# Safeguarding:
# Lost or Missing Children Policy

## Salcombe Preparatory School

September 2017

***This policy applies to Salcombe Preschool (EYFS), Pre-Preparatory School and Preparatory School***

| **Contact names** | |
|---|---|
| Head | Sarah Davies |
| School Business Manager | Sarah Riddle |
| Deptuy Head (Prep) | Tushi Hore |
| Deputy Head (Pre-Prep) | Giovanna Newson |
| Cognita Education Executive/<br>Chair of governance panel | Robin Davies |
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**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 early years 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. Any child going missing from education or learning is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, particularly on repeat occasions.

1.2. The procedures outlined in this policy will be followed alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures, Whistleblowing Policy, 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 Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that this policy is understood and followed.

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, even if they remain on site.

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 the school Safeguarding Policy including 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 Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for definition of harm).

2.4. Any consequent disciplinary matter against staff will follow our separate disciplinary procedure, in consultation with the School's 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, early help or in need of other support.

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. The law requires schools to have an attendance register which is compliant with the Regulations.

## 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. For children in the early years, we must only release children into the care of individuals who have been notified to us by the parent/carer(s) in advance, and we must ensure that children do not leave the premises unsupervised. We must take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises, and have an agreed procedure for checking the identity of visitors.

3.3. 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.

3.4. 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.

3.5. 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.

3.6. It is the responsibility of the Director of Education, on behalf of Cognita, to ensure that the Assistant Director of Education is aware of the school's procedures and that they will provide challenge and support to the school in the review of this policy.

3.7. 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's attendance 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 incidents occurring while children are learning outside the classroom on school visits, the visit leader will assume such responsibility, as agreed with the Educational Visits Coordinator on behalf of the Headteacher.

3.8. 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:

3.9. 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 visit.

3.10. School 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.

3.11. While staff are supervising children off-site, the Learning Outside the Classroom Policy will apply at all times.

3.12. 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.

3.13. 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 (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 (SIRF) will be completed by the Headteacher and sent to the PA to the Head of Facilities. The visit 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 and details fully provided in writing to the school's safeguarding governance committee (SGC). 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 by

the school and submitted to UK compliance committee for approval, via Head of Education Compliance.

4.10. All incidents will be reported to the Head of Facilities, 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 under two years of age, Ofsted must be informed of the incident under our separate registration arrangements. Local authority children's social care should also be informed of any missing child in the early years, and our usual local authority safeguarding and child protection arrangements followed.

5.4. All relevant policies and procedures will immediately be reviewed and revisions presented formally to the Assistant Director of Education 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 visit 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 visit leader must then contact the police by telephoning 999 (within the UK or similar equivalent number if overseas).

6.4. The visit 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. **Compliance with this policy is reported formally to**

**the Safeguarding Governance Committee (SGC) with the Head reporting any changes including management actions accordingly.**

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.

7.3. Our school's leadership team ensure that we monitor the quality and compliance of our accident and incident reports at our compliance committee meetings. The Headteacher ensures that staff are sufficiently trained and experienced to be compliant at all times; particularly during school trips and visits.

7.4. The Safeguarding Governance Committee (SGC) is chaired by an Independent Chair who will maintain an overview of the effectiveness of this policy and local school practice in this regard, providing appropriate governance scrutiny and challenge

| Ownership and consultation | |
|---|---|
| Document sponsor (role) | Director of Education |
| Document author (name) | Rosalind Vahey – Head of Education Compliance |
| Specialist Legal Advice | n/a |
| Consultation | n/a |

| Compliance | |
|---|---|
| Compliance with | ISSR 2014, Keeping Children Safe in Education, The Education (Pupil registration)(England) Regulations 2006c. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences RIDDOR 2013, Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014, Incident Reporting in Schools HSE 10/13. |

| Audience | |
|---|---|
| Audience | Heads, DSLs |

| Document application | |
|---|---|
| England | Yes |
| Wales | Yes |
| Spain | Yes |

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|---|---|
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| Review date | September 2018 |

| Related documentation | |
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| Related documentation | Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Procedure, Supervision Policy, Health and Safety Policy, After School Clubs and Activities, First Aid Policy, Learning Outside the Classroom, Special Educational Needs, Data Protection, Complaints Procedure, SIRF Form and Guidance, Critical Incident Management Plan, School Compliance Committee terms of reference, Safeguarding Governance Committee terms of reference |