**MISSING CHILDREN POLICY**

**09/24**

**MISSING CHILDREN POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

It is important to remember that children go missing for a whole variety of reasons and being absent without leave can be indicative of unhappiness, distress and even abuse. Therefore, each missing child is an individual case and has to be handled in a way which is most beneficial to the child. It is essential that the young person missing is given the opportunity to speak to someone from the staff or the independent listener.

At The Wilderness Grove we have several protocols to minimise the risk of a child leaving site in the first instance. All children are accounted for at any given point of the day be it sessions, activities, or lunchtimes.

At The Wilderness Grove a child is classified as ‘missing’ when we do not have clear knowledge of where the child is and the decision has been made to call the police. However, this policy covers our practice and processes regarding all children who leave site without authority.

Once it is certain that a child has left the site, the Forest School leader should be notified and a Left Site Without Authority form completed. The senior member of staff will inform any adult supervising the young person and with agreement telephone parent/carers/commissioning parties and the police.

As a matter of course, staff should only pursue a child when there is a reasonable chance of returning them without undue commotion and without leaving the other children inadequately supervised, in accordance with the behaviour management policy document. Crucially, staff should be familiar with pupils’ risk assessments in the event there is specific guidance regarding how to respond to a child we have seen leaving site. The decisions regarding how long to follow a child will be dependent on their RA’s and their age and vulnerability.

* Upon suspecting a Young Person/child has gone missing from site, staff member will report immediately to the Forest School manging partner onsite.
* Within the first 5 minutes, a full site search will be undertaken. This should be extensive and include ‘hiding holes’ and the immediate vicinity off site. It is very important this is done calmly and without fuss. Other children may not be used in the on-site search.
* Where possible, staff will be dispatched in a vehicle to check local roads.
* Site search should be thorough, however after a maximum of 30-minutes of searching, Police should be called by a senior member of staff, unless it has otherwise been agreed between school/commissioning party (if appropriate) and parents/carers to wait longer.

If at any point the young person is located off-site by staff in a vehicle, and it is unsafe to put the child in the vehicle, then staff should continue to follow and keep the child in sight. The Forest School leader should be called at the earliest opportunity so that Police can be kept updated as to the child’s whereabouts. Options at this point are:

1. Continue to follow
2. Continue to follow and try to persuade to return to the vehicle
3. Call Police for support /help in supporting the Young Person to return.

Missing Child/Young Person Detained by Police:

1. If missing child/young person is found/detained by the Police, then a confidential preliminary discussion will take place between the most appropriate officer, at the appropriate place and the young person/child, the purpose of which will be to ascertain why they went missing.
2. If the child/young person indicates that they are being abused, then the duty inspector will inform the duty social worker and child protection procedures will commence in line with LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Board) guidelines.
3. If there appears no cause for concern, the young person/child will be returned to their place of residence.

The family or appropriate adult should be informed as soon as is practically possible.

When a child returns of his own volition or is found and persuaded to do so by staff, the Police and the family or appropriate adult must be informed.

The return of the child must be handled with sensitivity. Food, drink and shelter should be offered before the incident is investigated further.

There is no fixed sanction relating to missing children incidents. Each case will be viewed individually.

**INCIDENT REPORT LEAVING SITE WITHOUT AUTHORITY**

This form must ONLY be completed for students who leave site without authority

Child’s name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reporting member of staff \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Day and date of incident\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Time (24hr clock) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Year group \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Other staff present \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Details of events leading to the student leaving site without authority \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Parents informed Yes ▢ Time\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

No ▢ Reason \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Police informed Yes ▢ Time\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

No ▢ Reason \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Manager FSL ▢ Forest School Leader ▢ Informed by\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How were matter resolved/consequences applied?

Time and date of return \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Management FSL Tick Details

* Talked through
* Reparation
* Consequences
* Parents called/to be called in
* One to one supervision
* Internal exclusion
* Exclusion
* Police involvement Wellbeing Check completed