



Missing Child Policy

This policy is inclusive of all the pupils in the Prep School Years 3-8

Reviewed: January 2026

Reviewed by: V Rae

INTRODUCTION

The welfare of all of the children at Moulsford Preparatory School (the School) 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.

The School operates a variety of registration checks through the course of the day:

- Registration in form room 8.20-8.35am
- Registration in form room 1.30-1.45pm
- Prior to boarder's supper; 5.45 pm
- Post activities; 8.00-8.30 pm

Any pupil missing from the first two registration sessions of the day must have registered permission on the school portal to be absent. In the case of sickness, a parent should register their child as absent on the School Portal by 9.30 am.

Purpose

This policy sets out the procedures to follow if a child goes missing while in the care of the School, during school hours, trips, or school events. The safety and welfare of children are paramount. This policy ensures swift, coordinated action and complies with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025) and the Children Act 1989 & 2004.

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

1. Immediate Action

- Staff who notice a child is missing should act immediately and begin a search of the immediate area, including classrooms, toilets, playgrounds, and other accessible areas.
- Conduct a headcount to confirm all other children are accounted for.
- Check the attendance register to verify the child is unaccounted for.
- Ask other staff if they have seen the child, while simultaneously continuing the search.

2. Notification of Senior Staff

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or in their absence a deputy DSL, must be informed immediately.
- The Head or member of SLT is also notified to coordinate the response.

3. Extended Search

- A thorough search of the school buildings and grounds is undertaken under the direction of the DSL/Head/SLT.
- Staff must ensure other children remain supervised.

4. Parent/Guardian Communication

- Parents/guardians are informed immediately that their child is missing.
- Parents are kept updated, but the search is led by staff, following safeguarding procedures.

5. Police and External Authorities

- If the child cannot be found without delay, the police are contacted immediately.
- Children's Services (Local Authority) may also be contacted for guidance if required.
- Staff continue searching under professional supervision until the child is located or authorities take over the investigation.

6. Documentation

- A detailed written record is made, including:
- Time the child was reported missing
- Actions taken (search areas, staff involved)
- Contacts made (parents, emergency contacts, authorities)
- Outcome of the incident

7. Review and Follow-Up

- After the incident, the DSL and senior leadership team review the circumstances to identify how the incident occurred.
- Policies, procedures, and risk assessments are updated as necessary to prevent recurrence.

Preventative Measures

- Maintain accurate attendance registers and conduct regular headcounts.
- Ensure appropriate staff-to-child ratios at all times.
- Supervise children closely during transitions, breaks and off-site activities.
- Ensure all access points to the premises are secure.

MISSING CHILD POLICY FOR BOARDING

In the unlikely event that a pupil is found to be missing after 5.45 pm the following steps are to be taken:-

1. A check of the boarding register to make sure the child is unaccounted for.
2. The Head of Boarding or, in his absence, the Deputy Head of Boarding is informed immediately along with the Head, DSL and/or a member of SLT.
3. Ask other pupils if they have seen the child while continuing a thorough search of all buildings and grounds under senior staff direction.

4. Inform parents immediately; do not involve them in the search. Ascertain whether the pupil has been taken out without permission.
5. If the child cannot be located, contact police without delay and Children's Services, especially if there is any risk to the child.
6. Keep the child's welfare as the priority, ensuring other pupils remain supervised.
7. Document all actions on CPOMS, communications, and outcomes.
8. DSL to review and update risk assessments, registers and procedures with SLT after the incident.

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED IF A CHILD GOES MISSING ON A SCHOOL TRIP

1. Conduct an immediate headcount to ensure all other children are present.
2. Assign an adult to search the immediate area.
3. Keep the remaining children safe and supervised; consider returning them to the coach or school if appropriate.
4. Notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Head immediately.
5. The DSL coordinates the response, including:
 - Contact the police immediately if the child cannot be located and may be at risk.
 - Contact parents/guardians promptly, explaining the situation and next steps. Parents do not lead the search.
 - Contact the venue manager or local staff to assist where appropriate.
 - Informing Local Authority safeguarding team.
6. Cooperate fully with police and children's services investigations.
7. On return to school, log the incident on CPOMS.
8. Document all actions, including timing, staff involved, contacts made, and outcomes.
9. DSL to review and update procedures with SLT as needed following the incident.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found is to be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures and risk assessments will be adjusted.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to ensure it remains compliant with current legislation, statutory guidance and best practice.

Trigger for Additional Review

The policy will also be reviewed immediately if:

- A child goes missing incident.