Farnborough Road Infant School

Missing Child Policy

"Learning, Caring and Achieving Together"

At Farnborough Road Infant School, children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made to keep our children safe at all times.

Staff carry out thorough risk assessments for off-site trips and follow the Entering and Leaving School Policy to ensure the security of children is maintained.

In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed:

Treat a child unaccounted for as an urgent safeguarding incident. The member of staff discovering the absence must raise the alarm immediately, notify the Headteacher/DSL or most senior available leader, and ensure other children remain safely supervised. Establish the child's identity, last known location and time, clothing, known vulnerabilities and any possible exit route. Search and escalation occur concurrently: do not wait for a full search or for the Headteacher to become available before calling 999 where there is immediate danger, suspected abduction, a vulnerable young child outside secure supervision, or the child cannot be located promptly. Any member of staff may call 999. Provide police with relevant information and follow their instructions.

Immediate response — all incidents

This policy applies to all pupils, including Nursery and Reception children, during the school day, at arrival and collection, on educational visits and during school-organised activities. It is read alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the EYFS statutory framework effective September 2026, and the school safeguarding, attendance, educational visits and collection procedures. It concerns a child missing from supervision; children missing education or absent from school are addressed through separate attendance and safeguarding processes.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the key person/staff will alert the Headteacher.
- The Headteacher and other available members of staff will carry out a thorough search of the building and outside areas.

The Headteacher/DSL or nominated senior leader will ensure police are contacted without delay when a child remains missing or risk is significant, and parents/carers are informed promptly unless police or safeguarding advice indicates that doing so would increase risk. Staff must not delay emergency action while seeking managerial permission.

- The register will be checked to make sure no other child is missing.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child

A designated adult checks toilets, classrooms, cupboards, quiet spaces, outdoor areas, gates and immediate accessible surroundings without leaving other pupils unsupervised. Allocate named search zones and record who searched where and when. Preserve CCTV, access-control and sign-out information where available.

- The Headteacher will talk to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The Headteacher contacts the Chair of Governors and reports the incident.

The DSL considers whether the circumstances indicate neglect, exploitation, abduction, domestic abuse or other safeguarding risk and consults children's social care/police as appropriate. Any child found is checked for injury, distress and safeguarding concerns, with medical assistance sought when needed.

The Headteacher/DSL leads an immediate factual review and safeguarding response. Governors provide strategic oversight and challenge without replacing police, local authority, LADO or other statutory investigations.

Child going missing on a trip/outing

Before visits, the visit leader must confirm named adults, current headcounts, emergency contacts, venue exits, meeting points and individual risk assessments (including SEND, communication, sensory or mobility needs). Staff carry emergency contact and relevant medical information securely.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, ensure the rest of the class/group are sat down and are with a member of school staff
- All activities should stop immediately.
- The class teacher will search the immediate vicinity, but does not search beyond that.
- The class teacher will alert the trip venue staff that a child is missing.
- The class teacher should alert other staff on the trip that a child is missing.
- -The visit leader directs a rapid, coordinated search with venue staff, using named zones and maintaining supervision of all other children. A designated adult stays at the last known location and another at an agreed rendezvous point, if safe.
- Trip Leader to inform Head/ Deputy or SLT in school and incident is recorded.
- The Headteacher contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
  - Parents/carers are informed promptly by the Headteacher or delegated senior leader and given clear, accurate instructions. Do not automatically require parents to travel to school: agree the safest meeting and collection arrangements with police and the family.
  - The visit leader and school leadership decide, with police advice where relevant, whether the rest of the group should remain safely at the venue or return to school; at least one appropriate member of staff stays available to assist the search and police response.
- The Headteacher contacts the Chair of Governors and reports the incident.
- An investigation is carried out by the Governing body.
- The Headteacher or member of staff may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The Investigation

Staff will keep a contemporaneous chronology of the alarm, searches, headcounts, telephone calls, decisions, advice, reunification and welfare checks. Preserve registers, trip records, CCTV and relevant communications. Record safeguarding concerns on the school's secure safeguarding system, share information on a need-to-know basis and inform the local authority and relevant agencies according to the incident and their notification criteria.

Recording, notifications and review

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Headteacher speaks to the parents.

The Headteacher arranges a proportionate internal review, with governor oversight and support from the local authority where appropriate. Staff provide factual accounts promptly; where police, children's social care or LADO investigation is underway, the school coordinates its review so as not to compromise that process.

- The Member of Staff in charge writes an incident report detailing:
  - The date and time of the report.
  - What staff/children were on the outing and the name of the staff member, designated responsibility for the missing child.
  - When the child was last seen on the outing.
  - What has taken place on the outing since the child went missing.
  - The estimated time the child went missing.
- 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. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.

RIDDOR notification is not automatic for every missing-child incident. The Headteacher seeks health-and-safety advice and reports to the HSE only where the incident meets the applicable statutory reporting criteria.

Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.

The DSL/Headteacher assesses whether notifications to Ofsted, the local authority, the LADO or other bodies are required under the setting's registration and statutory safeguarding requirements. Allegations about adults are managed under the school's allegations/low-level concerns procedures; Ofsted notification must not be assumed to depend on disciplinary action.

- The Insurance provider is informed.

Where appropriate, notify the school insurer in accordance with policy terms. Conduct a post-incident debrief, review staffing, gates, handovers, headcount systems and risk assessments, and agree recorded actions with owners and deadlines.

Managing People

Provide age-appropriate reassurance and support for the child, family, other children and staff. Communications must be accurate, confidential and coordinated by the Headteacher/DSL. Staff should not speculate, post on social media or share identifiable details beyond those who need to know.

Support and communication

- 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. School leaders need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated, but receive support while feeling vulnerable.

The Headteacher will meet distressed parents/carers with sensitivity, using an appropriate second member of staff where helpful for support and accurate recording; a governor does not need to attend every meeting. Follow the school's violence and aggression procedures where necessary.

- Aggression or threats against staff will not be 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 Governors will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

Links:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; Educational Visits Policy; Entering and Leaving School/Collection arrangements; Attendance Policy; SEND Policy; EYFS Policy; Health and Safety Policy; Emergency/Critical Incident Plan; Allegations Against Staff procedures.

All staff, including temporary staff and volunteers, must know emergency alert arrangements, the location of registers, pupil handover procedures and who will coordinate searches. Leaders review the effectiveness of site security, attendance reconciliation, supervision, transitions, collection arrangements, educational visit controls and individual risk assessments. Governors receive anonymised learning from incidents and monitor completion of corrective actions.

This policy will be reviewed regularly.

Updated October 2026

Signed Date Headteacher

Signed Date Chair of Governors