Safeguarding the Missing Child Policy

for Hertsmere Jewish Primary School

Reviewed by A Waller

Reviewed in: September 2026

Date of Next Review: September 2027

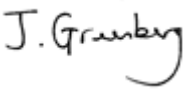
Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on an annual basis.

The policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body in September 2026.

It is due for review in September 2027.

Signature  Headteacher Date September 2026

Signature  Chair of Governors Date September 2026

Children’s safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the outings procedure and the exit/entrance procedure to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

This policy should be read alongside the school’s **Safeguarding Policy** and follows statutory guidance including *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026)* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), together with any local Hertfordshire safeguarding partnership procedures.*

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the member of staff alerts Security, the Headteacher, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Security will carry out/organise a thorough search of the building and grounds.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If the child is not found, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will consider whether a referral to Children's Services is required if there are safeguarding concerns or if the child remains missing.
- The Headteacher talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The Headteacher contacts the Chair of Governors and reports the incident. The Chair of Governors carries out an investigation and may come to the school immediately.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the setting leader and/or other staff back in the setting. If the Headteacher has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly. What to do when a child goes missing from an outing may be a little different, as parents may be present and responsible for children.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The Headteacher and DSL are contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- The Headteacher contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will consider whether a referral to Children's Services is required if there are safeguarding concerns or if the child remains missing.
- The Headteacher contacts the parent, who makes their way to the school or outing venue as agreed with the Headteacher. The school is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the school.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the school.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The Headteacher contacts the Chair of Governors and reports the incident. The Chair of Governors carries out an investigation and may come to the school.
- A designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The Investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Headteacher together with the Chair of Governors or representative speaks with the parent(s).
- Any relevant evidence, including CCTV footage, signing in/out records and visitor records, will be preserved to support any investigation.
- The governors carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- The supervising member of staff writes an incident report detailing:
    - The date and time of the report.
    - What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
    - When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
    - What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
    - The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
    - A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
    - If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's Services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.

- The Headteacher will determine whether the incident meets the reporting requirements under RIDDOR or any other statutory reporting arrangements and will make any required notifications.
- A record of the incident is made on CPOMS.
- Following the incident, the Headteacher and DSL will review whether any further safeguarding assessment, support or risk management is required for the child and whether any changes to procedures are necessary.

Managing People

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the supervising member of staff or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Setting leaders need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others. They may direct their anger at the setting leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom should be the Headteacher or DSL. It may be appropriate to have a governor present as well. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The Chair of Governors or Headteacher will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice from the Local Authority.