



Missing and Uncollected Children Policy

Policy Leader: David Martin

Reviewed Date: October 2023

Review Date: October 2025

Ghyll Royd School and the Pre-School (Early Years Foundation Stage) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Policy statement

Children's safety is our highest priority at Ghyll Royd School and Pre-School, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through the implementation of our trips/outings procedure and our exit/entrance procedure, to ensure the safety and security of children in our care is maintained at all times.

Children's personal safety

- We ensure all employed staff have been checked for criminal records by an enhanced disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (formerly CRB checks)
- All children are supervised by adults at all times.
- Whenever children are on the premises at least two adults are present.
- We carry out risk assessments to ensure children are not made vulnerable within any part of our premises and grounds, nor by any activity.

Security

- Systems are in place for the safe arrival and departure of children.
- A register is taken daily, twice a day (am & pm).

- The arrival and departure of adults - staff, volunteers and visitors - is recorded via the front office.
- All visitors must wear a 'visitors badge'
- Door and gate locks with security codes deter unauthorised access to our premises.
- Door and gate locks deter children from leaving our premises unnoticed.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

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

- As soon as it is suspected that a child is missing, the key person/staff alerts the person in charge.
- Staff carry out a thorough search of the immediate environment e.g. building and playgrounds.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- The Headteacher is informed and a search of the entire school and grounds is carried out.
- 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 not found, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.
- The Headteacher talks to staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The Head Teacher reports the incident to the Chair of Governors. Our Chair of Governors comes to the provision immediately to carry out an investigation, (with our senior management team where appropriate) and decides whether to instigate an inquiry

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group/class on an outing, leaving our Headteacher and/or other staff back at school. If our Headteacher has

accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. The procedures may be a little different during a whole group outing if a parent is attending and is responsible for their own child.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff member in charge of the outing asks the children to stand with their designated person and carries 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 Headteacher is contacted immediately, and the incident is reported.
- A senior member of staff on the outing should contact the police and report the child is missing.
- If the outing is at a designated venue, a member of staff from the venue will be contacted and their procedures for missing children will be followed.
- The Headteacher contacts the parent(s), who makes their way to the school or outing venue as agreed with the Headteacher. The school is generally the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned there.
- Our staff will take the remaining children back to school as soon as possible.
- According to the advice of the police, a senior member of staff, should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- A description of what the child is wearing, and a recent photograph if possible is given to the police.
- The Headteacher contacts the Chair of Governors and reports the incident. An investigation will take place if appropriate.
- Our staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- The Independent Schools Inspectorate are informed as soon as possible and kept up to date with the investigation.

- The Headteacher and Governors carry out a full investigation, taking written statements from all staff and volunteers who were present.
- The Headteacher speaks with the parent(s) and explains the process of the investigation.
- The parent(s) may also raise a complaint with us or Ofsted.
- Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the incident.
 - Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue.
 - Which staff/children were on the premises/ outing and the name of the member of staff who was designated as responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen on the premises/outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - What has taken place on the premises/outing since the child went missing.
 - The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff and parents. Children's social care 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, Ofsted are advised.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements if necessary; the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- 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. 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/worried. The Headteacher ensures that any staff under investigation, is not only fairly treated, but receives support whilst feeling vulnerable.
- The parents may feel frustrated, angry, and fraught. They may want to blame the staff and may single out one staff member over others. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff one of whom is the Headteacher and the other should be a Governor or senior member of staff. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against the 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. Our remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and at all costs must not discuss the incident in front of them/within earshot. They should answer children's questions honestly, but also provide reassurance and support.
- 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. Our Headteacher and 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.

Uncollected child

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult by their expected collection time, Ghyll Royd School and Pre-School will put into practice agreed procedures. The child will receive a high standard of care in order to cause as little distress as possible.

Procedures

- Parents are asked to provide the following specific information which is recorded on the 'Registration' and 'Personal Contact and Permission' forms:
 - Home address and telephone number - if the parents do not have a telephone, an alternative number must be given, eg. a neighbour or close relative.
 - Place of work, address and telephone number (if applicable).
 - Mobile telephone number (if applicable).
 - Email address (if applicable).
 - Contact details (name, relationship to pupil, telephone number and mobile telephone number) in case of emergency and/or other information that is relevant to the safety and well being of the pupil.
 - Names, addresses and telephone numbers of up to 2 adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child from school, for example a childminder or grandparent who has parental responsibility for the child.
 - Information about any person who does not have legal access to the child.
- On occasions when parents are aware they will not be at home or in their usual place of work, they inform us in writing of how they can be contacted.
- On occasions when parents, or the persons normally authorised to collect the child, are not able to collect the child, they provide the school with written details of the name and telephone number of the person who will be collecting their child.
- Parents are asked to provide a password for children in Pre-School that can be used to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child.

- Parents are informed that if they are not able to collect their child as planned, they must inform school so we can begin to take back-up measures. We provide parents with our contact telephone number and email address.
- If a child is not collected at their expected collection time, we adopt the following procedures:

The child's file is checked for any information about changes to the normal collection routines.

If no information is available, parents/carers are contacted at home or at work.

If this is unsuccessful, the adults who are authorised by the parents to collect their child - and whose telephone numbers are recorded on the personal contact and permission details form are contacted.

All reasonable attempts are made to contact the parents or nominated carers.

The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the forms in their file.

If no-one collects the child within one hour of their expected collection time and there is no-one who can be contacted to collect the child, we will apply the procedures for uncollected children. We will contact Bradford Children's Social Care Team on 01274 435600 or on the out of hours duty officer where applicable Social Services Emergency Duty Team - 01274 431010.

The child stays at school within the care of two fully qualified members of staff until the child is safely collected either by the parents or by a social care worker.

Social care will aim to find the parent or relative. If they are unable to do so, the child will become looked after by the local authority.

Under no circumstances will we go to look for the parent, nor leave the premises with the child.

We ensure that the child is not anxious and we do not discuss our concerns in front of them.

A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file.

- Depending on circumstances, we reserve the right to charge parents for the additional hours worked.
- Ofsted may be informed.

Action 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 an outing
- The Headteacher will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Headteacher will conduct a full investigation if appropriate (involving Social Services/ Local Children Safeguarding Board if necessary)
- Media queries should be referred to the Headteacher
- 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.