

Missing Child Policy

Effective from: September 2025

Authorised by: Mary Fysh; Principal, Sarah Tapp; Head and Martin Ayres; Chair of Advisory Body

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Rationale

The welfare and safety of all of our children at the Avenue Nursery and Pre-Preparatory School (the 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 the children safe at all times. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is continually supervised at all times whilst in our care.

Information for Parents

The secure login area of the website describes:

- The arrangements for registering the children on arrival in either the morning or afternoon
- The arrangements for handing over children to the care of their parents at the end of the day
- The ratios for supervising the children whilst they are on School Trips

Educational Trips Offsite

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are set out in a detailed policy document: "Educational Trips". All children on educational visits wear wristbands with the School's name and telephone number printed on them. All Early Years children additionally wear high visibility jackets. Children are split into small groups and assigned to a particular teacher who then takes total responsibility for those children in his/her group. We undertake risk assessments before any organised trip offsite in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy (Please see the School's Educational Trips policy)

Policy Documents

We review all policies related to Child Protection/Safeguarding of the children regularly (at least once a year) in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust, effective and in line with current statutory requirements. All new members of staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of very young children and the requirements of all relevant policies.

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 is seen to be missing, the following immediate steps are taken: -

Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children are present

- Inform the Head, Principal and Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Ask all the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child
- Occupy all the other children in their classroom(s) .
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the School, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms where a small child might hide
- Check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit
- If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken:
- Inform the Principal and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Ask the Principal/Head to ring 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.
- The DSL/Principal would notify the Police.

- The Principal would arrange for staff to continue searching 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 ascertain whether the child had gone home.
- The DSL/Principal will inform the Children's Services of the local authority.
- The school will fully cooperate with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Children's services.
- ISI will be notified within 24 hours.
- The Insurers will be informed.
- If the child is injured a full report will be made under RIDDOR to the HSE.
- An internal investigation will be conducted to ascertain the reasons behind a child going missing and to review the school processes and their effectiveness and risk assessments will be made and updated accordingly

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found will be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures will be adjusted.

If A Child Goes Missing on an Outing

- An immediate head count will be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- An adult will search the immediate vicinity
- The remaining children will be taken back to school
- Inform Principal, Head and the DSL by mobile phone
- Ask the Principal/Head to 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 at once.
- Contact the venue Manager and arrange a search.
- Contact the Police.
- The DSL/Principal will inform the Children's services of the local authority
- The school will cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Children's services.
- ISI will be notified within 24 hours.
- The Insurers will be informed.
- If the child is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE.
- An internal investigation will be conducted to ascertain the reasons behind a child going missing and to review the school processes and their effectiveness.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found will be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures will be adjusted.

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 Principal/Head will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Principal of the School will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving Children's services and any other relevant agency (ISI, Police, Local Children Safeguarding Board))
- Media queries will always be referred to the Principal.
- The investigation will involve all concerned and be based on the provision of written statements
- The report should be detailed covering: the purpose of the outing, time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened, the length of time that the child was missing and how s/he appeared to have gone missing. The aim will be to learn lessons to ensure procedures remain relevant and serve to continue to protect children.