

## LOST OR UNCOLLECTED CHILD POLICY

Date Policy Reviewed	April 2026		
Date of Next Review	April 2028		
Person(s) Responsible for Review:	Owner:	Approver:	Board/Legal Approval:
	DHP	Head	n/a
Related Policies	Attendance Policy		

### DEFINITION

A child is considered 'lost' if they are unaccounted for after having been registered or confirmed present on the school site, and cannot immediately be located by staff.

### LOST CHILD ON SCHOOL SITE

#### 1. Immediate Response

The member of staff responsible for the child's group must:

- Remain calm
- Conduct an immediate headcount
- Ensure all other children are safe, supervised, and remain in one place, with supervision ratios being maintained at all times.
- Notify the School Office immediately, who will find additional adults to support in searching as required. This will include informing either the Head or a member of the Senior Executive Team (SET) in their absence. In the absence of a member of the SET, a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will be informed.

#### 2. Initial Search

A quick but thorough search of all relevant areas must be carried out, including:

- Classrooms, toilets, cloakrooms, changing areas
- Playgrounds, halls and the Dining Room
- Corridors, stairwells, cupboards and potential "hiding spots" such as lost property boxes
- Outdoor and boundary areas
- Any areas recently visited by the child
- Any areas where there might be potential duplication and misunderstanding e.g Extended Day
- Any areas where a child might act as a 'helper' e.g in Pre-Prep for Year 6
- Check sign out system, Orah
- CCTV checks if available

Staff must ensure no other child is left unattended during this time. The Head or relevant senior member of staff will make a judgement on how long is reasonable to continue conducting these searches before escalating to the next stage of this policy.

The senior member of staff may consider running an unplanned fire drill to evacuate all children from the building, in the interest of locating the missing child.

### **3. Contacting Parents and Police**

Once the a senior member of staff has been informed:

Parents:

- The Head or relevant senior member of staff will contact the parents/carers immediately to inform them of the situation, explain steps taken so far and agree on the next steps.

Police:

- If the child is still missing after consultation with parents (or immediately if parents are unreachable), the Head/senior member of staff must:
  - Call the Police without delay
  - Provide the child's name, age, description and last known location
  - Send Police a recent photo of the child (with parental permission)

The time between confirming the child is missing and contacting parents/police must be as short as possible.

### **4. Ongoing Actions While Awaiting Police and Parents**

- Searches will continue with all available staff (while maintaining supervision of other children).
- Staff should keep routines as normal as possible for the remainder of the group.
- The Head/senior member of staff will meet parents/carers and the Police, and coordinate the school's response.

### **5. After the Child is Found**

- The SLT and relevant staff will conduct a debrief and review procedures.
- Any necessary changes to policies, risk assessments, or practice will be implemented.
- All details must be recorded on CPOMS using the the 'Lost Child' category.
- Parents will be informed by the Head or relevant senior member of staff if their child was temporarily missing, as soon as practically possible.
- Pastoral support will be put in place for the child as required.

## **LOST CHILD ON A SCHOOL TRIP**

### **1. Immediate Response (First 1-2 Minutes)**

- Conduct an immediate headcount.
- Ensure all other children remain supervised safely in one area.

- A staff member conducts an initial search of the immediate surroundings.

## **2. Notifying School and Venue**

- The Trip Leader must:
  - Notify the venue manager or relevant staff so that a coordinated wider search can begin.
  - Call the School Office immediately, who will then notify the Head or a member of SET in their absence. In the absence of a member of the SET, a member of the SLT will be notified.
- Ratios must be maintained at all times.

## **3. Contacting Parents and Police**

- The Head/senior member of staff will contact parents to:
  - Inform them of the situation.
  - Explain what is being done.
  - Maintain communication throughout.
- Parents and Police must be notified as soon as possible, following the same expectations as for on-site incidents.
- Staff will liaise with Police to ensure effective coordination whilst ensuring appropriate supervision of the remaining pupils.

## **4. Decision About Continuing the Trip**

Following consultation between the Head/SET member, Trip Leader and Police, a decision will be made as to whether the trip may safely continue (if ratios remain appropriate), or the group should return to school.

Priority will always be given to the safeguarding and supervision of all children.

## **5. After the Child is Found**

- A review will be carried out by SET and involved staff.
- Any required changes to policy or practice will be implemented.
- The incident will be recorded on CPOMS under the 'Lost Child' category.
- Parents will be informed as soon as reasonably possible if their child had been temporarily missing.

## **UNCOLLECTED CHILD**

The school will ensure that all children are collected by a parent, carer or designated adult. If for some reason a child is not collected at the end of a session, the following procedures will be activated:

1. While waiting to be collected, the child will be supervised by a member of staff who will offer them as much support and reassurance as is necessary. The child will not leave the premises with anyone other than those with requested permission.

## **2. Pre-Nursery and Nursery**

If a child is not collected at lunchtime, they will stay with the rest of the group eating lunch and join the afternoon session for which they may be charged. Staff will continue to try to contact the parents/carers or other designated adults on the emergency contacts sheet.

Children not collected by 4:00pm will be taken to Extended Day.

## **3. Reception-Year 2**

If at the end of a school day a child has not been collected they will join the children going to Extended Day.

## **4. Years 3 to 6**

Any children not collected by 4:00pm will be taken or sent (as appropriate) to Extended Day.

## **5. If no-one has collected the child by the time the school closes at 6pm and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect the child, including emergency contacts, the member of SLT on duty will initiate the following procedure:**

- With the Head's prior knowledge, we contact the MASH Emergency Duty Team - 0800 833408.
- The child stays at Extended Day in the care of two members of staff 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.
- Under no circumstances will staff go to look for the parent, nor do they take the child home with them.

A full written report of the incident is recorded on CPOMS under the 'Uncollected Child' category.

Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked by our staff.

Continual incidents of late collection will be recorded and discussed with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity.

## **UNAUTHORISED OR FREQUENT ABSENCE**

Please refer to The Manor's Attendance Policy for information about absence management.