

Christ Church CoE Primary School

Missing Children Statement, Including EYFS Specifics

1. Purpose and scope

Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the school premises. This statement explains what staff must do if a child is believed to be missing from school, wraparound provision, the EYFS setting or an off-site visit. It applies to all pupils, including Nursery and Reception, and to all staff, volunteers and adults supervising pupils.

This statement concerns a child missing from supervision. It should be read alongside the Attendance Policy and Children Missing Education procedures, which cover pupils missing from education or unexplained absence from school.

2. Preventive arrangements

- Registers are taken accurately and promptly, with unexplained absence followed up in line with attendance procedures.
- Staff maintain appropriate supervision, headcounts and transition checks.
- External doors, gates and access points are kept secure and monitored.
- Visitors sign in and are challenged if unknown.
- Risk assessments for visits identify staff deployment, meeting points, group lists, emergency contacts and arrangements if a child becomes separated.
- EYFS staff maintain statutory ratios, use key-person knowledge and communicate procedures to parents/carers.

3. Child missing on the premises

As soon as a child is thought to be missing, staff must act immediately and calmly.

1. Alert the Headteacher, DSL or most senior member of staff. In EYFS, the key person/member of staff must also alert the wider EYFS team immediately.
2. Take a register/headcount to confirm all other children are present and supervised.
3. Keep the remaining children calm, occupied and safely supervised.
4. Search the child's classroom/base, EYFS areas where relevant, toilets, cloakrooms, cupboards, outdoor areas, halls, shared spaces and any other safe hiding places.
5. Check doors, gates and boundary points for signs of a breach of security.
6. Ask staff and children calmly when and where the child was last seen. Record the information.
7. If the child is not found quickly, the Headteacher/DSL will contact the police and then parents/carers. Where appropriate, parents/carers will be asked to come to school.
8. If safe and appropriate, a member of staff may check the immediate area outside school, particularly a known walking route home, while school supervision ratios remain safe.
9. Inform the Chair of Governors and, where required, the Local Authority and Diocese.

4. Child missing on an off-site visit

1. The visit leader must stop the group, carry out an immediate headcount and ensure the remaining children are supervised by designated adults.
2. One adult should search the immediate vicinity only, keeping in contact with the visit leader.
3. The visit leader must contact the venue manager/security team so that local search procedures can begin.
4. The Headteacher/DSL must be contacted immediately unless already present.
5. The police must be contacted if the child is not found immediately or if there is any risk of harm.
6. Parents/carers must be contacted by the Headteacher/DSL or visit leader, depending on the agreed emergency plan.
7. The remaining children should return to school or move to a safe central location as directed by the visit leader and Headteacher/DSL.
8. A member of staff may be required to remain at the venue until police arrive or until the incident is resolved.

5. EYFS-specific requirements

For Nursery and Reception children, the following additional expectations apply:

- The key person or EYFS staff member must alert the EYFS lead/setting leader and Headteacher immediately.
- EYFS registers, signing-in/out records and staffing deployment must be checked at once.
- The search must include all EYFS indoor and outdoor areas, sleep/rest spaces, toilets, cloakrooms, cupboards and small enclosed spaces.
- Ratios for the remaining children must be maintained throughout the incident.
- Parents/carers must be informed of the procedures for a child going missing at, or away from, the setting.
- If the incident is a serious childcare incident or indicates a failure to meet EYFS requirements, Ofsted must be notified as soon as possible and within 14 days where the school is required to do so.

6. Once the child is found

- Comfort and reassure the child and check whether medical attention is needed.
- Inform parents/carers, police, staff and other relevant agencies that the child has been found.
- Speak with the child in an age-appropriate way to understand what happened.
- Reassure other children without sharing unnecessary details.
- Do not blame or discipline the child before the safeguarding circumstances are understood.

7. Investigation and recording

The Headteacher, with the DSL and Chair of Governors where appropriate, will ensure a full written record is completed. This will include:

- date, time and location of the incident
- name of the child and group/class involved
- staff responsible for the child or group
- when and where the child was last seen
- actions taken and times
- who was contacted and when
- how the child was found or how the incident concluded
- any safeguarding, supervision, premises or risk-assessment issues identified
- lessons learned and policy/risk-assessment amendments required

Staff must not speak to the media or post about any missing child incident. All external communication will be managed by the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and relevant advisory bodies.

8. Related policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy and Children Missing Education procedures
- Educational Visits Policy
- EYFS Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Critical Incident / Emergency Plan
- Data Protection Policy

9. Related policies

- EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers: requirement to make information available about procedures for a child going missing at, or away from, the setting.
- Ofsted guidance: reporting serious childcare incidents within 14 days where applicable.