

Missing Children and Collection Policy Whole School Policy including EYFS

*(Also see: Safeguarding & Child Protection, Prep & Pre-Prep Information Booklets,
Educational Visits, Risk Assessments for EYFS Outings)*

“Twickenham Preparatory School seeks to create a safe, caring and happy Christian environment in which all pupils are valued and can thrive personally, socially and academically.”

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Approval Body:	Board of Governors
Authorised by Chair of Governors:	
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Review Schedule:	Annually
Circulation:	Governors, all staff, parents and volunteers

1. Introduction

This policy consists of two parts, the first covering a missing child and the second covering the procedure to be followed by the School in the event of a parent failing to collect a child at the appointed time. There are also clear links between this policy and policies on Child Protection and Safer Recruitment, all of which apply to the Early Years Foundation Stage in exactly the same way as they apply to the whole school. The policy is kept under regular review and updated to keep pace with changes to the EYFS framework.

The welfare of all of our children at Twickenham Preparatory 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. Missing Child Procedures

2.1. Information for parents

The Pre-Prep Information Booklet, provided to parents describes:

- 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(s)
- 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 the Educational Visits Policy, available on request from the School Office. Policies and procedures are regularly reviewed 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.

2.2. Procedure to be followed by staff if a child goes missing from school

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

- Check with other adults present in case the child has been granted permission to get a drink, go to the toilet etc
- Make a note of the time
- Search the immediate surrounding area (including the toilets), in case the child is hiding because he /she is playing a game
- Ask other children if they have seen him /her and try to retrace his /her steps
- Stay calm and be reassuring to other children so they can recall any important details
- Call the child's name calmly but firmly and look in blind spots, quiet corners, under tables, equipment boxes, storage cupboards, shed etc
- If there is no response, raise the alert with the Head of Pre-Prep who will alert other staff in the department
- If you are in the playground, blow the whistle for lining up to do a head count and pupil check, and then return to classes
- The Head of Pre-Prep will raise the alert with the office and the Headmaster who will alert other school staff available to help including the Premises Manager
- Use all staff not taking a class to help search, checking all classrooms, the Pre-Prep kitchen, the Pre-Prep library, the hall, under the mini-buses, the immediate outside area and then the playground including areas out of bounds to children
- Check that the Hampton gate has not been open but if it has, broaden the search to that area
- Check that the main gate has not been opened but if it has, enlarge the search to the front grounds of the School
- If the child continues to be missing after the Head of Prep and Headmaster are confident that a thorough search of the site and surrounding area has been carried out, it is time to inform the parents and to call the Police
- **Remember, the first hour is critical** – Monitor the time closely and if the child is not found within 20 minutes of the search beginning, the Police should be involved to make optimum use of that first hour
- Police and other agencies may need to be involved earlier if the child is known to be at risk for any reason. The office will arrange this if it is necessary.

If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Ask the Headmaster or Head of Pre-Prep 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
- 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 local Children's Services
- The School would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Children's Services
- Inform the Chairman of Governors
- Ofsted would be informed
- 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.

2.3. Procedure to be followed by staff 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 venue Manager would be contacted and a search arranged
- Inform the Headmaster or Head of Pre-Prep and the Designated Safeguarding Lead by mobile phone
- Ask the Headmaster or Head of Pre-Prep 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 remaining children would be taken back to school
- Contact the Police
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead would inform the local Children's Services
- The School would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Children's Services
- Inform the Chairman of Governors
- Ofsted would be informed
- The Insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE.

2.4. Information to be provided to the Police

When the School contacts the Police during the day or night, the following information should be provided:

- The pupil's name
- The pupil's age
- An up to date photograph if possible
- The pupil's height, physical description and any physical peculiarities
- Any disability, learning difficulty or special educational needs that the pupil may have
- The pupil's home address and telephone number
- A description of the clothing the pupil is thought to be wearing

- Any relevant comments made by the pupil such as “I’m going to run away to Brighton.”

The information will then be passed to the various police stations through police channels and no further notifications from the School should be necessary.

2.5. Missing pupil incident book

The School must keep a full written record of any incident of a missing pupil including:

- The pupil's name
- Relevant dates and times
- The action taken to find the pupil
- Whether the police or children's social care were involved
- Outcome or resolution of the incident
- Any reasons given by the pupil for being missing
- Any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident
- A record of the staff involved.

A full written record of the incident will be kept on the pupil's file.

2.6. Procedure 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 or separate from a group on an outing
- The Headmaster or Head of Pre-Prep will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Headmaster or Head of Pre-Prep will promise a full investigation, if appropriate involving Children’s Services/ Local Children Safeguarding Board
- 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.

3. Procedures to be followed by staff when a child is not collected on time

If a child is not collected within fifteen minutes of the agreed collection time, the School will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, office staff will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child.

3.1. In the event that a Pre-Prep child is still awaiting collection at dismissal time (Reception – 3.15pm, Y1 – 3.20pm, Y3 – 3.25pm):

- Ask the child what he/she thinks are the collection arrangements for that day and reassure the child
- Check the messages written on the clipboard from the morning duty (on the filing cabinet by the kitchen)
- Check with the office if they have had a message regarding later collection or the parent/carer being delayed
- Leave the child with a familiar teacher/teaching assistant so they do not become distressed and ask the office to contact the parents/carers to confirm the collection arrangements (4pm supervision)

- Notify the Head of Pre-Prep or another senior teacher if she is not available
- If the child has an older sibling they should be located so that both children can wait together and the younger child should feel less worried about the situation
- The office will keep telephoning numbers on the contact list until they speak to a reliable adult
- Stay by the telephone in Pre-Prep to assist the office in receiving the call and to minimise distress for the child
- If the delay persists beyond 4:15pm the child should be taken to the After-School Club and the person on late duty notified. If the child is becoming distressed you may make a more suitable arrangement with the person on late duty. It may be less distressing for them to wait with a teacher in Pre-Prep, particularly if there are older children in the After School Care or if the office have been unable to make contact with the parent or carer. The person on late duty is responsible for the child from this point
- The Headmaster should be informed at this point, particularly if the office is unable to contact the parent /carer. Do remember, that the parent / carer may be unable to answer the telephone if they are driving or they may not have any charge left in their mobile telephone
- The child should be given something to eat and drink and taken to the toilet if necessary
- The office will continue to telephone the contact numbers until they contact an adult who can /should have collect(ed) the child /children and the child /children can continue to wait in the After School Care **you /the person on late duty must ensure that everybody is aware of the child's /children's location**
- The office will also check BBC News in case there has been an event which may be causing communication difficulties with telephones and networks
- The Head of Pre-Prep and Headmaster may wish to contact the Police if the delay persists beyond 4:30pm if the office has been unable to make contact with the parents /carer and there appears to be no explanation for the lack of contact
- At all times the child /children need to be reassured and made to feel as cared for and secure as possible
- The School will co-operate and take advice from the Police regarding when /if it would be appropriate to involve Children's Services.

If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers for a child in either Pre-Prep or Prep when the School is closing, the senior member of staff on duty will inform the Headmaster and will contact the Children's Services. Children's Services 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. The School will make a full written report of the incident.

The School undertakes to look after the child safely throughout the time that he or she remains under its care.

4. Review

This policy shall be reviewed every year as part of the School's annual review of safeguarding, and updated as necessary. In undertaking the review the Headmaster will take into account any incidents in the Missing Pupil Incident Book that indicate that there may be a problem with supervision, pupil support or security at the School and any issues raised by individual members of staff, parents and pupils.