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**Missing Child Policy and Children Missing in Education**

**PART ONE: MISSING CHILD POLICY**

INTRODUCTION

The welfare of all of our children at Notre Dame Prep School is our paramount responsibility.  Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times.  Every member of our staff who works with children has read at least Part 1, of Keeping Children Safe in Education, (Sept 2025).  Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Our companion document, ‘Pupil Supervision, Absence & Attendance’ policy describes:

* The arrangements for children arriving at school and leaving the premises at the end of the day to include the handing over of EYFS children to the care of their parents.
* The qualifications of our staff and the arrangements for supervising the children whilst they are in school.
* The arrangements for registering the children in both the morning and afternoon. Parents are responsible for notifying the school if their child is absent for any reason. The school will always contact the parent if the child fails to arrive at school without an explanation.
* After School Club arrangements.
* The physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to or exit from the building.
* The supervision of the playground and the physical barriers that separate it from the rest of the school.

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings (including EYFS children) are set out in the NDPS ‘Visits & Trips’ policy. Both the ‘Missing Child’ and the ‘Visits & Trips policies are available to view on our website.  We review these policies regularly (at least once a year) in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective.  All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of children (including very young children in the EYFS) and read Part 1 of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance.

**ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM THE SCHOOL**

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible.  If a child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

* Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children are present
* Check with reception who will check the signing out/in book
* Inform the Head Teacher or the senior member of staff on duty. In addition, the Head of Foundation Stage will be informed if an EYFS child is missing
* Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child
* Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) with a relevant activity
* At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search the school premises both inside and outside carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms etc where a small child might hide
* Check the doors, gates for signs of entry/exit

If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

* Inform the Head Teacher (if not already done so) and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
* After no more than 15 minutes call the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion.  Ask them to come to the school at once
* After no more than 15 minutes the DSL/ Head Teacher would notify the Police
* The Head Teacher or DSL would arrange for staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds
* If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her
* The DSL would inform the Local Authority CADS (see also NDPS Safeguarding Policy 2025)
* The school would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
* Inform the Chairman of Governors
* The school's insurers would be informed
* If the child  is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

During the course of the investigation into the missing child, the school, in consultation with the Local Authority, will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report.  If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.  NDPS has a specific ‘Missing Child Incident Form’ that must be completed – the form is attached to this policy. Hard copies of the incident form are readily available at the front of the school’s emergency data file.

**ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING ON AN OUTING**

* An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present
* An adult would search the immediate vicinity
* Inform the Head Teacher and the DSL by mobile phone
* The remaining children would be taken back to school
* After no more than 15 minutes ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion.  Ask them to come to the venue/ the school (whichever is the most appropriate) at once
* Contact the venue manager and arrange a search
* After no more than 15 minutes Contact the Police
* The DSL will initiate the CADS process if appropriate
* The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
* Inform the Chairman of Governors
* The school's insurers would be informed
* If the child is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report.  The school will review its procedures and, if appropriate, these would be adjusted.

**ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF ONCE THE CHILD IS FOUND**

* Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child
* Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
* The Head Teacher/DSL will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident (having discussed this beforehand with the LADO if necessary)
* The Head Teacher will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the Local Authority and or Police)
* Media queries should be referred to the Head Teacher.
* The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements
* The report should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened, the purpose of the outing, the length of time that the child was missing and how s/he appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future (see also ‘Missing Child Incident Form’ attached to this policy).

**PART TWO: PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED ON TIME**

If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed collection time, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, the Head Teacher or other appointed member of the SMT will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child.

During this time, the child will be safely looked after.

If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a one hour period of when the premises are closing, the Head Teacher/ DSL will contact the **Social Care Duty Officer on 0344 800 8020.**  Social Care will make emergency arrangements for the child and will arrange for a visit to be made to the child's house and will check with the Police.  We will make a full written report of the incident.

**We undertake to look after the child safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care, until such a time as s/he has been collected by a parent, guardian or carer, or until appropriate, alternative care arrangements have been made with Social Care and/or the Police in order to prioritise the child's safety.** The school's DSL will keep a record of incidents where parents/carers do not collect a child from school or are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents. If any concerns about the child's safety and welfare result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the school's safeguarding /staff behaviour policy.

CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

Notre Dame Prep School takes its responsibilities for children ‘coming off’ its roll very seriously. School adopts the policies and protocols of its host Local Authority (LA) and informs the LA at every stage when a pupil transfers to another school, or is removed by a parent. The LA’s CME form is used. School reserves the right to liaise with the LA Admissions department at any juncture, and if concerned about a child, and will check the status of a prospective pupils with both the LA and/or another Independent School.

**See also:**

Safeguarding Policy

Activities and ASC Policy

Medication & First Aid Policy

Early Years Foundation Stage Policy

Holiday Club Policy

Privacy & Pupil Data Policy

Risk Assessments Policy/Assessments

Staff Supervision and Playtime Duties Policy

Visits and Trips Policy

Pupil Supervision, Absence & Attendance Policy

This list is not exhaustive and other NDPS policies may apply.

 **References:**

A:  Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, September 2025

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

B: Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE guidanceSeptember 2025

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

C: Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE guidance, 2023

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

D. Signs of Abuse NSPCC fact sheet: [www.nspcc.org.uk/signsofabuse](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/signsofabuse)

E: Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

***Reviewed September 2025 by S Smith***

***Approved September 2025 by L Campbell***

***To be reviewed no later than September 2026***

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**MISSING CHILD INCIDENT FORM**

1. Obtain a copy of the child’s Emergency Data sheet either from SIMS database or the file kept in the School Office or the After School Club and attach to this form.
2. Complete the form below ensuring that all relevant parts are completed and details given.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Name of Missing Child |  | Date |  |
| Child’s Class/Year Group |  | Teacher |  |
| Name of person reporting missing child: |  |
| Time the child was first missed: |  |
| Place where the child was last seen: |  |
| Apparent reason for disappearance, if known: |  |
| Additional descriptive information i.e. clothes worn, hairstyle or other distinguishing features |  |
| Have the parents been contacted Y/N and time: |  |
| Details of contact with parent/emergency contact |  |
| Have the police been contacted Y/N and time: |  |
| Details of contact with the police if applicable: |  |
| **OUTCOME** |
| Child found by: |  |
| Date and time found: |  |
| Full details of location: |  |
| Visual assessment of child’s health and mental state: |  |
| Reaction of parent/guardian: |  |
| Signature of person finding the pupil: |  |
| Print name below signature: |  |
| Signature of parent: |  |
| Print name below signature: |  |