



PLYMOUTH COLLEGE

MISSING CHILD & UNCOLLECTED CHILD POLICY

Including Early Years Foundation Stage

Last reviewed:	August 2025
Next review date:	August 2026
Responsibility:	Head of Prep

INTRODUCTION

The welfare of all of our children at Plymouth College is our paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that they have 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 they are in our care.

All schools that provide for children within an EYFS framework are legally required to have:

- A policy for the procedures to be followed in the event of a child going missing from school or whilst on a school outing
- A procedure to be followed in the event of a parent failing to collect the child at the appointed time

CONTENTS OF POLICY

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. *Parents will have their attention drawn to the existence of both procedures, the policy covering the information for parents of Early Years Foundation Stage pupils.* There are also clear linkages between this policy and policies on Child Protection and Safer Recruitment, all of which apply to the EYFS in exactly the same way as they apply to the whole school. The policy will be kept under regular review and updated to keep pace with changes to the EYFS framework.

OCCASIONS WHEN A CHILD MAY GO MISSING

1. From an indoor lesson

A child may leave the room unaccompanied by an adult and fails to return, e.g:

- to be excused
- to collect something from another classroom/reception cloakroom
- being sent to another classroom/teacher
- carrying out an errand for a teacher

2. From an outdoor lesson, e.g:

- during games on the field
- any other outdoor lesson
- between lessons when moving to the Sports Hall/SwimmingPool

3. Travelling between lessons

- when moving around the senior site for lessons and clubs
- when doors and gates are left open/unlocked

4. Other times, e.g:

- start and finish of day
- breaks and lunchtimes
- when on a school outing off-site

PART ONE: MISSING CHILD POLICY

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our pupils are set out in a detailed policy document: "Outdoor Education, Visits and Offsite Activities". These 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.

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM THE PREP SCHOOL

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. At all times the emphasis should be on ensuring that the other pupils are supervised and that there is no sense of panic. If a child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

- If the person who notes the missing child is a voluntary helper / classroom assistant they should immediately inform the Form/Class Teacher or member of staff on duty. They should state the name of the child (or description if name is not known); what the child was last seen doing and where; how long since they saw the child. They should then help with the search as directed

The Form/Class Teacher will then:

- Conduct a search of the immediate surroundings

- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children are present
- Inform the Head of Prep, Head of Early Years or member of the Prep Leadership Team and alert the Prep reception and Senior reception.
- Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child
- Get cover for all of the other children in their classroom(s) by reading to them or directing the classroom assistant or double up with another class for supervision while they search
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the School premises, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms where a child might hide
- Check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit

If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken by the Head of Prep or Head of Early Years.

- Join in searching for the child directing available staff to help

Once the Head of Prep or Head of Early Years is convinced the child is missing the following steps will be taken:

- Inform SLT
- The Head of Prep or Head of Early Years will ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, what steps have been set in motion and ask them to come to the school at once. They will then ensure that the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is aware.
- If the child is not at home then the police will be contacted by the DSL or Deputy DSL
- The Head of Prep or Head of Early Years 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 DSL or Deputy DSL would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- Inform the Chair of the Schools' Management Board*
- If the child is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE

If a child is absent from school and a member of staff has reason to believe there might be a danger of radicalisation taking place this should be reported immediately to the Head. Similarly, if a child is removed hurriedly from the school premises by a parent / family friend / relative.

The School Secretary would make a full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN IF A CHILD IS SEEN RUNNING OFF PREMISES

Any member of staff seeing a child leaving the premises either unaccompanied or accompanied by a person they do not recognise then they should send a message to Reception or another member of staff whilst ensuring that they do not lose sight of the child.

Staff should use their professional discretion to decide whether or not it is appropriate to follow the child off premises. They must always consider their responsibility in supervising the other pupils.

ACTIONS 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 remaining children would be taken back to school
- Inform Head of Prep School, Head of Early Years and the DSL or Deputy DSL by mobile phone
- Ask the Head of 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 venue or the school (as appropriate) at once
- If appropriate contact the venue Manager and arrange a search
- Contact the Police
- The DSL or Deputy DSL would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- Inform the Chair of the Schools' Management Board*
- 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.

ACTIONS 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 Head of Prep will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Head of Prep will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving Social Services/ Local Children Safeguarding Board)
- Media queries should be referred to SLT who will seek lines to take from the Schools' Management Board and the Head of Marketing if appropriate
- 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.

PART TWO: PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED ON TIME

If a child is not collected by 6pm, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, the Head of Prep, the Duty Teacher, or the Receptionist will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be looked after safely.

If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a 2 hour period the Head of Prep will contact the Social Care Duty Officer. 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 they remain under our care.

*Plymouth College is part of the Galaxy Global Education Group. The College is managed by the Schools Management Board of the Galaxy Global Education Group (*which is responsible for Group Governance and Local Advisory Board Liaison, Co-ordinating Learning Initiatives & Setting Group KPIs, Regulatory Compliance, Safeguarding Oversight & Student Voice*). The Local Advisory Board (LAB) is an advisory sub-committee of the Galaxy Global Education Group Schools Management Board, providing local insight, support, and challenge to the school's leadership in regards to educational standards and school improvement, safeguarding and welfare, community and stakeholder engagement, compliance and reporting. The Chair of the LAB is appointed by the Chair of the Schools Management Board and the LAB is composed of 3-4 local members appointed by the Chair of the Schools Management Board (with whom formal governance authority rests) and approved by the Board of Directors of the Galaxy Global Education Group.