child passes from staff to them and vice versa
- Staff update Class Mark (digital registration) promptly and accurately as children arrive in to the classroom – mornings and afternoon sessions
- At the end of the nursery session, parents will enter the classroom and collect their child from either indoors or the outdoor space; staff will monitor children as they leave

Children attending for 30-hours

- Children will arrive and be registered as for all children
- At 2.10pm approximately, children collect their belongings from their cupboard and then sit on the carpet with an adult
- The children's names will be checked on Class Mark to ensure that all children are accounted for
- One staff member will remain with the children on the carpet and another staff member will open the main classroom door.
- An additional staff member will open the main door and remain here, as above.
- Parents will be permitted to enter to collect their child one by one; their child will be called to go to their parent rather than the parent enter the classroom
- When all children have been collected, or it is 2.30pm, the main and the classroom door will be closed

- Parents arriving late will be admitted, and allowed to enter the classroom, via the office.

Visits

- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff/pupil ratios are provided when pupils leave the school premises
- Contact details and a list of pupils/groups are taken by a staff member on visits out of school
- Mobile phones are taken on every visit and mobile contact numbers left at school
- Signed permission to leave school site is obtained and signed by parent/carer

Procedures in the event of a child going missing on school premises

- The person in charge will carry out a thorough search of all the rooms in the building, outside perimeter and garden
- The remaining children will be gathered into class groups, e.g. for a story/activity, adequately supervised, while the remaining staff search for the missing child. The register will also be checked to make sure no other child is unaccounted for
- The children will sensitively be asked if they have seen the child who is missing, as will all adults, so that it can be established who was last to see the missing child and when and where this was
- Doors and gates will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security
- The person in charge will speak to staff to establish what has happened
- If the child is not found, the parent/carer will be contacted and the missing child will be reported to the police. If the child lives within walking distance, an adult may travel by car to the likely destination and retrace the route on foot in order to catch up with the child if possible

Procedures in the event of a child going missing during a visit off the school site

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the visit will ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a head count to ensure no other child is unaccounted for. One member of staff will search the immediate vicinity but will not search beyond that. Staff will immediately activate the lost child risk assessment
- The person in charge will be informed and will then act as the point of contact for the police as well as support staff, and the school (Critical Incidents Policy)
- A staff member will contact the police using the mobile phone and report the child as missing
- At an indoor venue, the staff will contact the venue's security team who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found
- Staff will take the rest of the children back to the school
- The school will contact the child's parent/carer (alarming them as little as possible)

When the child is found, members of staff will care for and talk with the child, bearing in mind that he/she may be unaware that adults have been looking for them and been

worried about them or, alternatively, they may also have been afraid or distressed and 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 the reasons why.

After the Incident

- The headteacher/lead adult 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 with the children to give parents brief, accurate information about the incident, as soon as possible
- Liability will not be discussed until the incident has been fully investigated by the school and the local authority
- Staff and parents will be asked to refer any enquiries they have or any enquiries from the media, about the incident, to the headteacher

The Investigation

- The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and take statements from all the staff present at the time, or those who were on the visit
- The key person/staff will write an incident report detailing:
 - the date and time of the report
 - which staff/children were in the group/outing
 - when the child was last seen in the group/outing
 - what took 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 incident happened and used to inform future risk assessments