



# SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

## LOST, MISSING OR UNCOLLECTED CHILD POLICY

*Note: This policy applies to all sections of the School including EYFS*

Reviewed October 2020

Review Date October 2021

### 1. RATIONALE

The welfare of all of our children at Saint Nicholas 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. 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. This policy sets out our procedures for maintaining safety and managing the unlikely event of a child going missing

### 2. RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the Headmaster's responsibility to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of this policy, the procedures to follow and to ensure that the policy is reviewed annually. It is the responsibility of all staff to read the policy and act at all times according to its guidance.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that they provide correct, updated contact information and know the procedures for the handing over of their child at the beginning and end of sessions.

It is the Governors' responsibility to ensure that they are aware of the School's procedures and to challenge/support School in its review of this policy.

### 3. REDUCING RISK OF A MISSING PUPIL

#### 3.1 General procedures

The following procedures are aimed at reducing the risk of a missing child.

- Contact information for pupils' parents / guardians is kept up to date and complete. Where reasonably possible the School holds more than one emergency contact number for pupils.
- Each child's photograph is attached to their electronic pupil record for easy identification.
- Pupils are registered at the beginning and end of each day and absences are followed up by the School office.
- Staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure every child is well supervised.
- Robust risk assessments are carried out and checked before any off-site visits can go ahead.
- There are high staff to pupil ratios on off-site visits to reduce risk.

#### 3.2 Start of the day for parents and children

Parents are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of their child passes from the parents to the staff and vice versa.

There are clear procedures for welcoming pupils into school. Pupils who arrive into school before 8:30am are expected to go to Mountbatten Hall where they are supervised by a member of staff. At 8:30am Lower School pupils are sent to the infant playground where they are collected from the playground by their form tutor at 8:40am. Middle & Upper School pupils are sent to their locker room at 8:30am and it is an expectation that they make their way to their form room in time for registration at 8:45am.

Late children are signed in at the main office; Lower School children are accompanied to their form room. Staff mark registers promptly and accurately at the beginning of the morning and at the end of the afternoon. Registers are electronic so information is received by the office quickly and absences are promptly followed up.

### **3.3 Outside time/lunch/playtime**

When children are outside they are supervised by adults at all times.

If pupils leave the classroom to work in other parts of School, teachers ensure that adequate supervision is maintained and all pupils are accounted for on return to the classroom.

All staff members on duty have a responsibility to politely but firmly refuse entry to an adult to the school building or playground unless they are already escorted by a member of staff.

### **3.4 Learning times**

If a child leaves the learning environment without permission, the teacher must send quickly for another adult to ensure that the child remains supervised, even if from a reasonable distance.

If an adult gives a pupil permission to leave the classroom for a short period of time it is important that the class teacher makes a mental note of the time the pupil leaves the classroom. If they are gone for a period of time longer than expected they should notify the office immediately so the pupil can be located.

### **3.5 Late collection**

If a parent has been detained and is late to collect their child, the child should be taken to homework club by the relevant member of staff unless they have an older sibling. If they have an older sibling the pupil in question should be given to the next duty member of staff who can supervise until collection. The homework club staff will then contact the parents and the pupil will remain in homework club until the parents can collect. There is an additional charge for this service which will be added to the parents' bill at the end of the term.

Pupils who have not been collected from after-school care by 6pm are brought to the Headmaster or SLT member on duty.

### **3.6 Educational Trips and Visits**

Thorough risk assessments and high staff/pupil ratios are provided when pupils leave School premises. There is good communication between the party leader and school and supervising teachers keep a list of pupils/groups and medical requirements on visits.

Parents / Carers are never left on their own with groups of children and should not be placed in a group with their child, unless part of a specific risk assessment.

Staff members should always take one of the school mobile 'phones on every visit and mobile contact numbers left at School.

## **4. PROCEDURES IN THE EVENT OF A CHILD GOING MISSING**

### **4.1 Missing child whilst at school**

In the event of a member of staff fearing that a child has gone missing while at school, that member of staff must:

- take a register in order to ensure that all the other children are present;
- ask all of the adults and children calmly if they remember when they last saw the child;
- contact an available member of staff who can cover their class while they carry out a search of the immediate area;
- inform a member of SLT, who will inform the most senior leader immediately;

The SLT member will then arrange all other available staff to conduct a thorough search of the premises and notify the member of staff if the child is found immediately. If the child remains unfound, staff will begin a search of the wider area. If the child has still not been found from the initial report of them as missing, the police then parents must be notified. When contacting parents/carers, ask them to bring with them a recent photograph of their child; try to remember and write down a description of what the child was wearing and any distinguishing features, including if the missing child has any special medical or learning needs.

### **4.2 Missing child whilst off-site**

If the event of a member of staff fearing that a child has gone missing while off School premises:

- An immediate head count should be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children are present;
- The party leader must stay with the main group and ensure safety of remaining pupils;
- One or more other adults should immediately start searching for the child;

- Where appropriate, a member of staff must notify the venue manager to ensure all exits are supervised or closed;
- The party leader should contact school to alert them in accordance with our Educational Trips & Visits Policy;
- If the missing child is not found, the party leader or delegated other must contact the Police.

## **5. PROCEDURES ONCE THE CHILD IS FOUND**

Actions to be followed by staff once the child is found:

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child;
- The Head of Section will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident;
- The Head of Section will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving Social Services/ Local Children Safeguarding Board);
- Media queries should be referred to the Headmaster;
- 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, lessons for the future.

## **6. UNCOLLECTED CHILD**

### **6.1 Care of the child**

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult by their expected collection time, we put agreed procedures into practice. The child will receive a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible.

### **6.2 Informing parents of procedures**

We inform parents/carers of our procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for.

### **6.3 Procedures for a non-collected child**

If a child is not collected at their expected collection time, we follow the procedures below:

- The child's file is checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.
- If no information is available, parents/carers are contacted at home or at work.
- If this is unsuccessful, the adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child - and whose telephone numbers are recorded on the Registration Form - are contacted.
- All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or nominated carers.
- The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Pupil Information Form or in their file.

### **6.4 Failure to collect a child within 1 hour**

If no-one collects the child within one hour of their expected collection time and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect the child, we apply the procedures for uncollected children.

- The Headmaster or a member of Senior Leadership Team is contacted;
- We ensure that the child is not anxious and we do not discuss our concerns in front of them;
- Under no circumstances will we go to looking for the parent, nor leave the school premises with the child;
- On advice from SLT, the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board will be contacted (Telephone: 0345 603 7627 / Out of hours service: 0345 606 1212);
- The child is cared for at the School until the child is safely collected either by the parents or by a social care worker;
- Social care will aim to find the parent or relative. If they are unable to do so, the child will become looked after by the local authority;
- A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file.