

HUNTER HALL SCHOOL

Foundation Stage

Missing Child Policy and Procedure in event of child not being collected



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| Prepared | June 2011 BP | Approved June 11 Governors |
| Reviewed | June 2012 BP | Approved June 2012 Governors |
| Reviewed | June 2013 JC | Approved June 2013 Governor JRK |
| Reviewed | September 2014 JC | Approved September 2014 Governor NE |
| Reviewed | October 2015 JC | Approved October 2015 Governor NE |
| Reviewed and amended | October 2016 GG | Approved October 2016 Governor NE |
| Reviewed | September 2017 GG | Approved September 2017 Governor NE |
| Reviewed | October 2018 GG | Approved November 2018 Governor NE |
| Reviewed and amended | October 2019 GG | Approved November 2019 Governor NE |
| Reviewed | October 2020 GG | Approved November 2020 Governor NE |
| Reviewed | October 2021 GG | Approved October 2021 Governor NE |

MISSING CHILD POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Rationale

This very rarely happens, but complacency is a hazard we must avoid at all costs. 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.

There are a limited number of situations where a child could be lost and these are:

- Where a child goes missing on an outing.
- Where a child escapes from the school grounds.
- Where a child is taken by an unapproved adult.

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 – see EYFS risk assessment.
- The attendance register is taken at the start of each session and the number of children attending recorded.
- 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 regular intervals during each session (particularly during any transition activities)
- Children who arrive late must be recorded and those who leave early should be marked out accordingly.
- Key workers 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.
- Prominent notices will be displayed to ensure that doors are kept closed and where appropriate secure (key pad system on reception door and pre-school entrance)
- Parents must be made aware of the need for supervision of children at all times especially while waiting for the Early Years to open and of their responsibility to ensure that their child's arrival is acknowledged.
- Children should be counted before going out to play and again when they are lining up to come back indoors. A member of staff should be at the end of the line to ensure no children are left outside. Once inside it must be ascertained that the correct number of children are still present.

Drop off and Collection

- We request names of those who have been given permission and will be picking the child up on a regular basis.
- When someone other than one of the main named carers is collecting a child, we ask that we are informed on a daily basis when they bring the child to preschool or school – or by contacting the school office during the day.
- We ask that the person collecting is a responsible adult (over 18) and is known to the child
- We require relevant identification or the pre-arranged password, ideally we would like to have met the person previously.
- If there is any cause for concern or clarification, the parent will be contacted before the child is released to anyone's care.
- If a parent has not informed us that someone else is collecting, we will not allow the child to leave without first checking with the parent

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 chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child's absence is noted as soon as possible. Staff must be vigilant in ensuring that children in their key groups or those allocated to them for a particular session are present)
2. The senior member of staff present will arrange for the other children to be satisfactorily supervised. *(The remaining children should be gathered together for a storytime/music session. Without alarming them, the children should be asked if they have seen the missing child).*
3. A systematic search will be carried out to see if the child can be located in the surrounding area.
 - All toilets, cupboards, under tables, cushions, anywhere a child might hide - Outside areas including play house, climbing frame
 - Check all exits for where a child may have been able to leave the premises or site
 - The school grounds, playing field, car park, also check inside the school. --- Enlist the help of school office staff to search the school and caretakers to continue searching the school grounds
 - CCTV will be checked
4. The Head or Manager will then inform –
 - a) The parents/carers of the child – alarming them as little as possible. If they do not answer the phone a message must be left on any answering service before attempting alternative numbers. However if parents do not answer their preferred contact number the POLICE must be called before attempting other child contact numbers. If contacted parents should be advised that at least one parent is 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
5. Check route home (*If the child cannot be located a member(s) of staff should search along a possible route the child might take to get home. Where able they should take a mobile phone to keep in contact. If a member of staff arrives at the house without finding the child they should make contact with the school for further instructions.*)
 6. A record of events should be logged by the Manager in charge or by another member of staff delegated by them.
 7. 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 Early Years manager 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.

Intruder/ kidnap procedure:

Staff should always be wary of people they don't know/suspect. If a suspicious person is noticed within the nursery or school premises/grounds the following should be adhered to:

- In the event of having to approach the person, two staff members (ideally the senior management) should do this together and have a phone with them as a means of communication with the school. After ascertaining the reason for their presence, either:
 - Help them with their enquiry or direct them to the school office for assistance if appropriate. OR
 - If they become offensive/aggressive remove yourself immediately to a place of safety within the buildings and raise the alarm with the school office. 999 should be called.
- If you are at all suspicious, follow the same action as above.
 - The children should be kept securely in the preschool or school buildings.
- If the intruder is within the buildings, staff and children should remain in their rooms with doors closed, or if possible to do so safely, gather at the fire assembly point outside.
- 999 should be called immediately. Staff should make no further attempt to communicate with a potentially aggressive intruder.
- If the intruder makes their escape before the police arrive, details and full description should be made in order to assist the police.

If a person attempts to convince staff that they are family/friends of any of the children – the collection procedure should be followed. No person should be allowed to take a child without correct permission.

If a child is 'snatched' from the preschool or school grounds – the police must be informed immediately and staff made aware. The lost child procedure must then be followed without putting the remaining children at any further risk.

No attempt should be made by staff to restrain or go after the intruder.

Following any of the above, an incident report should be completed and submitted to relevant authorities as required.

PROCEDURE IN EVENT OF A CHILD NOT BEING COLLECTED

Procedure

Reception:

In the event that a child has not been collected within 15 minutes of the end of the day (3:00pm) the child will be registered within the after school care facility which is available until 5:30pm. If they have not been collected at 5:30pm attempts will then be made to contact the parents. If they are not collected by 5:45pm and no contact has been made the head teacher will be informed.

Pre-school:

- Children are collected at the latest by 5.30pm. If they have not been collected at 5.30pm attempts are made to contact the parents.
- Staff will continue to call and leave messages with parents/carers. In the event the child has still not been collected the staff will contact the emergency person/numbers given by the parents.
- If the child has not been collected by 5.40 parents and emergency numbers are contacted again. If they are not picked up by 5.45 and no contact has been made, then the member of staff will take the child to the Head teacher.

Monitoring and Review

The Missing child policy is constantly being reviewed to take into account any changes with contacts or procedures. This policy will be monitored by the Early Years Manager, who will report to the Head teacher on its implementation on a regular basis.