



**CHARLESWORTH SCHOOL**

*...from tiny acorns great oaks grow*

# Lost/Left Child Policy 2025 - 2026



## PURPOSE

Charlesworth School makes every effort to ensure the safety and well-being of all our children. In order to do this we need to consider all eventualities, however unlikely to so that staff follow defined and agreed procedures in an emergency or unusual situation. This policy has been written to set out the guidelines and procedures to be followed when a child is lost on a school outing, leaves the school without permission or is not collected at the end of the school day, including at the end of our Wraparound Care session.

## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

In considering the wide range of activities that children at Charlesworth School enjoy, we seek to:

- Minimise the risk of a child being lost at school;
- Minimise the risk of a child being lost on an educational visit;
- Outline the procedures that should be followed in the event of a child being lost at school;
- Outline the procedures that should be followed in the event of a child being lost on an educational visit;
- Follow up a child having been lost at school or on an educational visit;
- Outline procedures that should be followed in the event of a child not being collected at the end of the school day, including at the end of our Wraparound Care session.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The whole school community at Charlesworth school has a responsibility to safeguard our children. This includes to ensure that due policy and procedure is following to ensure that this is the case.

### Parents

- Must follow the agreed procedure for the arrival and departure of their children from the school premises
- Informing the school as soon as possible about any changes to their arrangements;
- Agreeing to all of the procedures set out in this policy and in the Home-School agreement;
- Recognise that they hold sole responsibility for the safety of their children until they are collected from the playground by the teacher;
- Understand that they need to make themselves known to a teacher for their child to be released at the end of the day. It is not acceptable to expect the child to walk out of school to where they are waiting in the car (unless there are exceptional circumstances);
- In the case of older children in Y5/6, to give permission in writing if they expect their child to walk or cycle home. Charlesworth School does not consider it acceptable for a child younger than this to make their own way home and will expect them to be collected by an adult;
- Call the school as early as possible in the morning if their child is absent from school;
- Ensure that if they are collecting their child in the middle of the day (e.g., for an appointment) that they or the child has told a member of staff that they are leaving;
- Not to expect a child to open a locked door to the school unless a member of staff is present.

### Staff

- To understand and follow the agreed policy and procedures (including reporting issues to the Headteacher);
- To be constantly vigilant to ensure that lost/left children are identified as quickly as possible;
- To maintain good communication with parents so that any changed arrangements and considerations are taken into account;
- To reinforce the policy in conversations with parents;
- To ensure that children have been taught safe working practices and know what to do if they are lost or left at school uncollected.

## Headteacher

- To ensure that policy and procedure is monitored and implemented;
- To record instances of lost/left children and investigate the events in order to determine where improvements in policy/procedure might be needed;
- To review policy and procedure after any near miss of lost/left child incident and at least on an annual basis to ensure that all risks are minimized;
- To report to the governors regarding the effectiveness of the policy and any instances of lost/left Children including the actions taken;
- To ensure that all new staff (and supply staff) receive instruction on what to do in the case of a lost/left child.

## Governors

- To ensure that the policy is reviewed at least annually;
- To assign a designated governor to monitor the effectiveness and to support/challenge the headteacher when there is an incident of a lost/left child and make a report to the governing body

# PROCEDURE

## Minimising the risk of a child being lost at school

### *Arrival and Morning Session:*

Most children are brought to school by their parents. Very few arrive independently and this minimises the possibility of them becoming lost on the way to school. Young children should always be accompanied by a parent or other responsible adult. Children enter school through one external gate and congregate on the playground. At this point they are still the responsibility of the parent/responsible adult until the duty teacher arrives on the playground. All gates are opened at 8.45am and closed at 9.05am in KS2 and 8:55am in EYFS/KS1. The children will be asked to line up and sent in by the teacher. They will then go straight to their classroom where a register will be taken. Any child not present without a prior reason will be noted and the office will call the parent to check why they are not in school.

Children who attend Acorns Wraparound Care will be brought into the Infant building and parents will be sign them in. A child may not sign themselves in.

All children are told that they must not open any of the external doors to the premises and there are high level locks to reinforce this. Children are also taught never to open the door for anyone but to tell a member of staff that someone is at the door. The gates are closed to allow pupils to move around the building and grounds freely in a safe manner. Staff are asked to be vigilant about any open doors and gates and ensure that they are closed immediately.

### *Afternoon Session and Departure:*

Registers are formally taken again at the beginning of the afternoon session. Teachers should check with the Office if a child is unexpectedly absent for the afternoon session e.g., accident during lunch. Any children who go in and out of school during the course of the day (e.g., to an appointment) should ensure that the teacher or other member of staff is aware that they are leaving. That member of staff must ensure that they see them leave in the present of a parent or a known responsible adult. If the child cannot be accounted for during the afternoon registration, follow the procedure outlined below.

The gates will be open at 3:15pm in EYFS/KS1 and 3.30pm in KS2 and children will be walked to the school gates and released to parents. Teachers will take the time to match each individual child to their parent/designated adult. Teachers should all monitor the children leaving school at the end of the school day to ensure that they are collected by a parent or a recognisable responsible adult. **Parents must inform the school of any changes in who is collecting their child.** In the case of children in Y5/6 they will leave the

school independently but have all been taught that if they cannot see their parent/responsible adult, they are to return to the school. They will then be supervised by a member of staff until they are collected. If parents of older children (Y5/6) wish children to cycle/walk to or from school unaccompanied at the end of the day they must advise the teacher in writing and this letter will be retained as evidence in the child's file.

At the end of the Wraparound Care session, parents will collect their child from the Infant building and sign them out.

### **Procedure if a child is lost at school**

- Establish whether the child has been in school that day or whether they have gone on a legitimate visit and have signed out. Check with the office if there is a message from the parent about collecting them early and whether they know if the child has left the premises.
- Check that the child is not in a lesson (e.g., drumming or clarinet), or activity (e.g., a sports team or after school club). Without causing undue alarm, establish where the child was last seen; try to verify this with an adult rather than just a child's word.
- Ensure that the rest of the children are safe whilst a thorough search is conducted of the premises, inside and out. Check everywhere, including unlikely areas, in cloakrooms, toilets, etc. – anywhere a child could hide.
- Check all available exits.
- If all possibilities have been explored and the child cannot be accounted for, the Head must be informed and the parents must be phoned. If the parents cannot account for the whereabouts of the child it will be necessary to phone the police. It will be helpful to know when and where the child was last reliably seen.
- If for any reason, the parent or another contact has not been obtainable through the contact details left with the school office, it may be considered reasonable to phone the police.

### **Minimising the possibility of a child being lost on an educational visit**

Please refer to the [Educational Visits Policy](#) for further details. The teacher in charge of the visit will have an accurate list of all the children on the visit. All children need to be counted frequently throughout the visit, especially when they are regrouping after a visit to the toilets or a shop etc. Depending on the nature of the visit, group leaders will also take responsibility for ensuring that their group is accounted for. Children should also be encouraged to take responsibility for each other and notice if someone is missing.

All the children and adults are given an important briefing before an educational visit. All children should be reminded about remaining with their group leader or within designated areas.

### **Procedure if a child is lost on an educational visit**

At Charlesworth, our Curriculum Vision requires that we provide opportunities to enable pupils to:-

- Develop a sense of awe and wonder;
- Take informed risks in their learning;
- Constructively challenge;
- Understand and actively practice values promoted by the Christian faith.

The provision of out of school learning experience is central to these aims and children will regularly take part in trips and visits (including a residential visit in Y5/6). The Policy for Educational Visits outlines the necessary risk assessments and additional arrangements that should be in place in order to ensure the safety of children whilst learning off-site. In the highly unlikely event of a child being lost during an educational visit, a member of staff will immediately inform the Visit Leader who will:

- Establish where the child was last seen and with whom.
- If in groups, check all the other groups to see if the child has joined a different group.
- Ensure that the other children are safe

- Conduct a thorough search of the area.
- Depending on the location of the visit, inform any relevant authorities for their assistance in locating the missing child. e.g. an information point, Centre staff etc.
- Inform local police or other authority e.g. coast guard.
- Contact the Headteacher (or other key contact person) at school to inform of the situation and the action taken.
- Liaise with the Head about contacting parents and should inform the Head immediately the child is found.

*Action following a child having been lost at school/educational visit:* Once a child has been found it is necessary to establish how the child was lost to minimise the likelihood of the event recurring.

If the child was lost at school, the Head will investigate how this occurred and will address any matters arising from this.

If the child was lost on an educational visit the Visit Leader will need to prepare a report for the Head on the circumstances regarding the incident. The Head will address any issues arising from this and will make any necessary amendments to the Educational Visits Policy.

#### **Procedure if a child is left at school:**

There may be many unavoidable reasons why child is left at school at the end of the day. Parents must send a message via Class Dojo or call the school office to make sure that the teacher is made aware of their late collection and give a reason for the delay. If a child is not collected by an adult at the end of the school day, the teacher will send the child to Acorns Wraparound Care and parents will be advised to collect from the Infant Site. There will be a cost to parents for this service.

At the end of the day, when Acorns Wraparound Care has closed, if a child is left then staff should:

- Report this to the DSL and ask if any message had been left by a parent regarding late collection or alternative arrangements.
- Phone the contact numbers held in the office to arrange for the urgent collection of the child. During this time, the child should be seated in a place that is visible to the teacher.
- Alternative adults (family members and friends) will be contacted if the parent is unavailable to resolve the situation.

If a child is still uncollected at 6:45pm without a reason and the parent is still unavailable, the member of staff responsible should notify the Headteacher/ DSL who will then contact the police for further advice and assistance.

A child may be part of one of the after-school clubs that take place at Charlesworth. The same principles are adhered to when a child is not collected on time.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The Headteacher and Governing Body will review the implementation of the Mathematics Policy in line with the agreed schedule for policy review.

Staff and governors will be involved and asked to contribute to the review and all staff will be informed of the outcome of the review.