

Missing Child Policy

Grange Park Prep School

March 2026



Member of staff responsible: Gavin Biston

Head: Gavin Biston

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This policy applies to the whole of Grange Park Prep School, which also includes the Early Years Foundation Stage.

POLICY STATEMENT

At GPPS we have the highest regard for the safety of all the children in our care at all times, both on and off the school premises. **Every attempt is made** from the moment they arrive at school to the moment they leave **to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. Part of that responsibility requires us to know at all times, as far as is reasonable, the whereabouts of our pupils. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.** Even when all precautions are properly observed, emergencies can still arise. Below are the current systems in place to minimize the risk of a child going missing and the procedure staff should carry out if a child does go missing.

Daily PROCEDURES

Systems in place to minimize the risk of a child going missing

- Registers – taken AM and PM.
- Members of staff in rooms – must make themselves aware of attendance.
- Security of the building:
 - CCTV cameras monitored from office
 - Side-gate requires code. It is closed during school hours and from that time the gate is opened by the office via an entry system
 - For access to the Nursery during the school day, the Nursery lead also has access to the entry system to allow access via the side-gate
 - Playground gate is opened at 8:30am and shut as soon as parents have left. It is re-opened at 3:20pm
 - In the morning staff are on duty at both entrances to the school until the gates are shut
 - Children will only be released to the parent/carer. They will be released to other known adults with permission from the parent
 - When moving to different areas of the school – children should be supervised
 - Toilet breaks (permission must be requested from teacher/ children to use the nearest toilets)
 - Dismissal procedure – all classes are dismissed by a member of staff
 - Nursery children should be accompanied by an adult.
 - When teachers other than form teachers take a class (for example Dance, Drama, Music, French, PE) a quick head count should be taken. Any absentees should be checked with the class teacher.
 - After School Clubs - a register is taken at the beginning of each club
 - When After school clubs are completed, each child is then handed over to parent/carer (or an adult that parents have given permission to collect) or taken to after school club

PROTOCOLS

We therefore have systems in place:

- For parents to advise us that their child will be absent from school
- For staff to register pupils' presence or absence at any form registration, lesson, games session, activity or education visit to determine who is on or off site
- For office staff to sign in or out of school if children have permission to arrive late or leave early

PROTOCOLS Parental notification of pupil absence from school (See Absence Policy and Procedures)

- For planned absence, such as for a medical or other appointment, parents should ask permission in advance by writing to or emailing the school office.
- For unplanned absence, for example in the case of illness, parents should contact the school office by email or telephone.
- If a pupil arrives in school after 8.30am or leaves before 3.20pm (Pre-Prep) or 3.30pm (Prep Department) for whatever reason, they must sign in or out at the school office.
- Accurate recording on iSAMS (online registration portal) is essential within the context of this policy but also in the case of fire.

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the key person/staff alerts the Head Teacher.
- The Head Teacher will instigate a thorough search of the buildings and playgrounds
- Staff will communicate as a search is carried out using the walkie talkie system
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- CCTV will be reviewed
- If the child has not been found after a thorough search, then parents should be notified by the most senior member of staff left in school. The Head teacher or next most senior member of staff on site will decide at which point the police need to be contacted. This would be approximately 10 minutes after initial concerns are voiced that a child is missing, giving sufficient time for searches and CCTV observation to take place. When contacting parents or carers please ask them to bring with them a recent photo of their child.
- The Head Teacher talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- A full written account of the incident must be produced by the DSL/s on the **SAME DAY**, (recorded on MyConcern).

Extra -Curricular Clubs and After School Care

For clubs and out of hours care taking place before or after school the member of staff running the activity takes a register of those present and is responsible for these pupils in the case of an emergency or evacuation. It is the responsibility of the staff member taking the club to take and register all pupils not collected at the designated time into After School Care to wait for collection by their parents if they have not been collected by 4.40 pm. They must also take any pupils to

After School Care if they are booked in. *Pupils must not be left alone for any reason nor allowed to return unaccompanied. Registers MUST be taken for clubs.*

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the Head Teacher and/or other staff back in the school. If the Head Teacher has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.

The Head Teacher is contacted immediately and the incident is reported.

The Head Teacher contacts the police and reports the child as missing.

The Head Teacher contacts the parent, who makes their way to the school or outing venue as agreed with the Head Teacher. The school is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the school.

Staff take the remaining children back to the school.

In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.

The Head Teacher, or designated staff member, may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The investigation

Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The Head Teacher will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.

The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:

- The date and time of the report.
- What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
- When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
- What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
- The time it is estimated that the child went missing.

A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.

If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Social services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.

In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, LADO is informed.

The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people

Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.

The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases. Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The SLT need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.

The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the setting leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.

The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.

In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The Chair of Governors will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press, please refer to the school's SLT.

Missing child in education

In accordance with our register policy if a child is missing from school without notification and we cannot communicate with the parents, the child will be reported as missing to the local education authority. This will also apply where a pupil leaves Grange Park Prep School and a destination school has not been disclosed, or where a child fails to start at Grange Park Prep School

IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

Emergency Services: 999

International Emergency 112

Enfield Police Station Telephone: 0300 123 1212 (Opening Hours: 24 hours a day)

PARENT/CARER CONTACT DETAILS

Details regarding the relevant address/es and phone numbers for each child will be requested at the beginning of each academic school year. A copy of parent contact information must be taken on all trips.

This policy will be reviewed after every major incident / accident to ensure the policy and procedures are effective.

