



Missing Child Policy
June 2026



Missing Child Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually	
Policy reviewed:	June 2026 by ADT
Next review	June 2027 by ADT

This policy applies to all children in the school including those in the EYFS.

Introduction

WCPS aims to provide a secure environment for children at all times. The primary principle laid down in the Children Act – *the welfare of the child is paramount* – must be kept in mind at all times. Staff make every effort to continually and effectively monitor children whether inside the school, in the playground or outdoor learning area, or on an outing.

A missing child must always be regarded as a safeguarding matter. The circumstances in which a child goes missing may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation, unauthorised removal, mental health concerns, or that a child may be at risk of significant harm. All incidents of a missing child will therefore be managed in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

The Early Years Foundation Stage outings require a ratio of 1 adult to 4 children for Reception. For Years 1 and 2, outings require a ratio of 1 adult to 6 children. For each type of outing the teacher in charge will carry out a risk assessment and, taking into account the nature of the outing, will consider whether it is appropriate to exceed this ratio. Risk assessments will take account of the individual needs and vulnerabilities of children, including SEND, medical needs, communication difficulties, behavioural needs, or safeguarding concerns, and staffing ratios may be adjusted accordingly. The school obtains written or electronic parental permission for children to take part in outings although the school contract includes an overarching parental permission for school trips. Staff take essential records and equipment on outings, including contact telephone numbers for the parents of children on the outing, a mobile phone, a first aid kit and a recent photograph of each child attending.

There are generally two adults in each classroom in Reception and KSI. This ratio of adults to children helps the school to be confident in the knowledge that all children are accounted for at all times. Staff welcome the children at the back doors of the school and on arrival in their classrooms at the start of the day and are positioned so that they can see each child arrive and therefore help to prevent a child slipping out after their parent. At the end of the day staff ensure that each child is collected by an authorised adult known to the school or confirmed by the parent/carer. Identification may be requested if the adult is unfamiliar to staff. Where there are court orders, safeguarding concerns or restrictions regarding collection, staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and notify the DSL immediately if concerns arise. Parents are requested to inform the school by email, in writing or by a phone call to the school office of any changes to pick-up arrangements.

A register is taken every morning and afternoon to record the presence/absence of all children. The school gate is locked at all times during the school day. Visitors are required to sign in on entry in the office.

In the event of a missing child, the school may implement a restricted movement or lockdown procedure where appropriate, to secure the site and support an effective search.

Action in case of missing child from the school buildings/playground

In the unlikely event that a child becomes separated from their group, the following will apply:

- Stay calm and instigate a search of the immediate area in particular areas such as toilets, cupboards and other areas of a size capable of hiding a child;
- Conduct an immediate dynamic risk assessment taking into account the child's age, vulnerability, SEND, medical needs, emotional presentation and any known safeguarding concerns.
- Doors and gates to be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could exit the premises.
- The teacher will allocate duties to staff:
 - i) supervise those children present;
 - ii) execute a further search of all rooms in the school and outside areas with the assistance of other members of staff available.
- If the child is still missing following the initial search, the Head/Deputy Head and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL must be informed immediately. A senior member of staff present will arrange for all the other children to be satisfactorily supervised;
- They will talk to staff and any other adults to establish what has happened;
- One or more members of staff to be delegated to check local roads;
- If the child is still missing the following procedures must be followed:
 - Parents must be contacted at this stage by the Head Teacher or most senior member of staff available;
 - If the child is considered high risk due to age, vulnerability, medical condition, or safeguarding history, the Police will be contacted immediately without delay.
 - Inform the Police who will advise on the next stage;
 - Inform Head of KCJS, of the planned action;
 - Re-check all venues;
 - Check by phone and/or mobiles all adults, who have recently left the building (staff and then parents);
- A complete account of the incident must be recorded in the Incident File.
- Staff should not speak to anyone who has no need to know or who might be a member of the media, and under no circumstances should the name of the child be divulged to any such person.
- Legal liability should not be discussed with or admitted to anyone.

If a child has been removed from the school by an unauthorised person, the child's parents and the police will be contacted immediately.

Action if a child is believed to have been abducted or removed unlawfully

If there is reason to believe that a child has been taken by an unauthorised person:

- The Police will be contacted immediately;
- The DSL and Headteacher will be informed immediately;
- Parents/carers will be informed unless doing so would increase risk;
- CCTV footage will be secured where available;
- Descriptions of any adult, vehicle, or direction of travel will be recorded;
- Relevant court orders or safeguarding plans will be checked;
- Social care and/or other agencies will be informed where relevant.

Action in case of a missing child on an outing

To ensure safety on school outings, the following measures must be taken:

- Parents to have given permission for their child to attend the outing.
- Contact details for parents/carers to be taken on the outing so that they can be contacted in an emergency.

- Each adult in charge of a group will have details of which children they are responsible for. The class teacher will have a photo sheet of the children in the class.
- The children will be given details of the adult who is responsible for them, including their name.
- All children will be told to stay with the adult and not to stray or to go anywhere unaccompanied. If they need the toilets, they must ask and be taken by a member of staff.
- The children will be given wristbands/stickers with the school contact details on them.
- The children will be told what to do if they become separated from the group. Particular consideration will be given to children with SEND or communication needs to ensure they understand separation procedures.
- Depending on the outing, it will generally involve:
 - Stay where they are as someone will come back to look for them;
 - Look around to see if they can see the group;
 - Not to go with anyone even if they tell you they know where to find the teacher or adult they were with.
- A regular headcount will be taken of the group.

In the unlikely event, when taking a headcount, a child appears to be missing the procedure is:

- Stay calm and ensure the Group Leader is aware of the situation;
- A check will be repeated by the Group Leader; immediate possibilities will be assessed;
- The group will stay still and keep together.
- A member of staff will search the immediate vicinity;
- If the child is still missing after five minutes the staff on site will be informed, the school will be contacted and the Police will be called;
- The group leader will be prepared to give the following information:
 1. The Group Leader's name
 2. What has happened
 3. Name, age, address and description of the child
 4. Time of the incident
 5. Where the child was last seen and by whom
 6. Any special medical or learning needs
 7. A photograph of the child from the class photo sheet.
- The Head Teacher/School will contact the parent/carer of the missing child to inform them of what has happened and the steps that are being taken to find their child;
- The search will continue to happen after calling the police and the school;
- The teacher/adult involved will complete an incident report as fully as possible. This will be stored in the Head's office for future reference;
- Teachers/adults should not speak to anyone who has no need to know or who might be a member of the media and under no circumstances should the name of the child divulged to any such person;
- Legal liability should not be discussed with or admitted to anyone.

The Investigation

The Head will carry out a full investigation, taking statements from all adults present at the time, or who were on the outing. The DSL will contribute to the investigation to identify whether there are any safeguarding implications, patterns or wider concerns.

The Head will write an incident report detailing:

- The date and time of the report;
- What staff/children were present;
- When the child was last seen and by whom;
- What action had taken place since that time;

Give a copy of the report to the Bursar, Headmaster of the Junior School, KCS Head and, where appropriate, the Governors.

The school will consider whether the incident meets the threshold for notification to external agencies, including the local authority, safeguarding partners, LADO or other relevant regulatory bodies. A conclusion will be drawn as to how the breach of security took place.

School Telephone Number: 020 8946 1001

Head Teachers Mobile Number: 07837216287

Children Missing from Education Policy

A child missing education from school due to repeated or unexplained absence, or by leaving the school unexpectedly, is a potential indicator of wider safeguarding concerns, or where a family may be in need of additional support or early help. The school has drawn up this policy to deal with children who miss schooling in these circumstances, particularly on repeat occasions and for those children who leave school without clear indications of where they will be continuing their education. Children missing education may be an indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation, forced marriage, mental health concerns or radicalisation and will be treated as a safeguarding matter.

1. Context

This policy should be read alongside the school's Attendance Policy and in particular with the school's Safeguarding Policy, which gives further details on this topic. The policy has regard to the DfE guidance: Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2025): 'Children missing education (Aug 2024)

2. Policy and Procedures

The school will carry out daily registration and absences will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Attendance Policy. This policy covers those instances where:

- there is a repeated pattern of absence;
- there have been 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence;
- the reason for absence is unclear or unexplained;
- a member of staff has concerns about the nature of a pupil's absence;

In these instances the school's designated safeguarding lead (DSL), or the deputy DSL, should be consulted. The school's DSL will then follow the procedure detailed in the school's Safeguarding Policy and in accordance with Children missing education (Aug 2024) and will review the information, recording actions and discussions.

When a pupil leaves the school other than at the usual transition point (end of year 2), the school will make contact with the receiving school to ensure the child is registered at the school and has started to attend. If a child protection file has been created, the DSL will then forward the appropriate records to the receiving school, in line with the safeguarding partners' guidance: Keeping records of Child Protection and Welfare Concerns (January 2014). The school will also notify the local authority when a child leaves the school as described in Children missing education (Aug 2024), using the terms in Annex A of that document.

When a pupil leaves our school without clear indication of a receiving school, the school will contact local authorities to advise them of the situation and to start their tracking procedures. In case of serious concern the DSL will contact the local authorities, in line with the Safeguarding Policy for further advice.

If a pupil joins the school at a non-standard transition point, the school will notify the local authority of their residence arrival within 5 days.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes in legislation, statutory guidance or following any significant incident.