



HOLMEWOOD HOUSE SCHOOL

'Kindness, aspiration & self-belief'

MISSING CHILD POLICY UNCOLLECTED CHILD POLICY

Policy Holder	Asst Head Pastoral and Wellbeing
Date Approved	September 2026
Governor Approval	SLT
Date for next review	September 2027

"A child is considered missing if their whereabouts cannot be established"

(Kent Police, Schools Officer Charter)

MISSING CHILD POLICY

EYFS AND PRE-PREP CHILDREN

EYFS & Pre-Prep children are usually kept within sight and hearing at all times. In the very unlikely event that a child went missing there would be immediate identification of the situation by staff, due to constant interaction, observation and monitoring of the children by the staff. The situation would also be identified through the registration procedure at the start of the day and at the start of afternoon lessons.

The procedure can be halted at any stage when the child/ren is/are found, with a full report back to concerned staff.

Actions To Be Taken

1. Alert the Pre-Prep Reception or School Office immediately, as well as the DSL.
2. School Office will check absentee list & Medical Centre, Music Dept, Drama Dept, LAMDA lessons.
3. The School Office should inform the Head of Pre-Prep, Head, Deputy or the most senior member of staff available immediately.
4. If child cannot be accounted for, School Office Staff & Senior Staff will initiate a formal search of the school premises and grounds by teachers and the on-site team of maintenance & grounds staff (if appropriate).
5. As a priority, staff will be asked when and where the child was last seen.
6. Sign sheets & Systems will be checked

This is a Whole School Policy including EYFS and Boarding

Missing and Uncollected Child Policy and Procedures September 2026

7. A further search of the School buildings, grounds & surrounding area will be carried out systematically.
- a. Key area such as the North Lawn and Coffee Shop would be checked as parents often gather there.
8. The child's parents/guardians will be called by a senior member of staff.
9. If the child still cannot be located after 15 minutes from when the formal search commenced, the Police* should be informed. (*parents will be contacted again before informing the police*).
10. When the child is found they should be made to feel safe and reassured and should not be allowed to become alarmed or anxious.
11. Procedures should be reviewed following an incident to ensure current practice remains effective. This is done via the Health and Safety Meeting every term and also via individual case reviews chaired by SLT or the Head of Estates.

*SPO should be contacted in the first instance

Schools Police Officer Contact Details - The Divisional Commander is Chief Superintendent Neil Loudon.

Head of Divisional Operations T/Superintendent Elena Hall and Head of Divisional Investigations Detective Superintendent Julia Pexton.

PREP SCHOOL CHILDREN

In the very unlikely event that a child goes missing during the school day, it is reported to the School Office which is always staffed. Appropriate staff would be contacted to ensure that the child is not absent with permission. Once this situation was identified, the premises would be searched, including key areas where the child might be found:

- Toilets,
- Changing Rooms
- Music Department,
- Art Room,
- Science Classrooms,
- Learning Hub,
- Learning Strategies
- Medical Centre

Relevant staff (SLT and/or Senior Staff) would be informed immediately, once a search had been undertaken, and a decision made about whether to do a full roll call (fire drill). In the highly unlikely event that the child was not found the child's parents and the Police would be informed – The timings of this would be agreed on by the senior staff taking into impacting factors. e.g.

- Timing of the day
- Pastoral Concerns
- Safety

The procedure can be halted at any stage when the child/ren is/are found, with a full report back to concerned staff.

Actions To Be Taken

1. Alert Reception or School Office immediately, as well as the DSL.
2. School Office to check absentee list & Medical Centre, Music Dept, Drama Dept, LAMDA lessons.

3. The School Office should inform the Head, Deputy Head or the most senior member of staff available immediately. In the case of boarders inform the Head of Boarding.
4. If child cannot be accounted for, School Office Staff & Senior Staff will initiate a formal search of the school premises and grounds by teachers and the on-site team of maintenance & grounds staff (if appropriate).
5. As a priority, staff will be asked when and where the child was last seen.
6. Sign sheets & Systems would be checked
7. A further search of the School buildings, grounds & surrounding area should be carried out systematically.
 - a. Key area such as the North Lawn and Coffee Shop would be checked as parents often gather there.
8. The child's parents/guardians will be called by a senior member of staff.
9. If the child still cannot be located after 15 minutes from when the formal search commenced, the Senior Staff will meet to review, they take into account:
 - Time of day
 - Weather
 - Welfare/Safeguarding issues/concerns
 - Previous experience
10. After which time, a decision will be made to:
 - Contact the Police* immediately (*parents will be contacted again before informing the police*), or;
 - Search again for a maximum of 15 minutes. If the child still has not been found the Police* will be informed. (*parents will be contacted again before informing the police*)
11. When the child is found they should be made to feel safe and reassured and should not be allowed to become alarmed or anxious.
12. Procedures should be reviewed following an incident to ensure current practice remains effective.

*SPO should be contacted in the first instance

Schools Police Officer Contact Details - The Divisional Commander is Chief Superintendent Neil Loudon.

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If there is a concern involving danger to life, risk of serious injury or a serious crime is in progress/about to happen, the School should contact 999

BOARDERS

Specifically relating to a child missing during boarding hours

- Monday – Friday 6:00pm to 7:30am
- Saturday & Sunday – All day

The procedure can be halted at any stage when the child/ren is/are found, with a full report back to concerned staff.

- I. If unable to find the child, staff will inform the Head of Boarding (if this has not already been done) who will then act or designate someone to act as the co-ordinator of any additional search, involving more staff and extending to all areas of school buildings, as appropriate. The DSL will be contacted if the child is not found within 15 minutes.

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2. The Head of Boarding will telephone home (if local/UK) to ascertain if a parent has picked up the child from school without signing him/her out with Boarding House staff.
3. The child's parents/guardians will be called by the Head of Boarding or Senior Staff member.
 - a. If the guardians and parents cannot be contacted the Head of Boarding should continue the procedure *in loco parentis*, until such time that the parents/guardians can be contacted.
4. The Head of Boarding will telephone any other parent, carer or staff with whom the child may be.
5. Police to be contacted and informed of missing child/ren after a time that the Head of Boarding or designated person believes that all possible searches have been completed or that the risks of harm/safety levels warrant the phone call.

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If there is a concern involving danger to life, risk of serious injury or a serious crime is in progress/about to happen, the School should contact 999

PROCEDURES IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM A TRIP OR AS VISIT – see the Educational Visits Policy for additional information.

When a member of staff or parent volunteer notices a child is missing, after an initial search, they must notify the Group Leader and a member of staff on the site/venue. The Group Leader will alert all members of staff on the trip and contact the DSL/Head/Senior staff member.

1. All pupils will be brought together in a safe and sheltered place to be supervised by the Group Leader.
2. A full register of pupils on the trip will be taken.
3. The remaining staff will search the immediate vicinity.
4. A thorough search of the site/venue, both indoors and outdoors will be conducted.
5. Staff and, if appropriate, peers will be questioned in a calm manner about when and where the child was last seen.
6. In the unlikely event that the child has still not been found then at this stage the child's parents/carers will be telephoned. Further action beyond this shall be taken in consultation with the parents/guardians, the DSL, the Head, or other SLT members.
7. The search will include a thorough check of exits, doors and gates to see that there has been no breach of security.
8. If the child is still not found after 15 minutes, the Police should be informed, at which point the group leader would assume the role of dealing with the appropriate authorities.
9. There are many procedures in place to minimize this risk including:
 - a. High pupil to staff ratios
 - b. Regular registers taken
 - c. Regular head counts to ensure that all children are present and always when leaving or arriving at a site/venue and coaches/minibuses
 - d. Reminders about behaviour to children so they know who their nearest adult is and how to find help.

- e. Larger groups should (if possible) be split into smaller groups, each with a responsible adult.

IF THE POLICE NEED TO BE CALLED

- While waiting for the Police and the parent/guardians to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, staff will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children at the school.
- A senior member of staff will be responsible for meeting the Police and the missing child's parents/guardians.
- They will co-ordinate any actions instructed by the Police and do all they can to comfort and reassure the parents/guardians.
- Once the incident is resolved, the SLT and the staff team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes.

UNCOLLECTED CHILD POLICY

In the event that a child is not collected by an authorised adult at the end of a session/day:

- Children will not be released into the care of anyone unfamiliar or who has not been previously identified or confirmed by the parent.
- Children will not be allowed to leave the premises unsupervised.
- The school will ensure that children are cared for safely by an experienced and qualified practitioner to ensure that they receive a high standard of care and to cause as little distress as possible.
- The school will inform parents/carers of our procedures so that, if they are unavoidably delayed, they will be reassured that their children will be properly cared for.
- Reviewing these procedures following an incident will ensure current practice remains effective.

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW IF A PARENT FAILS TO COLLECT A CHILD IN THE PREP SCHOOL, PRE PREP INCLUDING THE EYFS (Nursery and Reception)

Parents of children at Holmewood House are asked to provide the following specific information, which is recorded on the school Management Information System - iSams:-

- Who has parental responsibility
- Home address and telephone number
- Daytime and mobile telephone number
- Emergency contact name and number

On occasions when parents or those who normally collect the child are not able to do so, they provide written details of the name of the person who will be collecting their child. A means of verifying the identity of the person who is to collect their child is agreed with the parents.

If a child has not been collected from school at the end of the day (and is not booked into board) the Office Staff/Duty Staff member/Deputy Head/most senior member of staff will adopt the following procedure:

1. Contact the parents of the child concerned using information on the school MIS and explore why the child has not been collected. Messages should be left in the event of calls going to voicemail explaining who the school will contact next.
2. If the parents cannot be contacted, the emergency contact person will be contacted, who will be asked to collect the child.
3. If the child is in the Pre Prep or EYFS, they will be taken to Owls and if necessary, Late Owls after notifying the Head or Pre Prep Reception.
4. If the child is in Pre-Nursery, they will be brought back to Pre-Prep Reception to either the (Head or Pre Prep Reception).
5. The staff member in charge should regularly try to contact the parents and emergency contact person in case they have not picked up their messages.
6. The child does not leave the premises with anyone other than those named in the contact details provided by parents, as above.
7. Under no circumstances should staff go looking for the parent.
8. Staff must not take the child home with them.
9. The child concerned should be made to feel safe and reassured and should not be allowed to become alarmed or anxious.
- a. If a child has not been collected by 6.45pm they will be taken to the Dining Hall to join Boarder's Supper.

- b. If, after calling all emergency contact numbers, there is still nobody available to collect the child, the Head and or the Senior DSL will advise on the most appropriate course of action.
- 10. A full written report of the incident must be recorded in the child's file using iSams.
- 11. Procedures should be reviewed following an incident to ensure current practice remains effective. This would take place in either The Health and Safety meeting each term or more immediately led by the DSL or Head of Estates.