

MISSING CHILD POLICY 2025 – 2026

THIS POLICY INCLUDES EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

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1. Introduction:

The welfare of all children at Pennthorpe School is our paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. Staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care.

This policy is written in accordance with the EYFS Statutory Framework (September 2025), Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025), and local safeguarding procedures. It applies to all staff working with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

2. EYFS Supervision and Ratios:

Pennthorpe complies with statutory EYFS ratios: Reception classes maintain 1:30 with a qualified teacher; Nursery classes maintain 1:8 for children aged 3 and over, and 1:5 for children under 3. These ratios are upheld during outings and emergencies to ensure continuous supervision.

3. Safeguarding and Welfare:

Missing child procedures are part of our safeguarding duties under Section 3 of the EYFS framework. All staff complete EYFS-specific safeguarding training and paediatric first aid as required.

The school maintains regularly updated Supervision of Children, Safeguarding and Educational Visit policies which outline:

- The arrangements for handing over children to the care of their parents or nominated carers at the end of the day.
- The qualifications and safer recruitment procedures of our staff and the arrangements for supervising the children whilst they are in school.
- The arrangements for registering the children in both morning and afternoon.
- The physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to or exit from the premises.
- The supervision of the playground areas and other areas used at breaktimes.
- The supervisory arrangements for outings involving children.
- These documents are available on our website and can be provided to parents on request. Policies are reviewed regularly (at least once a year) to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective.

- All new staff receive thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision for young children.
- A child going missing from or absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead if a pupil is absent on repeated occasions to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation, particularly county lines, and to help prevent any future risk of their going missing in the future.
- The Front Office or Matron will always telephone a parent to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil that has not arrived at school.

2. Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing from the school:

These procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child is found to be missing, the following actions should be carried out:

- Immediately, take a register or head count to ensure that all the other children are present.
- Ask all the adults and children in attendance if they can say when they last remember seeing the child.
- Inform the Front Office so that Staff can be called to carry out a search.
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom.
- Within 10 minutes, the Head will arrange for members of the Administrative and Premises Teams to carry out a search of the school buildings, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, toilets or anywhere a child might hide. Search Staff must carry their radios (tuned to specified channel) to stay in contact with each other.
- Once a thorough search has been carried out and if the child is still missing, the following steps should be taken:
 - Inform the Head, the Deputy Head Senior or Deputy Head Pastoral (as appropriate)
 - Ask the Head, the Deputy Head Senior or Deputy Head Pastoral (as appropriate) to ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the school at once.
 - Whilst the telephone calls are being made, the Head will arrange for staff to continue to search the rest of the school premises and grounds and the surrounding streets.
 - If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff will set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her.
- Immediate phone calls to be made by a member of the Senior team following notification to the parents.
 - Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputy DSLs will notify the Police. The school will cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care.
 - The Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform West Sussex Safeguarding Children's Partnership
 - The Head will inform the Chair of Governors.
 - The Deputy Head Senior or Deputy Head Pastoral will inform Ofsted (for pupils in EYFS)
 - The Bursar will inform the School Insurers.

- If the child is injured, the Head of Estates will ensure a report is made under RIDDOR to the HSE.

Regular risk assessments are conducted for premises and outings, with specific consideration for EYFS vulnerabilities.

3. Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing on an outing:

- A full record of all actions taken up to the stage at which the child is found will be documented and will be included in the incident report. If appropriate, procedures will be adjusted.
- An immediate head count will be carried out to ensure that all the other children are present.
- An adult will search the immediate vicinity.
- The remaining children will be taken back to school or to a safe space (e.g. classroom) at the trip venue.
- The Head, the Deputy Head Senior or Deputy Head Pastoral (as appropriate) and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be notified by mobile phone by the Group Leader.
- The Head, the Deputy Head Senior or Deputy Head Pastoral (as appropriate) will ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Parents will be asked to come to the venue/ the school at once.
- The Group Leader will contact Venue Staff and arrange a search.

4. Actions to be followed by staff once the child is found:

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child.
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing.
- The Head, the Deputy Head Senior or Deputy Head Pastoral (as appropriate) will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
- The Head, the Deputy Head Senior or Deputy Head Pastoral (as appropriate) will instigate a full investigation (if appropriate involving Social Services/ Local Safeguarding Partnership Team).
- Media queries should be referred to the Head.
- The investigation will require all staff concerned to provide written statements.
- The incident report will detail:
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in the group/class.
 - When the child was last seen in the group/class.
 - What has taken place in the group/class since then and the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened and, if appropriate, procedures (including risk assessments and training) may be updated.

5. Procedures to be followed when a child is not collected on time:

If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed collection time or the end of the extended school day, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, the Extended Day Supervisor will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after.

Collection Procedures for EYFS:

If a child is not collected on time, two staff members remain with the child in a safe, comforting environment until handover. Parents are informed of these procedures during EYFS induction.

If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within when the premises are closing, the Extended Day Supervisor will contact the Head or member of SMT on duty, who will then contact the Social Care Duty Officer on 033 022 26664. Social Care will make emergency arrangements for the child and will arrange for a visit to be made to the child's house and will check with the Police.

Full written reports will be made of any such incidents.

6. School responsibility for reporting absences:

Pupils are occasionally absent from school for a number of reasons. Parents are required to seek authorisation for any absence from school and we do not encourage parents to allow children to miss school unnecessarily.

Any child absent from school will be investigated. Front Office will telephone parents if a child is absent from school and no indication of the reason for absence has been recorded or received. The school maintains two emergency contact numbers for each pupil, where reasonably possible.

Any extended absence, whether due to illness or not, will be reported to the Head, who will request a further discussion with the parents. Prolonged absence or concern for a child will be reported immediately to the West Sussex or Surrey Safeguarding Team.

Front Office notifies the Head weekly of any pupil absence over 10%. The Head and SMT scrutinise this data half termly and liaise with the relevant staff to determine a contextual picture. The Welfare Committee, consisting of the school's Safeguarding personnel, will scrutinise termly absence of pupils.

The school must notify their local authority when they remove or add a pupil's name to the admissions register at non-standard transitions.

If a pupil does not return within 10 days after authorised leave of 10 school days or more, or after 20 school days unauthorised absence the school and the local authority must have jointly made reasonable enquiries as to the pupil's whereabouts and failed before a pupil can be deleted from the register.

7. Child missing from education:

KCSIE, September 2025 and the DfE 'Children Missing Education', outline the school's responsibility to notify their local authority when they remove or add a pupil's name to the admissions register at non-standard transitions. This is conducted by the Registrar and the DSL under the authority of the Head. All pupils leaving the school are removed from the school's admissions register within 5 days of the child being reported missing from education.

Appendix I details the reasons and conditions for removal from the roll/admissions register and the actions to be taken by the school.