CHATSWORTH SCHOOLS

MISSING CHILD AND UNCOLLECTED CHILD POLICY

Policy reviewed by: James Thompson – Chief Operating Office

Review date: 10/7/25

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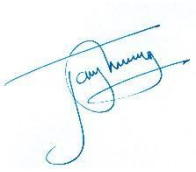
Next review date: July 2026

Reviewer's Signature: 

Please note: 'School' refers to Chatsworth Schools; 'parents' refers to parents, guardians and carers.

This is a whole school policy, which also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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POLICY AMENDMENT PAGE

Date	Key Amendments	Version Number	Reviewed by
28/06/2018	Policy Approved – Fit for use by schools.	v1.1	RNB
01/09/2019	Reviewed, minor amendments.	v1.2	RNB
01/09/2019	Annual Endorsement	v2.0	RNB
11/12/2020	Formal Policy review	v3.0	RNB
06/07/2021	Annual Review	v4.0	CMS
10/06/2022	Annual review	v5.0	CMS
29/06/2023	Annual review	v6.0	CMS
01/06/2024	Annual Review	v7.0	JCT
10/7/25	Annual Review	V8.0	JCT

CHATSWORTH SCHOOLS

Part One: Child missing from the school or on an off-site activity or event

Part Two: Procedures to be followed by staff when a child is not collected on time

PART ONE: MISSING CHILD

INTRODUCTION

The welfare of all our children 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. Every member of our staff who works with children has read Part 1 of the current version of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that children are effectively supervised whilst in our care. Staff are given guidance, training and support on supervision duties, both on site and on off-site activities.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Our companion documents, 'EYFS Parents' Handbook' and 'Guidelines for Pupils and their Parents' describe:

- The arrangements for handing over children to the care of their parents at the end of the day
- 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
- The physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to, or exit from, the buildings
- The supervision of the outdoor spaces and the physical barriers that separate them from areas beyond the school grounds

The supervisory arrangements for off-site events and activities are set out in the Educational Visits Policy, which is on the school's website and can be provided to parents on request. We review our policies regularly in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive an induction into the importance of effective supervision, particularly of very young children and read Part 1 and/or Annex A of the DfE's latest edition of 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance.

The school has rigorous procedures for pursuing unexplained absences, including the aim to contact parents by 9.30am if a child has not arrived in school and the reason for absence is not known. This should ensure that staff become aware at the earliest opportunity of any child who may have gone missing on the way to school. In these circumstances, this policy will be followed.

School policies relating to health and safety and welfare, if strictly adhered to, should prevent a child from going missing. However, should a child become lost, the following procedure will be followed:

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 School Reception/Office who will check the signing out/in book
- Inform the Head and Deputy Head
- Ask all the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child
- Remain vigilant in relation to the other children in the group/class, ensuring that they remain supervised and engaged in a relevant activity
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere on the school premises, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms etc. where a child might hide.
- Staff undertaking a search should remain in contact with the school office or a designated liaison person, for example via mobile phone or walkie-talkie.
- Check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit
- Arrange to undertake a fire evacuation drill to see if this brings the missing child to the roll call point.

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

- Inform the Head and also the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- The Head or their deputy will make contact with the child's parents, explain what has happened and what steps have been set in motion and ask them to come to the school at once
- The Head will notify the police if the child has not been found within 15 minutes
- The school office will make relevant photographic information available to the police to assist in identifying the missing child.
- The Head will arrange for staff to continue searching the rest of the school premises and grounds and widen the search in co-operation with the police
- The school will co-operate fully with any subsequent police and/or safeguarding investigation.
- The school's insurers will be informed
- When found, the child will be comforted and reassured
- If the child is seriously injured, a report will be made, if required, under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)
- The DSL will inform the Local Safeguarding Partnership

During the course of the investigation into the missing child, the school, in consultation with the Local Safeguarding Partnership, will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how media enquiries are to be dealt with. The school will also have regard to its Critical Incident Policy, as relevant.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found will be made available to the post-incident investigation.

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING ON AN OFF-SITE

VISIT OR EVENT

- An immediate head count will be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children are present
- One or more adults will search the immediate vicinity. All the adults and children will be asked calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child; an adult will retrace the group's movements to the last place where the child was seen.
- Other adults will stay with the remaining children and ensure appropriate supervision
- Staff undertaking the search and those remaining with the group should remain in contact with each other, for example via mobile phone or walkie-talkie.
- The Head will be informed by telephone.
- If appropriate, the remaining children will be taken back to school
- The Head or their Deputy will ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. They will be asked to come to the venue or the school, as appropriate, at once
- A member of staff will alert the management/security services of the organisation/venue being visited and arrange a co-ordinated search
- The group leader or venue management will contact the police if the child is not found quickly
- When found, the child will be comforted and reassured
- The DSL will inform the Local Safeguarding Partnership
- The school will co-operate fully with any subsequent police or safeguarding investigation
- The school's insurers will be informed
- If the child is seriously injured, a report will be made, if required, 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 will be made available to the post-incident investigation.

Pupil removed from school premises by unapproved adult

The school has procedures in place to minimise the likelihood of a child leaving the premises with an unapproved adult. Pupils are not allowed to leave the school site unaccompanied.

- Children are handed over at the end of the school day only to a known adult
- No child is allowed to leave the school site with an adult other than a parent (for example, a relative, neighbour, childminder of the parent of another pupil) unless permission has been received from a parent, either in writing or by telephone or email.
- In such a situation, the school may provide a password to a parent, to be used by someone they designate to collect the child if, for example, that person is not already known to the school
- In cases where a parent is legally denied access to a child
    - all relevant staff are informed in writing of the circumstances, together with a photograph of the child, where necessary
    - if possible, a photograph is provided of the parent who is legally barred from contact with the child

If a child is seen (or believed) to be taken from the school site by an unapproved adult, the parents, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the police will be immediately informed. Subsequently, school staff will act in accordance with any instructions provided by the police. A post-incident investigation will be conducted, as noted below.

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF ONCE THE CHILD IS FOUND

Talk to, take care of, reassure and comfort the child

- Speak to the other pupils, for example immediately or in a subsequent assembly, to ensure they understand the seriousness of leaving the premises or becoming separated from a

group on an off-site activity
- Refer any media enquiries to the Head
- The Head will speak to the parents of the child who went missing to discuss events and give an account of the incident (having discussed this beforehand with the Local Safeguarding Partnership, if necessary)
- The Head will initiate a full investigation

POST-INCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Following the event of a child going missing, the incident will be fully investigated by the Head, to ensure that, where necessary, procedures can be reviewed and improved to reduce the likelihood of a future similar incident. Typically, such an investigation will include:

- Referral to the Critical Incident Policy for further guidance on post-incident procedures
- Participation, as relevant, from
    - The Chatsworth Central Team
    - The Designated Safeguarding Lead
    - Representatives of the police and other relevant external bodies
    - A representative of the relevant venue or organisation, if the child went missing on an off-site activity
- Interviews and/or written statements from the staff (and, if relevant, volunteers) involved
- Collecting information from any other adult witnesses
- Discussion, as appropriate, with any pupils involved in the incident
- Assessment of the effectiveness of the school's procedures and risk assessments relating to the incident
- Liaison with the Chatsworth Central Team regarding the handling of media enquiries and communication with the parental body
- Production of a detailed report, shared with the Chatsworth Central Team covering 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 the assessment of the school's procedures and risk assessments
- Recommendations for future action, including revision of procedures and risk assessments; discussion with the Chatsworth COO in relation to any proposed changes to policy and/or procedures.

Following an investigation, the incident and the implementation of the recommendations will be reviewed at the school's next Health and Safety Committee meeting, and, if appropriate, by a member of the Chatsworth Central team.

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 Deputy Head will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child.

During this time, the child will be safely looked after. If the child is placed in the school's After-School Care facility, a charge will be made to parents at the appropriate rate.

If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a one-hour period or when the premises are closing, the Head will contact the Social Care Duty Officer of the relevant Local Authority. Social Care will make emergency arrangements for the child, 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 he or she has been collected by a parent or person nominated by a parent, or until appropriate alternative care arrangements have been made with Social Care and/or the police in order to give priority to the child's safety. Staff will not undertake either to take the child to his or her own house, or to the member of staff's own home.

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 policy and procedures.

Interpretation

In this policy, the term "senior manager" means the School Head and their designated deputies.

This policy applies to all employees in all Schools (save for Schools with their own procedure which shall prevail) and other work environments within Chatsworth Schools.

This policy applies within all companies, which are wholly owned subsidiaries of Chatsworth Schools Ltd, a company registered in England, registered number 11552579.

The registered office of all companies is St Botolph Building, 138 Houndsditch, London, EC3A 7AR. Any enquiries regarding the application of this policy made to the above address.

This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment and may be amended at any time.