BIRKENHEAD
HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY

GDST
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

Missing Child Policy

Approved / reviewed by:	Maryanne Ramsbottom
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Ratified by:	LGB
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Birkenhead High School Academy

Missing Child Policy

1 Principles

At BHSA, the safety of our children is of the highest priority. A missing child should be an extremely rare occurrence. Staff must always be aware of the potential for children to go missing and of the procedures to be followed if a child does go missing. Risk assessments are carried out to ensure that the school is as safe as possible and children should never be allowed to leave the premises on their own. It is possible however that despite all precautions, a child cannot be accounted for and goes missing. This policy is designed to put in place swift and effective actions to locate any missing child and to notify and involve parents and the authorities at every appropriate point.

2 Aims

The aims of this document are:

- To ensure that all children are safe whilst in the care of Academy staff
- To give clear procedures and guidelines for action should a child be reported as missing in school or on a school-led trip

3 Preventative Procedures

- Rigorous systems in place to ensure that children do not go missing. This includes ensuring that all exits are kept closed, padlock codes are kept secure and exit buttons located at an appropriate height
- Children, staff and volunteers must be made aware of school boundaries
- Children must be supervised at all times and sufficient staff must be available to ensure that this happens
- Registers must be taken each morning and afternoon along with any activities outside of regular school hours i.e. enrichment clubs. Regular head counts should also take place throughout the day, particularly when children have been out of the classroom
- Parents/carers must sign their children in/out if they come to or leave the school outside of normal start and finish times
- Children until Sixth Form will not be allowed to leave the school with anyone other than authorised persons unless the school has been informed and the alternative person is identified
- Any visitors to school must be signed in and out. They must only be let into school by a member of staff to ensure that no doors are left open and the safety of the children is maintained. All visitors should be identified by visitor badges which are issued by office staff at sign in.

4 Reactive Procedures

- If a child cannot be found, the Head of Junior School/DSL must be notified immediately and told when and where the child was last seen. Time is of the essence and prompt action must be taken by all
- The remaining children will be left in the care of a suitable adult(s). All other available staff will conduct a thorough search of the school and grounds, e.g. PE shed, cottage, playgrounds, Senior school over the bridge, netball courts…
- If the child is not found the police must be called by the Head of Junior School/DSL or an appropriate member of staff. This period of time depends on the age and our knowledge of the child, e.g. no more than 5 minutes for EYFS and up to 15 minutes for older children
- If the child is not found within school, the child's parents/carers will be contacted by the Head of Junior School and informed of the situation

- Whilst awaiting the police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. Other members of staff will maintain as-normal-a-routine as possible for the rest of the children
- The Head of Junior School/DSL will be responsible for meeting with the police and the missing child's parent/carer. The Head of Junior School will also be responsible for co-ordinating any actions instructed by the police
- The Principal, LA and the ATB will be notified by the Head of Junior School that a child is missing so that additional support can be provided. Local Governors will also be informed as soon as is/Principalpracticable.
- If a member of staff finds the child, the Head of Junior School must be told at once. Parents/carers, police and other authorities will be notified
- Once the situation is resolved, a full written account of the incident will be recorded and held on file
- Further risk assessments and reviews will be carried out to ensure that the incident does not reoccur and any learning points can be gleaned

5 Out of School Visits

When a group of children is taken out of school, risk assessments must be completed in advance and checked by the Head of Junior School. All attending staff and volunteers must be aware of the details on the risk assessment.

- A list of children must be easily available to staff on the visit
- Regular head counts must be taken by staff on the visit
- Adult to pupil ratios will be in line with those set out in the Education Visits policy
- A school mobile phone will be taken on all visits
- If a child goes missing, the other children will be gathered together and a member of staff will be assigned to look for the missing child. An urgent but thorough search must be made of the immediate vicinity
- If in an enclosed space, the appropriate staff in that environment should be informed initially before calling the police
- The Head of Junior School/ EVC Principal must be contacted immediately and informed so that parents/carers can be contacted
- If the child is not found within a short period of time, the police must be contacted
- If the child is found, the Head of Junior School must be informed immediately. Parents/ carers, police and other authorities will be notified
- The Head of Junior School will investigate how the incident occurred and will take appropriate action to ensure that similar events do not happen again

This policy is reviewed and updated annually. If an incident occurs, it will be reviewed immediately after the incident and updated with any further actions.

October 2026