



## **Sussex Road School** **Procedure for Missing Child**

### **Overview**

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare and safety of all our children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. A missing child is an extremely rare event, and often an indication that a child is unhappy, frustrated or distressed.

No child is allowed to leave the School site unaccompanied during school day without permission from the Headteacher. On rare occasions a child may become frustrated/distressed and hide, leave, or attempt to leave the premises without permission. This procedure details the required action to ensure their quick and safe return to their classroom/working area. This procedure must be read alongside the School's SEMBEC and Critical Incidents Policy.

### **Objectives**

- To locate any missing child quickly and return them to a place of safety
- To ensure that all children are accounted for during school hours
- To ensure that children who leave school during the school day only do so with the Headteacher's, a Teacher's or Office Staff's permission and that they are accompanied by an authorised adult.
- To ensure that the building, grounds and play areas offer a safe secure environment.
- To support teachers and staff in keep children under proper supervision at all times.
- To ensure that if a child 'goes missing' during the school day, they are located quickly and returned safely to school.

### **Strategies**

#### Child missing at the end of the school day

If the child has gone missing at the end of the school day members of staff, they should check: -

- if the child is due to attend an after-school club
- if the child is booked to attend Polkadots Out Of Hours Care Club in the New Hall
- if with the Office in case there have been any alternative collection messages or if the child has permission to walk home alone
- Check the Play Area in Arundel Close (Turn left at Douglas Road and then First Right to the play area.
- If the child sometimes walks home alone call the home number to check for their safe arrival.
- Look up the child address and using local knowledge establish the most likely route home

If the route is drivable follow that route checking paths on the way.

If the route is footpaths two staff members with a mobile phone should follow that route.

- Consider regular play buddies, family member and child minders the child may have left with.

#### Child Missing on School Trip

If a child goes missing in school or during an outing or school visit, the teacher in charge must ensure that the remaining children are safely cared for by the other staff and adults. Risk reduction is the best protection therefore the trip leader should always: -

- Complete thorough pre visit Risk Assessments with reference to the particular needs of the cohort.
- Always plan visits with sufficient adult especially where pupils require One to One support.
- Allocate small groups of children to each adult and remind them to carry out regular rollcalls.
- Not have an allocated group and so be able to step in if a child goes missing.
- If a child goes missing it should be reported immediately to the venue staff, who will support with a search.
- The trip leaders must have a mobile phone with them at all times – turned on to co-ordinated the search and liaise with the school.
- A member of SLT should Liaise with the parents of the child in accordance with the schools Critical Incidents policy. This role must not be undertaken by the staff members or volunteer adults accompanying the visit.

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### Child Missing during the School Day

Staff are expected to be aware of where children are throughout the school day. However, the school acknowledges that some children, if distressed, may temporarily leave the immediate sight of adults. One to one staff need to be vigilant and use their knowledge of a child to spot warning signs and where possible maintain discrete sight until additional support arrives: -

- Immediately and quickly check normal hiding places and notify the School Office
- If a child cannot be found SLT must be notified immediately and advised when and where the child was last seen.
- SLT will verbally request that any available staff (not directly supervising pupils) will conduct a thorough search of the child's classroom, play areas, storage areas, toilets, the school building, and the school grounds.
- If the child is not found following this search and there is reasonable doubt that the child is still on site, SLT will consider next steps including calling the parents and/or the police.
- Staff should continue to search the school site - taking different areas to check and differing routes -until directed otherwise.
- Some members of staff may then be sent in pairs with their mobile phones or School's Walkie-talkies if available to search the area in the immediate vicinity of the school, particularly alleyways which might be part of the child's normal route home and the Arundel Close Play Area.
- Once a thorough search has been made of the immediate vicinity, SLT must be advised of the outcome
- If the child has not been found and the parents not been notified Sla Member of SLT must call them the parents will be notified that their child is missing.
- As soon as the child is found SLT must be notified immediately so that the search party may stand down and the parents/Police be advised if contacted.
- The Senior Leadership team will investigate the incident and will take appropriate action to reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence.

### Children who run

- In addition to the above strategies, if a child runs away from school and is in the eye line of an adult, it may be appropriate that the adult call after the child to encourage them to come back. It is however acknowledged that this strategy is not effective for all children as some feel safe to run further if an adult is following them. In these cases, maintaining sight of the child whilst calling for back up can be more effective.
- The member of staff will alert another member of staff, who will in turn ask another member of staff to advise SLT, whilst they join the search of the immediate vicinity. SLT will then take oversight of the search.
- As soon as the child is found SLT must be notified immediately so that the search party may stand down.
- The Senior Leadership team will investigate the incident and will take appropriate action to reduce the likelihood of a reoccurrence.

### **When to call the Police**

- This is uncharacteristic behaviour for the pupil
- The pupil was under a large amount of stress
- The school believes the pupil to be in danger

### Who should look for a child?

It is recommended to send teachers or other members of staff who know the pupil well to look for them. The School staff may know of particular places the pupil likes or feels comfortable in. For example, the pupil may feel safe and comfortable at a particular friend's house. It is also possible that, having run away, the pupil will not know where to go. It is therefore worth looking for the child near the school.

### **Outcomes**

#### What to do when the pupil is found.

When the pupil is found and returned to school, it would not be advisable to discipline them. Instead, before deciding on any action, the School should establish why the pupil decided to run away. It should:

- Seek to show the pupil that their behaviour was dangerous
- Seek to understand why they decided to run away. Did something that happened in School? Was it because of something happening outside of School? Ask open questions
- Establish if pupil feels safe in school.
- The School will consider ways to support the pupil, so they do not feel the need to run away again. This might involve looking at behaviour strategies for coping with stress. For example, school might provide a 'safe place' the pupil can go to for 'time out'. School might also encourage the pupil to speak to a particular member of staff if they begin to feel upset, angry or stressed.

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### Understanding why the pupil has run away

It is important for school to establish why the pupil might have run away. This will help it to decide how to address the with the situation. Some questions to help identify the cause are:

- Does the pupil have a relevant special educational need that might contribute to their decision to run away? The behaviour may be associated with their learning difficulties.
- Has something happened in the pupil's life outside school that might affect their behaviour in school?
- Is there a specific place or person at the school that might have prompted this behaviour?
- Has the pupil experienced acute stress at school for any reason?
- Are they a victim of bullying?
- Do they have a record of running away?

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**Check List for whole school search when alerted of a missing child**

Area on Map	Area	Area checked
1	Main gate outside and top playground	
2	Judd Forest School, and connecting area to bottom playground	
3	Bottom playground	
4	Year 1/R areas corridor including lift and outside areas	
5	Music room, ICT suite and adjacent toilets	
6	Group room, resources room, and Old Hall	
7	Toilets, the space adjacent toilets, care suite and packed lunch area. Check door to rear of school is locked	
8	Upstairs millennium building, girl's & staff toilets and science cupboard	
9	Downstairs millennium block, boy's toilets and small meeting Room	
10	New Hall including table store area	
11	Shed/P.E. shed inside and behind. Ensure all gates are padlocked	
12	Year 2 area, including stairs, storage room, lift, staff room, staff toilet. Check plant room if unlocked	
13	First Aid room, Piano room, and Staff toilets	
14	Forest School if unlocked	
Whole school search completed, or child found		

All available staff to meet in old hall on sound of alarm.

Please search your area quietly and carefully, looking

- in cupboards
- behind things
- in any small space
- in resources/PE Equipment

**Once areas are checked report back to SLT in old hall.**

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