



## **MISSING CHILD POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

This Policy applies to:

- The whole school including EYFS, before and after school care facilities and Holiday Clubs;
- all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to St David's Prep.

### **RATIONALE**

The welfare of children in our care is paramount. Children may go missing and EVERY member of staff has equal responsibility in ensuring the safety of the children and knowing where they are. In the event that a child goes missing from the School, Holiday Club or on an outing, school puts into practice agreed procedures. These ensure the child is found as soon as possible and that the correct people are informed. This very rarely happens but complacency is a hazard we must avoid at all costs.

### **PROCEDURE**

In the event that a child goes missing, we will ensure that the following procedures are followed. We inform parents/carers of our procedures so that, if a child does go missing we assure them we are doing everything we are capable of to find them.

#### **A: Minimising Risk**

Systems in place to minimise the risk of children going missing –

- Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the premises and surrounding site is secure.
- The attendance register is taken at the start of each session and must be completed by 9.30am. It is the responsibility of every member of staff to be aware how many children are present and a quick head count should be taken at intervals during each session. Children who arrive late must be recorded in the register and those who leave early should be marked out accordingly. Teachers of new children should take extra care to be aware of their whereabouts and ensure they know the boundaries of where they can and cannot go.
- Parents will be advised of our security procedures and be given the opportunity to discuss any concerns, particularly if their child has an adventurous nature.
- Gates and doors are kept closed and, where appropriate, secured.
- Parents must be aware of their responsibility of the need for supervision of their children at all times especially while waiting for the School to open and at the end of the day. It is the duty of parents/carers to immediately notify the school of any absence on a daily basis and to ensure that they are signed in or out if leaving or arriving at school outside of normal hours.
- One member of staff on duty should be the last to leave the field to ensure no children are left outside. Once inside it must be ascertained by the class teacher that the correct number of children are still present.

## **B: Procedure in the event that a child goes missing**

**In the event of a child being found to be missing it is vital that prompt action is taken.**

- 1. The missing child (children) should be identified and the last known whereabouts recorded. The situation should immediately be reported to the Missing Child Co-ordinators: Sarah Handy and Chloe Slim - School Office (term-time, 8am – 6.00pm) or the Holiday Club Leader or Chloe Slim (when the Holiday Club is running).**

### *School Trips*

If a child goes missing on a school trip, the Group Leader must alert staff at the trip venue and the School Office and may choose to delegate one of these tasks to another adult to allow them to happen simultaneously. On any school trip, the Group Leader then assumes the role of Missing Child Co-ordinator and maintains constant telephone contact with the School Office who will immediately alert the Head Teacher in the event of a child going missing on a school trip.

- 2. The Missing Child Co-ordinator will check the pupil registers to establish whether the child has been signed out of school.** The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child's absence is noted as soon as possible.
- 3. The member of staff who was responsible for the missing child will arrange for the other children to be satisfactorily supervised.** Without alarming them, the children should be asked when they last saw the missing child. Ratios must be maintained.
- 4. The Missing Child Co-ordinator will organise a systematic search to be carried out to see if the child can be located in the surrounding area. The following areas must be included in the search, beginning with higher-risk areas:**
  - a)** Check all exits for where a child may have been able to leave the premises or site. Any staff member searching off-site should take their mobile so that they can be contacted/contact the school upon locating the missing child.
  - b)** All toilets, cupboards, kitchen, under tables, cushions, anywhere a child might hide.
  - c)** Outside areas including Reception playground, play houses, climbing frame.
  - d)** The playground and field will be checked also check outside the school.

The Missing Child Co-ordinator may consider carrying out a fire alarm evacuation in the event that it is suspected the child may be hiding, as this may draw them out of their hiding place quickly.

If the child goes missing on a school trip, then the Missing Child procedure at the venue should be followed, where one exists. Otherwise, the Missing Child Co-ordinator will organise their own search.

- 5. If the missing child has not been found after 5 minutes the Head Teacher or, in her absence, a member of the Senior Leadership Team must be notified by the Missing Child Co-ordinator in person (term-time) or by telephone (after school or school holidays).**
- 6. The Head Teacher will arrange to inform:**
  - a) The parents/carers of the child – alarming them as little as possible. If contacted parents should be advised to stay at home in case the child arrives there; be advised that we are contacting the emergency services and that a member of staff is searching the route the child may take home. Parents should be asked for information of anywhere else the child may head for, e.g. grandparents, other relatives, local park, etc.
  - b) The Police and/or any other emergency services – The police have the resources to conduct a search and speed is important.

**7. Record of Events** - The following details are noted in order to help as much as possible in the investigation and search.

- I. Date time and location of disappearance
- II. Who was responsible for the care of the child at the time
- III. What was the child wearing
- IV. Any distinguishing features
- V. Circumstances surrounding disappearance
- VI. Time parents/other agencies contacted
- VII. A record of events should be logged on the Incident Sheet by the Missing Child Co-ordinator or by another member of staff delegated by them.

#### **8. Action to be taken once the child is found**

- a) Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child.
- b) Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing.
- c) The Head Teacher will speak to the parents of children involved to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
- d) The Head will instruct a full investigation and complete the Incident Sheet, which will involve all concerned providing written statements.
- e) The Head will review Risk Assessment documents as necessary following the incident.
- f) Media queries should be referred to the Head.

#### **9. Informing other people**

As soon as possible after the incident is concluded the Head Teacher may consider necessary to notify-

- a) The Proprietor
- b) All parents
- c) Bromley Council Early Years Team if the child is in the EYFS
- d) Details of time and who was contacted will be recorded.

#### **10. Dealing with reactions**

It is natural that the child's parents will be frightened, distressed and angry. Other parents will be rightly concerned for the safety of their own children. The school management and staff will also be shocked and upset at any lapse in security. All emotions and reactions must be dealt with in a caring and understanding way. However, until the situation has been fully investigated by all parties all staff must refer any parent and media enquiries to the Head Teacher.

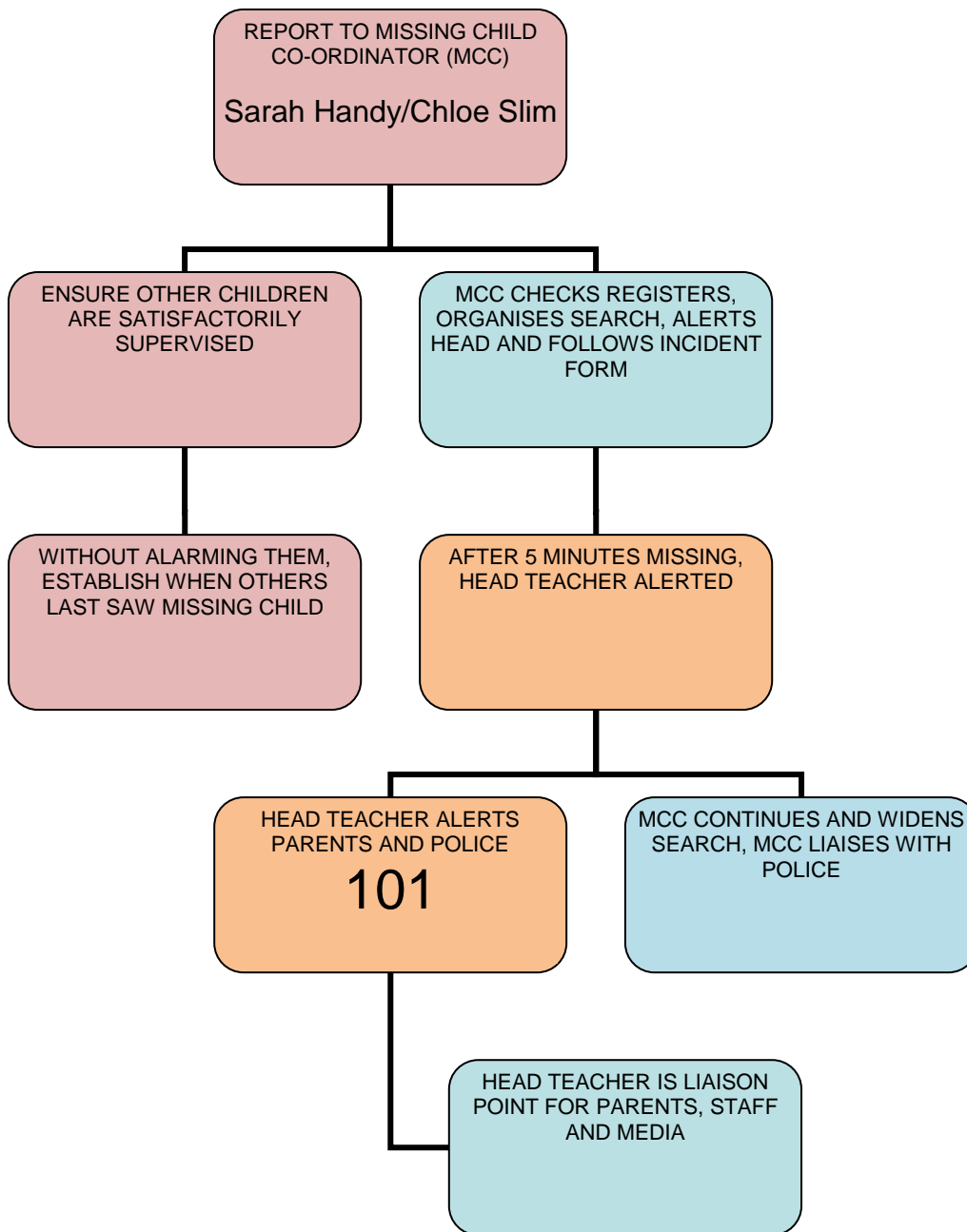
### **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

It is the responsibility of all staff to follow the principles stated in this policy. The Head Teacher is responsible for reviewing this policy annually.

This policy was reviewed in April 2017 and approved by the Head Teacher. It will be reviewed on an annual basis. The next policy review will take place in April 2018.

**APPENDIX 1**

Flowchart outlining Missing Child Procedure



*WHEN CHILD IS FOUND, CONTINUE FROM POINT 8 OF PROCEDURE OUTLINED IN POLICY.*

**KEY**

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY ADULT IN CHARGE OF CHILD AT TIME S/HE WENT MISSING

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY THE MISSING CHILD CO-ORDINATOR

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN BY HEAD TEACHER/SENIOR MEMBER OF STAFF IN HIS ABSENCE

**APPENDIX 2**  
**INCIDENT FORM**

**INCIDENT FORM**

This form is to be used in the instance that a child is reported missing whilst in the care of the School. The form will ensure that St David's Prep's Missing Child Policy is followed and will record information that may be useful to the police and other services.

<b>MISSING CHILD CO-ORDINATOR</b>	
-----------------------------------	--

<b>NAME OF MISSING CHILD</b>		<b>REPORTED MISSING BY</b>	
<b>CHILD'S AGE</b>		<b>CHILD'S CLASS</b>	
<b>DATE REPORTED MISSING</b>		<b>TIME REPORTED MISSING</b>	

<b>CHILD LAST SEEN BY</b>		<b>TIME CHILD WAS LAST SEEN</b>	
<b>LOCATION CHILD WAS LAST SEEN</b>		<b>ADULT RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD AT TIME S/HE WENT MISSING</b>	
<b>CHILD WAS WEARING</b>			
<b>DISTINGUISHING FEATURES</b>			
<b>RELATED/USEFUL INFORMATION (SEND/DISABILITY/SAFEGUARDING ETC.)</b>			

**RECORD OF SEARCH**

*Areas should be searched simultaneously to ensure child is located as swiftly as possible.*

	Checked by
Exits – Gates, road immediately outside school, perimeter fences	
School Field, Pre-Prep playground, play houses	
Toilets, cloak rooms ( <i>including staff toilets and staff room</i> )	
Kitchen, hall, peripatetic music rooms	
Classrooms including The Studio and The Cabin	
Offices	

***NB: AFTER 5 MINUTES MISSING, HEAD TEACHER MUST BE INFORMED***

<b>TIME HEAD TEACHER INFORMED</b>		<b>TIME PARENTS CONTACTED</b>	
<b>TIME POLICE CONTACTED &amp; NAME OF OFFICER IN CHARGE</b>			

**ADDITIONAL NOTES**

Form completed by \_\_\_\_\_ (PRINT)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

- **Written statements should be collected from all staff involved with the disappearance of the child, and attached to this form.**
- **Risk Assessments will be reviewed and adapted as necessary following the incident.**