

COGNITA
TEACHING EXCELLENCE



DOWNSEND
SCHOOL

Lost or Missing Children

September 2017

KEY FACTS:

- ✦ **This policy enables schools to deal promptly and professionally in a “worst case scenario” of a lost or missing child.**
- ✦ **It emphasises the responsibility for attendance, registers and keeping children safe.**
- ✦ **It requires schools to demonstrate collection and handover arrangements specific to the school.**
- ✦ **Procedures to follow should a child go missing or become lost are given.**
- ✦ **A SIRF (Serious Incident Report Form) must be completed.**
- ✦ **With regards to EY children who become lost or missing, Ofsted and Local Authority Children’s Services must be informed.**

1 Purpose

- 1.1. It is essential that Cognita as the Proprietor ensures that positive steps are taken to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The safety and welfare of all of our children at school is our paramount responsibility.
- 1.2. The procedures outlined in this policy will be followed alongside the Child Protection Procedures, Safeguarding Policy, Whistle-Blowing Policy and the Staff Disciplinary Procedure and any other relevant School policy or procedure.
- 1.3. All staff and volunteers understand what to do in the unlikely event that a child were to be lost or go missing either from the school building, site or during an off-site visit.
- 1.4. It is the Head’s responsibility to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of this policy. What is expected, the procedures to follow and to ensure that the policy is reviewed annually, or earlier if following an incident.
- 1.5. It is the responsibility of all staff to read the policy and to act at all times accordingly.

2 Introduction

- 2.1. This policy has been adopted in respect of any child who goes missing from our premises or wanders off from our care.
- 2.2. This policy will be used in respect of all cases in which it is found that a child is lost or missing. It should be read in conjunction with our policy and procedure for uncollected children (late collection) and Managing Allegations of Abuse Against Staff and Other Adults.
- 2.3. At all times we will treat very seriously any evidence which shows that any member of staff has behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child (see Child Protection Policy for definition of harm).
- 2.4. Any consequent disciplinary matter against staff will follow our separate disciplinary procedure, in consultation with our Human Resources Business Manager.
- 2.5. Due consideration will be given by the Headteacher as to whether referral may be made to children’s social care. For example, where the child is in need of protection or in need of services.

- 2.6. Staff are responsible for completing the attendance registers, including at after school clubs and activities. The register must be completed accurately and promptly.

3 Steps to Keep Children Safe

- 3.1. Our procedures will always be managed with common sense and sound judgement. If a member of staff takes a child out of school they are responsible for informing the parents and the School Office.
- 3.2. At all times, parents can be assured that all children remain within the safe environment of our school/setting, including attendance at any outings. We ensure that proper precautions are taken to prevent children going missing.
- 3.3. If any child is found to leave the premises without permission of the school and parents, they will be deemed to have broken the school's code of conduct and the application of appropriate and proportionate sanctions will be considered by the Head accordingly.
- 3.4. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure they provide correct and updated information on a timely basis and know the procedures for handover of their child.
- 3.5. It is the responsibility of the Assistant Director of Education/Education Executive, on behalf of Cognita, to ensure that the Assistant Director of Education/Education Executive is aware of the school's procedures and to provide challenge and support to the school in the review of this policy.
- 3.6. Particular care will be taken to register all children in each and every club or out-of/after school activity. A register will be taken of each child at every club or out of school activity. As a minimum, any unexplained absences will be reported immediately to the School Office and to the Headteacher by the responsible teacher so that swift and immediate action will be taken. In the absence of the Headteacher from the premises at the time, the designated member of the Senior Leadership team will always assume such responsibility. In the case of Learning Beyond the Classroom (school trips and visits) the Group Leader will assume such responsibility, as agreed with the Educational Visits Coordinator on behalf of the Headteacher.
- 3.7. No child leaves our supervision and care without an appropriate adult. In order to achieve this aim, we operate the following procedures at our school:
- ✓ Formal registration is taken in the morning at 8.45am and at 12.45pm in the afternoon
 - ✓ When on excursions outside the school premises, staff implement strategies to maximise the safety and security of the children
 - ✓ To prevent a child going missing, the school registers are checked twice a day, as well as outings registers, which are taken with the group and a duplicate left with the School Office
 - ✓ Registers are also taken for all extra-curricular clubs and activities, as well as for those pupils attending Extended Day
 - ✓ The staff maintain the appropriate high level of supervision throughout the day and are aware of the location of the children in their care at all times
 - ✓ Children are supervised at all times and are made aware of the boundaries of each activity when outside the classroom
 - ✓ Visitors are recorded on arriving and leaving Downsend

- 3.8. Permission from parents is obtained generically at the beginning of each academic year for any educational visits which are deemed as part of the school curriculum, and once again specifically for any other trip.
- 3.9. Mobile phones are taken on every school visit and the contact numbers are left at the School Office. Pupils are instructed to contact the responsible teacher in the event of any unexpected incident or undesirable behaviour in the first instance before contacting their parents directly. This is because it is the school's responsibility to safeguard the pupil's health, safety and well-being while they are in the care of the school staff.
- 3.10. While staff are supervising children off site, the Learning Outside the Classroom policy will apply at all times.
- 3.11. After-school clubs will only take place when a completed register of pupils is taken, the situation has been risk managed and the school has obtained written consent from parents with contact numbers and details of how the pupils are to go home and who with.
- 3.12. Every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality and guard against publicity in accordance with the School's practice in maintaining confidentiality and our obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998.

4 Procedures following a Child reported Missing or Lost

- 4.1. If a teacher suspects that a child is missing from a lesson or activity, they will contact the nearest member of SLT and School Office immediately.
- 4.2. All remaining children will be kept safe in a secure place with adequate adult supervision, including assistance from other school staff if necessary.
- 4.3. A full headcount will be taken by the teacher-in-charge and matched against the register; usually the class teacher or nominated person.
- 4.4. A senior member of staff will make a thorough search of the building and/or site and immediate surroundings including storage areas and toilets. A thorough check of all exits will be made, to ensure all gates/doors are locked and there is no other way a pupil could have left the site. If something is discovered, the SLT member must be immediately informed.
- 4.5. The following list held in the School Office will be checked: attendance register, off site records, and other school clubs.
- 4.6. If the child is not found after this initial search and/or approximately 10 minutes from the initial report of them deemed missing, the School Office will inform the Headteacher and Assistant Director of Education/Education Executive (Cognita Head Office), including where a child is found wandering or at risk of being lost or missing. The designated safeguarding officer in school will be notified immediately and they will ensure that the parents have been informed by the responsible teacher. The Headteacher, or SLT member in the absence of the Head, will decide at which point the police will be called.
- 4.7. All relevant emergency contacts for children will be used to inform parent/carer(s) accordingly. However, until such time as the child is safely returned to the care of the parent/carer(s), the Headteacher remains responsible for the care and welfare of the child, including off site.

- 4.8. As soon as is practicable, the Serious Incident Reporting Form will be completed by the Headteacher and sent to the Head of Education Compliance (Ros Vahey). The Group Leader (off site) or responsible form/class teacher will make a contemporaneous record to provide full details of the incident in the school's incident report book. A note will also be made on the school's attendance register accordingly.
- 4.9. Near misses will also be recorded and reported to the Assistant Director of Education/Education Executive and details fully provided in writing to the school's governance panel or meeting. This Report must outline the steps being taken to avoid any repeat incident, communication with parents and actions to be taken following the risk assessment process to mitigate future risk. Any relevant policy and procedure must be reviewed and submitted to UK compliance committee for approval, via Head of Education Compliance.
- 4.10. All incidents will be reported to Greg Warwick/Nadia Burn, Head Office, for the attention of our insurers, as appropriate. Staff must try to remember and write down a description of what the child was wearing and any distinguishing features.
- 4.11. If a missing child has any special medical or learning needs then these need to be noted to be disclosed to the police or other agencies.
- 4.12. A thorough search of the premises should continue until the child is found.

5 Following the Incident

- 5.1. It is in everyone's interest to resolve what has happened as quickly as possible, consistent with a fair and thorough investigation.
- 5.2. The written findings of the investigation must be reported by the Headteacher to Cognita Head Office within 48 hours of the occurrence of the incident.
- 5.3. Where the child is within the EYFS age range, Ofsted must be informed of the incident. Local Authority Children's Social Care should also be informed.
- 5.4. All relevant policies and procedures will immediately be reviewed and revisions presented formally to the Assistant Director of Education/Education Executive for approval within 5 working days.
- 5.5. The parent/carer(s) will be involved at all times.
- 5.6. Following receipt of our investigative report, the Director of Education will report his conclusions as to the next steps to further safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the care of the school to the UK compliance committee.
- 5.7. Where the parent/carer(s) remain concerned despite reassurances informally by the school, they may choose to use the school's complaints procedure accordingly.

6 Procedures following a Child Missing from an Off Site Location

- 6.1. The Group Leader must ensure the safety of remaining pupils. At least two adults must stay with them.
- 6.2. One or more adults should immediately start to search for the child.
- 6.3. If the child is not found within 5 minutes, the Group Leader must then contact the police by telephoning 999.
- 6.4. The Group Leader should alert the School Office, or in the case of out-of-hours, the nominated school contact for the trip, that the police have been contacted. The school

will make arrangements to notify the parents accordingly. The remaining procedures outlined above in sections 4 and 5 will then be followed.

7 Monitoring & Evaluation

- 7.1. This policy and our procedures will be reviewed annually and more frequently following a near miss or missing child incident.
- 7.2. If, as a parent, you are not happy with the way that you or your child is treated by any member of staff you should consider raising your concern with the Headteacher. You may find it helpful to refer to our formal complaints procedure for guidance. This procedure emphasises the importance of resolving any concerns informally and at the earliest possible opportunity. We expect our parents to share any concerns informally with us so that we can continuously improve the quality of education at our school.

8 Related Policies, Guidelines, Templates and Forms

- Special Educational Needs
- Safeguarding including Child Protection Procedures
- Allegations of Abuse against Teachers & Other Staff
- Compliments & Complaints Procedure
- Learning outside the Classroom
- Accidents & Incidents Recording & Reporting
- Health & Safety
- Equality & Diversity
- Data Protection
- Exclusion
- Supervision
- Social, Moral, Spiritual & Cultural Education
- After School Clubs and Activities
- Attendance and Registration