



ST CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL
(including the EYFS and Before and After School Care)

Lost or Missing Children Policy

The welfare and safety of the children in our care is paramount. We recognise that we need to be alert to the possibility, however rare, of a pupil being lost or going missing.

AIMS

We aim to:

- make the site as secure as possible
- take appropriate steps to minimise risk at vulnerable times such as the beginning and end of the school day
- ensure the children are appropriately supervised at all times
- make children aware of the boundaries set
- have systems in place to minimise the risk of children going missing
- have procedures in place that, in the unlikely event of a pupil going missing, enhance the chances of finding the pupil in the shortest possible time and ensure the safety of everyone else on site

HOW DO WE DO THIS?

Site Security

All perimeter fencing and gates are six feet high, are regularly inspected and kept in good repair. There are five access points to the site:

- The **front door** has a video entry system for visitors together with a keypad code plate for staff. It has a Yale key lock together with a safety chain and a sign which strongly reminds visitors to close the door firmly behind them. This door cannot be accessed from inside the building without first passing through a locked door from the reception area which is controlled electronically by a green button situated at adult height. Visitors who have accessed the front door cannot enter the door to the reception area without electronic access provided by the reception staff or knowledge of the code designed for staff on a keypad situated at adult height.
- The **back gate** is unlocked at specific times during the day for restricted keypad access by parents to enter by means of a 4-digit security code. The gate self-closes after entry. At all other times the gate remains locked with no restricted keypad access.
- The **assembly front hall door** is kept locked at all times and is never used by pupils.
- The **side gates** allow access from the front to the back of the school for the Premises Manager and contractors. There is one gate protecting each end of the two side passage ways. All are kept locked during term time.

Minimising risk at the beginning and end of the School day

- Pupils accessing breakfast club and before school care are handed over to staff in the assembly hall and a register is kept.
- At 8.25am the Mars cloakroom door is locked and members of staff escort Nursery, Reception, Y1 and 2 pupils (who have been in before school care) to the entrance hall and monitor them going to the Nursery and Reception cloakroom. The back door is then unlocked at 8.30am to allow children and parent access.
- At 8.30am all other nursery children are greeted and handed over at the nursery green room door by a member of staff.
- Once the back door is unlocked the Headteacher or another member of staff is on duty in the entrance hall to ensure no children go back out once they have been sent in by their parents, and remains there until 8.40am, when the back gate is locked.
- At the end of the day **Years 1 and 2** exit the building via the back door. The Head or another member of staff shakes hands with all the children and oversees as far as possible the meeting of parents and children. The Headteacher or appointed member of staff does not leave the door until all children have been united with their parent.
Reception exit via the Mars cloakroom door and are handed over to their parents by staff during the Autumn and Spring Terms and then exit together with Years 1 and 2 via the back door in the Summer Term to prepare them for their transition to KS1.
Nursery children are collected from the outside classroom at 12 noon and 1.30pm and from inside the nursery at 3pm. At all times they are handed over to the parent, carer or pre-authorized person.
- All children are only handed over to an authorised person. If an unauthorised person arrives to collect a child the parents' permission will be sought by phone. If the parent cannot be contacted the child will be looked after until contact can be made.
- Every family is required to inform the school if there are any family members that are **not authorised** to pick up the child. Parents are also required to inform the School if their child is going home with another child.
- If unexpectedly a child is not picked up they will be looked after in school in Owls whilst investigations are being made.
- All staff and parents will be alert to and challenge any unknown adults in the grounds at the beginning and end of the school day.
- The School takes responsibility of all pupils once they have entered the school either by the Nursery or the back door according to year group.

Supervision of pupils

- Pupils are well supervised during all activities in the day. All statutory adult/child ratios are adhered to.
- Pupils may sometimes move around the School without direct supervision, for example delivering messages or ringing the school bell. All staff are responsible for assessing the safety of the required task with regard to the age, disposition and ability of the child and the nature of the independent task.

Making sure that children are aware of the boundaries set

- Assemblies at the beginning of the School year are dedicated to our school rules.
- Children are reminded of safety rules during the school year.
- Parents are asked to enforce our rules, particularly about drop off and pick up times.
- The School provides physical reminders of boundaries set.
- The transition from being handed over to a parent in EYFS and shaking hands and then being allowed to look for a parent is carefully managed. In the last term of Reception staff accompany the children to the back door at the end of the day to help them through the shaking hands routine.

Systems in place to minimise the risk of children going missing

- Formal registration takes place at in the morning by 8:40am and in the afternoon by 1:40pm, with an additional register at 12 midday and during the lunch session in Nursery.
- All parents are required to inform the School if their child is unable to attend.
- Staff will follow up any unexplained child absence with the aim to contact parents by 9.00am.
- The School will reaffirm family contact details during each academic year. At other times the School will try to prompt parents to update changes in contact details but it is entirely the parents' responsibility to do so.
- Children are not allowed to leave the classroom, lesson, club, lunch hall or playground without the permission of the supervising adult.
- Outside space is always supervised while children are using it.
- Class teachers have lists of children going to after school activities and the teacher leading the club has a register of the expected children.
- All staff are responsible for knowing the whereabouts of the children in their care.
- All pupils entering or leaving school at any time, other than normal times, are signed in or out by their parent, at reception.
- All visitors to the School whether known or unknown are required to sign in and out and wear a visitors' badge.
- The reason for any visit will be checked out and no unsupervised access to the School for any purpose will be allowed, except by prior arrangement.
- Staff will challenge any person on school premises who is not a member of staff or wearing a visitor's badge.

What staff will do if a child goes missing in school

- Re-count pupils to double check the child is not present.
- **Remain calm**
- Calmly ask other children if they have seen the child or know where he/she is.
- Deploy some staff to search the immediate area while others ensure the safety of the remaining children.
- If the child is not found within 5 minutes inform the Headteacher, or in her absence a member of the SMT.
- If the child is not found within 15 minutes the police and parents should be called immediately by the Headteacher, or in her absence a member of the SMT.
- The Headteacher and the member of staff responsible for the missing child will establish how long the child could have been missing and explore all possibilities.
- If there is any risk that the child has escaped from school premises staff will be immediately deployed to Chartwell Place and Downs Road with mobile phones to keep in touch and report back. If the risk of escape is significant the police and parents will be called immediately.
- The Headteacher will meanwhile deploy all available staff to search every area of the school premises and report back, making sure to check underneath, behind and inside furniture and equipment, even those out of bounds to children.
- Immediately the search has been completed and the child not found, the Headteacher or member of the SMT, in the absence of the Headteacher, will inform the police and the parents.
- The Headteacher will liaise with the police and organise staff to carry out any police instructions.
- The Headteacher will support and liaise with the parents.
- The Chair of Governors will be informed.
- Enquiries from the Press will be handled by the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. Other members of staff should not give comment.
- A full enquiry into the circumstances will be undertaken and risk assessments will be thoroughly reviewed to identify possible improvements of procedures that could be taken in the future.

Points to remember

1. The Headteacher or member of SMT will phone the police with details of:
 - the circumstances of the incident including the time the child went missing and anything that may have triggered the incident
 - the missing child's description including clothing
 - the address and contact details of the setting
 - the contact details of the child's next of kin.
2. Class teachers will need to double up, one searching the immediate area and one supervising the remaining children. Children are not to be left unsupervised during the search.
3. Staff should always continue to search unless otherwise advised by the police.

Search Areas

All staff will thoroughly search the area they operate in, however unlikely it is the child could be there. Thereafter:

- **Nursery staff** will search the nursery toilets, all rooms including the kitchen, outside classroom and outside play area as well as out of bounds areas including the nursery office, staff toilet, kiln room and sheds noting any doors that are unsecure.
- **Reception class staff** will search all outside play areas (except those designated for nursery), the trim trail, PE shed, Premises Manager's store shed and downstairs toilets.
- **Year 1 staff** will check their toilets, staff toilets and staff room and the SEND room if the SEND teacher is not in.
- **The Bursar** will check the loft area, although this is an 'out of bounds' area.
- **The Premises Manager** will check the basement, although this too is an out of bounds area, and then check the front of the School, side passage and Year 1 Fire Escape, the PE shed and Premises Manager's store shed if YR have not already done so.
- **The Secretary** will check the security of the front door, entrance hall and the room under the stairs and then return to the office to man the phones.
- **Kitchen staff** will search the kitchen, assembly hall, hall storage cupboard and toilets and check the assembly hall door is locked.
- When available the **PE, Music and SEND teachers** will be deployed to circle the outside of the School starting in the front, one setting off left and the other right, meeting at the back gate. Otherwise the first available staff will be deployed to do this.

All staff must report to the Head or leading member of SMT as soon as their designated areas have been checked or the child is found.

Afterwards

Once the situation has been resolved a full internal investigation will be conducted and measures put into place immediately to avoid any recurrence.

If a child escaped or was abducted from the premises Ofsted will be informed in writing.

No staff will talk independently to members of the Press. A press statement will be drawn up by the Headteacher and Governors with reference to advice from any official bodies the School deems appropriate such as ISA, ISBA or NUT.

What to do if a child goes missing on a school visit – Additional information available in Educational Trips Policy

This risk must be planned for on **every** trip risk assessment, taking into account the specific environment of the venue and specific children going on the trip:

Factors that will minimise the risk:

- High staff pupil ratios.
- Adults being given responsibility for a small specific group.
- Regular head counts.
- Educating the children about their responsibility to stay with their allocated adult, listen to and follow instructions.
- Teaching a procedure for children to follow should they become separated from the group, e.g. stand still until found by staff.

Factors to consider in the case of a missing child:

- Have procedures in place for adults to follow in such a case.
- State which adults are to contact (group leader) and how.
- How can you enlist the help of venue staff?
- Which adults will stay with the children and how to ensure their safety? Never leave less than two adults with a group of children.
- How many adults can safely be spared to look for the child and how will they communicate?
- Following a thorough search of the premises and immediate area, or after 15 minutes, whichever is the sooner, the Group Leader will inform the police.
- The Group Leader will then inform the Headteacher or, in her absence, an SMT member. The Headteacher or SMT member will inform the parents of the child and Chair of Governors.

Signed *H. M. Crossley* Date February 2019
Mrs H. M. Crossley
Chair of Governors

Signed *A C Thackray* Date February 2019
Mrs A C Thackray
Headteacher

Review date February 2019
Previous review February 2017
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