



# Elstree School

Including all of the Pre-Prep Department and Early Years  
Foundation Stage

## Missing Child Policy

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Person responsible for Policy: **SCA** Responsible Governor **Emma McGrath**

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Elstree School is a Company Limited by Guarantee No 690450 (England)

## **1. Introduction**

The welfare of all of our children at Elstree 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 of the children safe at all times. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care.

## **2. Information for Parents**

The management and teaching staff of both Elstree and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure to provide quality assurance in:

- 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 morning and afternoon
- The physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to or exit from the building
- The supervision of the playground and the physical barriers that separate it from the rest of the school

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are set out in a detailed policy document: Educational Trips and Visits Policy. These policy documents can be provided to parents on request. We review these policies regularly in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of very young children.

## **PART I**

### **3. Actions to be followed, if a child goes missing from school (day or during boarding)**

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. Please note that that the time frame of what is considered missing depends on the age of the child.

- After one hour if someone in Y3-8 is missing you will need to inform the parents and the police (the Headmaster or Deputy if his absence should be notified as soon as there is a concern).
- Pre Prep parents and police should be alerted within 20 minutes.

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
- Inform the Head of the Pre-Prep or Prep School,
- Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) by reading to them

- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the Pre Prep or Prep School, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms where a small child might consider hiding
- Check the doors, gates for signs of entry/exit

After one hour from the original alert (Y3-8) or 20 minutes for a Pre Prep pupil, if the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Ask the Headmaster's PA 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead would notify the Police
- The Head of Pre-Prep or Prep School would arrange for staff to search 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 attempt to catch up with him/her
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead would inform the Berkshire West Safeguarding Partnership
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- The Chairman of Governors 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.

As soon as the police are contacted the insurance company would need to be informed.

#### **4. Actions to be followed, if a child goes missing on an outing**

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity
- The remaining children would be taken back to school
- Inform the Head of the Pre-Prep or prep School and the Designated Safeguarding Lead by mobile phone
- Contact the venue Manager and arrange a search
- After one hour from the original alert (Y3-8) or 20 minutes for a Pre Prep pupil, if the child is still missing ask the Headmaster's PA 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 or the school, whichever is more appropriate, at once
- Contact the Police (see timings above)
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead would inform the Berkshire West Safeguarding Partnership

- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- The Chairman of Governors would be informed
- The Insurers would be informed as soon as the police are involved.
- [ 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.

## **PART 2**

### **5. Procedures to be followed 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 duty staff will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child.

During this time, the child will be safely looked after.

If there is no response from the parents' or emergency carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a 5 hour period, the Head of Pre-Prep or Prep will contact the duty social worker at West Berkshire District Council. Social Care will make emergency arrangements for the child and 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.**

### **6. Actions to be followed 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/become separate from a group on an outing
- The Head of the Pre-Prep or Prep, depending on the age of the child, would speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Head of the Pre-Prep or Prep will undertake a full investigation (if appropriate involving Social Services/ Berkshire West Safeguarding Partnership)
- Any media queries should be referred to the Headmaster
- The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements
- 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 outing], the length of time that the child was missing and how s/he appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.

In the event of the return of the child, appropriate action will need to be taken to ensure the wellbeing of the child. It may be that following the return of the child, counselling may be required with a suitable agency for both child and supervising adult. Efforts would be made to include the parent(s), guardian or carer of the child in this process.

Equally, if following investigations, the event occurred as a deliberate act by the child, it may be considered necessary to impose some form of sanction, whilst also seeking to address the causes for such an act. Again, the parent(s), guardian or carer of the child would be involved in this process.

Records of the event would be kept by the Deputy Head and reviewed by the Headmaster on a regular termly basis.