



John Wilkinson Primary School and Nursery Out of School Hours Provision

Lost Child Policy

(at Nursery, Afterschool Club or on an outing)

Updated Spring Term 2026

STATEMENT OF INTENT

We believe the safety of all our children, staff, volunteers and parents to be of paramount importance. This policy sets out the procedure to follow in the event of a lost child at our setting or on an outing.

AIM

Our aim in this policy is to clarify the procedure to follow in the event of a lost child at our setting or on an outing.

As part of the daily routine the staff at Nursery keep children safe in the following ways:

- Before the start of a session the gates are closed and external doors are secured.
- When the children play outside the gates are checked again by a member of staff.
- There is always a member of staff outside with the children.
- At the beginning of a session a member of staff will be at the entrance door to welcome families and ensure children do not leave the setting.
- At the beginning of the session, the register is taken and the children counted. All members of staff are made aware of the number of children at the session, including completing/updating the fireboard located next to the whiteboard and computer.
- When the session finishes the children are gathered in the circle area with the leader. A member of staff will unlock the front and let each child out one at a time once satisfied that the correct adult is collecting. All staff have responsibility for ensuring the child leaves with the correct person.
- The leaders ensure adult/child ratios are correct at all times.

PROCEDURE AT THE SETTING

1. On suspicion of a lost child the leader will check the register without alarming the children.
2. The leader and one extra member of staff (if 3/4 staff members present) will conduct a thorough search of the building, playground, gardens, grounds and immediate vicinity. Gates will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security.
3. The remaining staff and children will continue with the normal routine.
4. If the child is not found within 10 minutes, the police and the child's parents/carers and will be contacted, and the Head Teacher informed. Staff will follow police guidance and remain vigilant, continuing to look for the child.
5. Ofsted will be informed.
6. A full report will be produced.
7. The person in charge (Head teacher, Manager) will maintain contact with the family and offer support.
8. In cases with media attention, staff will not speak to any media representatives.
9. The incident will be evaluated and the policy and procedure will be reviewed.
10. The security and practice will be improved where necessary.

PROCEDURE FOR AN OUTING

The following will happen prior to an outing to ensure the safety of the children:

- A risk assessment will be carried out, with relevant controlled measures added.
- The correct adult/child ratio will be adhered to. We always try to exceed the required ratios.
- Main outings e.g. summer trip will be accompanied by parents/carers who will be responsible for their own child/children.
- An adult, who will be the Manager or a leader will have the responsibility of “person in charge” for the outing.
- A register and emergency contact sheet will be made for the outing and looked after by the person in charge.
- Head counts will be held before; regularly during; before leaving the outing destination, and on arrival back at the setting.
- This will also happen if children are placed in groups. The main adult will have a list specific to their group.
- The main adult will have a mobile phone, contact details of their group and emergency details for location.

If a child should go missing whilst on an outing, (whether or not the parents are attending) the following procedure will be followed:

1. As soon as it is noticed a child is missing, staff will ask children to stand with their designated adult and a head count will be carried out. One staff member or adult will carry out a search of the immediate area, but not beyond that.
2. If child cannot be found at this point the lead adult of the group will contact the “person in charge” and the emergency person for the venue to help with search.
3. If the child cannot be found in 10 minutes the police will be contacted and guidance followed.
4. If the Head Teacher is not on the outing then the “person in charge” will notify him/her immediately, explaining the situation. The Head Teacher will make his/her way to the location of the outing to aid search, be a point of contact for the police and support parents and staff wherever possible.
5. If the parent is not on the outing, then the Head Teacher/Manager will contact parents and arrange for them to come to either the location or setting, whichever is appropriate at the time.
6. Staff and adults will take the rest of the children back to the agreed meeting point/transport or setting if necessary.
7. In any cases with media attention, staff will not speak to any media representatives.

PROCEDURE FOR FOREST SCHOOL

Prior to leaving the setting for a Forest School session, the leader will complete the register and check numbers (children and adults) and staff will be made aware of the numbers. We will always aim to have at least 3 members of staff at least one of whom is Forest School Leader trained. The Forest School Leader takes with them to Forest School a register, emergency contact lists, a mobile phone and emergency service directions (Handbook). When walking to Forest School across the school field, children will walk in a line, and will be closely supervised. An adult will be positioned at the front middle and rear of the line. If school children are on the field, staff and children will walk as close to the school boundary as possible. A pre-session risk assessment will be carried out before entry into the wood. Boundaries for children will be discussed through the ‘Forest School Rules’. During child-initiated play, an adult will be positioned on the bank area.

1. On suspicion of a lost child at Forest School, a head count will be done, and the register will be checked.
2. The Forest School Leader and one other member of staff (if 3/4 members present) will conduct a thorough search in Forest School and the surrounding boundaries.
3. The remaining member/s of staff will gather the children and supervise.
4. During the search, staff will call out one, two, and three where are you?
5. If after 10 minutes the child cannot be found, the police, the child’s parents/carers and Head Teacher will be called.

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6. Staff will then follow police guidance and remain vigilant, continuing to look for child.
7. Person in charge (Head or Leader) will maintain contact with the family and offer support.
8. A full report will be produced; the written statement will include-
 - Date and time of the incident
 - Details of the group (staff, adults, children)
 - When and where child was last seen
 - What the group were doing
 - Estimated time child went missing
 - Procedure carried out during search
8. Ofsted will be informed.
9. The incident will be evaluated and the policy and procedures will be reviewed.
10. The security and practice will be improved where necessary.
11. In cases of media attention, staff will not speak to any media representatives.

THE INVESTIGATION FOLLOWING THE EVENT OF A LOST CHILD EITHER AT THE SETTING OR ON AN OUTING.

- The Head Teacher will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from the “person in charge”, leader, staff and any other adult present at the time or on the outing.
- The written statements will include:
 - Date and time of the incident
 - Details of each group (eg. Names of staff/adults/children)
 - When and where the child was last seen
 - What the group were doing
 - Estimated time the child went missing.

CONCLUSION

- A conclusion will be drawn up as to how breach of security happened. The Policy & Procedure will be reviewed.
- If the incident requires police investigation, the staff and adults must co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation including interviews etc.
- The safeguarding team may be involved if the incident is considered to be a safeguarding issue.
- The incident will be recorded under RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases, and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) arrangements and recorded in the incident book. The local Health and Safety officer may want to investigate and decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- Ofsted will be informed.
- Our insurance company will be informed.