

Date: February 2024
Review date: February 2025
Responsibility: MW/KB/HB/RH

Bishop Challoner School



Missing Child Policy



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Missing Child Policy

As a school providing EYFS education for pupils, the contents of this policy should also be considered in this context.

This policy also applies to Breakfast Club and any after-school or co-curricular activities arranged by the school.

The welfare of all of our children at Bishop Challoner School is our paramount responsibility. A child going missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including sexual exploitation and so called 'honour based' violence. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. Every member of our staff who works with children has read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care.

Procedures

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible.

In the event of a child going missing whilst on the school premises the following procedures will be implemented immediately:

- Member of staff who has noticed the missing child will inform the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher immediately. If a Prep or Pre-Prep pupil is missing, the Head of Key Stage 1 and Head of Key Stage 2 will also be informed and if a nursery child, the Head of EYFS;
- Deputy Headteacher to ask the teacher to take a register in order to ensure that all the other children were present;
- Office to check the signing in/out system and medical room;
- Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child;
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) with a relevant activity;
- The Bursar will coordinate for available staff, including Site Staff, to search the premises thoroughly followed by a search of the surrounding areas;
- Closed Circuit Television Camera (CCTV) footage will be checked by the Bursar for sightings of the child;
- The Bursar will notify the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher immediately, if the child is found. If appropriate, the Head of Key Stage 1 and Head of Key Stage 2 and Head of EYFS will be notified.

If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- The Office Manager will fill in the Missing Child form;
- The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will establish a control and commence a log of events;
- The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher (who is also the DSL) will contact the parents/carer of the missing child. Parents will be informed of what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the school at once. Parents or carers will be asked to bring with them a recent photograph of their child;
- Headteacher to inform the Chair of Trustees;
- The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher (DSL) will meet with parents/carers;
- If the child is still not accounted for when these searches are complete, the Deputy Headteacher (DSL) will notify the police;
- The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the school's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- The school would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority;
- Pupils and teachers will be interviewed with regard to the last sighting of the child;
- If the missing child has any special medical or learning needs then these need to be noted and disclosed to police or other agencies.
- During this period, appointed staff will be continually searching for the missing child, whilst other staff maintain as normal a routine as possible for the rest of the pupils within the School;
- The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will await instructions from the police;
- During the course of the investigation into the missing child, the school, in consultation with the LADO and police, will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

In the event of a child going missing whilst on an educational visit the following procedures will be implemented immediately:

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present;
- A register of all children will be taken and information on last sighting of the child will be assessed;
- The lead teacher will inform the school by mobile phone of the situation and the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher (DSL) will be informed;
- The lead teacher must ensure safety of remaining pupils;
- One or more adults should immediately start searching for the child and keep in phone contact with the main group at all times;
- The lead teacher will inform / ask for additional help from the organisation they are visiting e.g. notify museum staff;
- The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will then contact the parents/carer of the missing child. Parents will be informed of what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the venue/school at once;
- Headteacher to inform the Chair of Trustees;

- Parents or carers will be asked to bring with them a recent photograph of their child;
- The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will contact the police;
- The main body of the party will return to school as soon as possible;
- The lead teacher will remain and help the local police;
- The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the school's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO);
- The school would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority;
- The Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will await instructions from the police;
- Any incidents must be recorded in writing on an incident report form;
- If the child is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR;

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. The school will review its procedures and, if appropriate, these would be adjusted.

Actions to be followed by Staff once the Child is found

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child;
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing;
- The Headteacher and Deputy Head (DSL) will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident (having discussed this beforehand with the LADO if necessary);
- The Headteacher and Deputy Head (DSL) will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the LSCB);
- Media queries should be referred to the Headteacher (after discussion with the LADO and police if appropriate);
- The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements;
- The report should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened, (the purpose of the outing if applicable), the length of time that the child was missing and how s/he appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future.

Duty to Report

The school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

Reviewed by: MW/KB/HB/RH

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Next Review: February 2025