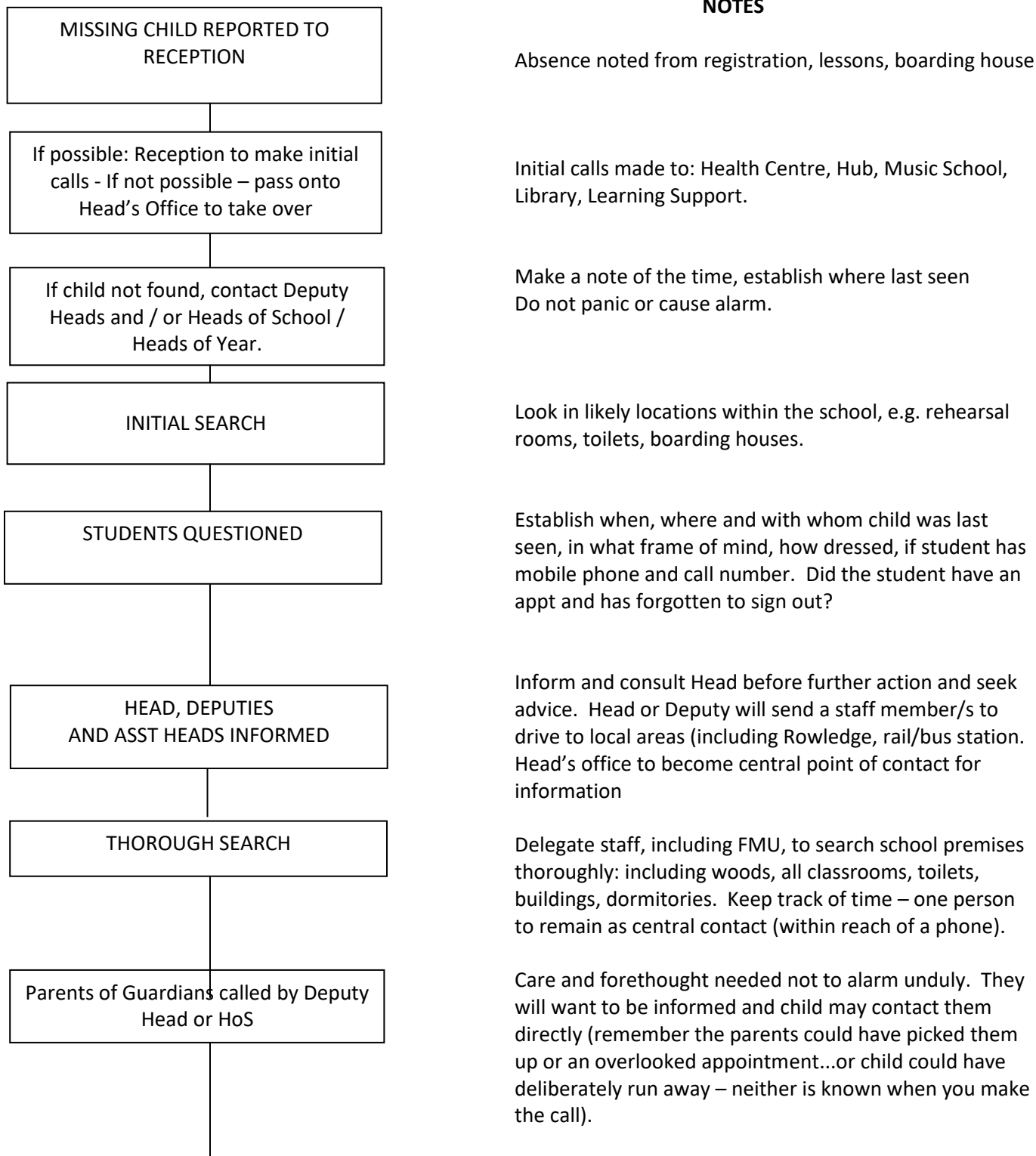


Last Reviewed	February 2024	
Review cycle	2 year	
Issue control		
Date to be reviewed	Comment	Updated by
February 2026		Deputy Head

SECTION 7.4 - MISSING CHILD PROCEDURE AND EYFS POLICY

NOTES



LOCAL POLICE INFORMED

Emphasise it is a child (boarder) who is missing and time last seen.

The School will monitor all student absences, particularly in relation to the Prevent duty and promptly address concerns about irregular attendance with the parent/carer.

After school hours initial “missing child” call is made to Housemasters/mistresses – who in turn contact duty SLT member. Housemasters/mistresses then replace Heads of School in process.

- If the child is not found after a site search and more that 60 minutes passed since the child was deemed missing, a missing child report is made to the police and the parents are contacted by the Head, who provide the police with details of the child and the circumstances of their disappearance.
- Staff will remain calm and will endeavour to prevent the other children from becoming anxious.
- The Head speaks with the parent(s), along with other staff members as deemed appropriate.
- The Head carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time of the incident.
 - The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the incident and the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - What staff/children were in the group and the staff members designated responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the group.
 - What has taken place in the group since the child went missing including conversations and police advice?
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened and a Risk Assessment is undertaken to avoid reoccurrence. This is shared with the appropriate members of the school staff.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will be asked to co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children’s Social Services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a Safeguarding issue to address.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, the relevant body would be informed in writing by the Headteacher, for example ISI and Ofsted, within 14 days.
- The insurance provider is informed.

Child going missing on a trip

- As part of the risk assessment process of planning a trip, due consideration should be given as to how you will control the supervision. This process starts by ensuring you have the correct staffing considering the age and nature of the trip. In these times of threats of terror, teachers are very aware of the heightened risk of taking trips and “being separated from a group”. This is covered through the risk assessment process.
- When planning the trip regular head counts should be planned for every incident where there is a change in location / change in activity. A member of staff should be responsible for a group of children and report the trip lead immediately any head count where a child is missing.
- When a child is missing, staff should ascertain as quickly as possible where the child was last seen by an adult and by their friends/peer group. For those students in Year 7 and above that have a mobile phone contact should be made as soon as possible.
- If not found the trip lead (or nominate an adult) should search the immediate vicinity thoroughly and alert staff/manager of the venue asking for support assistance. If, after 15 minutes of searching the child has not been found, the trip lead should contact the school to inform them of the situation. The Head or Deputy Heads will now be involved and Emergency Action Plan procedures would then be followed.
- During the course of the Emergency Action plan the child’s parents will be contacted and told what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. They will be asked to come to the school/the venue.

Other agencies will be contacted as appropriate e.g. police as appropriate during the Emergency Action Plan and the Chair of Governors will be informed as soon as is possible.

- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- The Insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE. A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted. If no injury was evident – a “Near Miss” form would be completed to ensure that the school/Governors were aware and in turn had reviewed policies and procedures as appropriate.

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF 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 a visit
- The Head, Deputy or trip lead, will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
- The incident should be written up as soon as is possible by the staff members involved. This would form the basis of a “near miss” or accident form that would be completed at school. 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 visit, the length of time that the child was missing and how she appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. The Head and Governing Body will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice from the Head.

Managing people

- Missing child incidents are a cause for concern for all parties. 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. 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 feel threatened. The parents may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others. It is important to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be at least two members of staff present, one of whom is the teacher and the other should be ideally a member of SLT (Deputy Head or Head where possible). No matter how understandable the parents’ anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and if appropriate the police should be called.
- The other children may also be sensitive to the situation. They too may be anxious. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on the needs of the children and must not discuss the incident in front of them though they should answer their questions honestly but also with the intention to reassure them.

EYFS Missing Child Policy

Policy statement

The safety of the children in our care is our highest priority at all times. Every attempt is made to ensure that the security of children is maintained at all times both within the school environment and when on school visits offsite. Every care is taken to ensure that the children are accounted for at all times. They are registered at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session and when they are handed over to another member of staff. The children are supervised in line with recommended ratios for staffing. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our EYFS missing child procedure is as follows:

Procedures

This policy works alongside the missing child procedure.

Reducing the risk of children going missing

- We ensure that our premises – both inside and outside are safe and secure. We carry out ongoing checks of the learning environments.
- We ensure that gates and doors into the Junior School (N-3) are closed.
- Notices are displayed to reinforce security and the importance of closing gates where appropriate. Gates that are not in constant use are locked securely.
- Children are registered on arrival. Children are registered again for afternoon sessions.
- All visitors must sign in and out at Main House Reception and supervised while on site.
- Ratios are always maintained so that children are adequately supervised.
- Parents are asked to collect their children from supervised areas at the end of the school day.
- In YN – 5 individual children who leave the classroom for e.g. music lessons, individual tuition or to visit the Health Centre are accompanied and collected by a member of staff.
- Members of staff are on duty in the classrooms from 8.15 a.m., during break times and Extended Day Care until 5.30p.m.

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the staff member calmly alerts the Head of EYFS and the Nursery Room Lead.
- The EYFS staff members ensure that the remaining children are secure and supervised and will carry out a thorough search of the building and outside play area.
- The Head of EYFS talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- 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.
- If the child is found, Head of Junior School and Head of EYFS are informed and a written report is made highlighting any actions which could help to prevent a similar incident in the future. The parents of the child will be notified at pick up time.
- If the child is not found, the Head of the Junior School, Head of EYFS, Deputy Head, Bursar and Head are informed and a thorough search of the grounds is undertaken with the assistance of support and administrative staff. The child's parents would be informed and at this time we would circulate a description of the missing child to all school departments. It may also be appropriate to implement the school's emergency plan.