

LGCS Policy	Lost Child Policy					
Approved by	LAC	Issue Date	Mar 2023	Review Date	Mar 2026	
Audience	Trustees		Staff	✓	Pupils	
	Local Academy Council		Parents	✓	General Public	

Overall Aim of Statement:

To provide a safe, caring and secure environment for all children, and to have a safe, systematic and reassuring procedure in place in the event of lost children.

Specific Objectives/Statements and Procedures:

Child going missing at school

All possible steps will be taken to prevent children leaving the premises alone. Please see Health and Safety Policy.

- As soon as a child appears to be missing, a systematic search of the premises will be carried out by available staff.
- The office staff are to be informed immediately. The whole of the premises is to be systematically searched.
- Without alarming them, other children in the class/group will be asked if they know the child's whereabouts.
- If the child cannot be found, the parents/carers will be contacted to inform them that the child may be missing.
- If the child is still not found, the police will be called.
- Information regarding and a photograph of the missing child will be given to the police by the Office staff.
- A written report of the incident will be kept on file. A thorough review of the procedure and policy will be undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team.
- A discussion will be held at carpet time to ensure children are made aware that they must not leave the premises until a suitable adult arrives to take them home.
- If the child is found, regardless of anxieties of staff and other adults involved in the search, reassurance will be given and the child will be encouraged to return to class and or home with appropriate adult carer.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when a child goes missing on an outing.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated adult and carry 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.
- A systematic search of the premises/ venue will then be carried out by available staff.
- The LGCS office staff are to be informed immediately.
- Without alarming them, other children in the class/group will be asked if they know the child's whereabouts.
- If the child cannot be found, the parents/carers will be contacted to inform them that the child may be missing.
- If the child is still not found, the police will be called by the trip leader. Information regarding and a photograph of the missing child will be given to the police by the Trip Leader staff.
- If the child is found, regardless of anxieties of staff and other adults involved in the search, reassurance will be given and the child will be encouraged to return to class and or home with appropriate adult carer.

The investigation

- The trip leader together with the Executive Principal/ Head of School speaks with the parent(s).
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
 - What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
 - The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.

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- 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.

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 for the designated adult 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, who under investigation, are fairly treated and receive support.
- The parents may feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame 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 present and a communication log must be completed. No matter how understandable the parent’s anger may be, aggression or threats against 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. 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 outcome, staff may need counselling and support.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.