



Lost Child Procedure Policy

Policy owner	Headteacher	November 2025
Formally endorsed by	Trustees	
Review date		November 2027

Lost Child Procedure Policy

St Paul's Waldorf School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff, trustees and volunteers to share this commitment.

This policy outlines the procedure for when a child goes missing during the school day in school or on an outing.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and trustees during school hours and off-site activities.

Note: Attendance procedures for morning and afternoon registration are covered in a separate Attendance Policy. If a child's absence is unexplained at afternoon registration (2:05pm), the office (receptionist) must be informed immediately. If the child's absence remains unexplained the Head Teacher and/or the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) should be informed. If the absence is still unexplained, the procedure for lost child will be followed.

A lost child situation should be prioritised as a serious incident and take priority over all other activities. Key members of staff during the incident are the Head Teacher, DSL, Class Teacher, Receptionist and Facilities Manager. All other available members of staff and volunteers should assist.

In School:

Immediate actions when a child goes missing:

- Establish the safety of the other children. Supervise and secure pupils; Do a headcount/check register.
- Initial search (maximum 5 min): Staff/volunteers search the immediate area where the child was last seen.
- After initial search: Inform key staff: Notify Headteacher or DSL immediately.
- Search coordinator: Headteacher (or DSL if unavailable) stays in reception and coordinates search and starts recording log.

Extended search and risk assessment:

- Gather details: Last seen location, child's emotional state, level of vulnerability.
- Decide urgency: Police and parents contacted within 10–20 minutes (or sooner for vulnerable children).
- Siblings and children in the class may be asked for information, if relevant.
Kindergarten children: Police called after maximum 10 minutes if not found
- Organize extended search: Facilities Manager sweeps building; available staff search wider area with mobile phones.
- Admissions Officer to gather all information about child; photo, D.O.B. description etc.

On an Outing:

Immediate actions when a child goes missing:

- Establish the safety of the other children. Supervise and secure pupils; Do a headcount/check register.
- Initial search (maximum 5 min): Staff/volunteers search the immediate area where the child was last seen.
- After initial search: Call School: Notify Headteacher or DSL immediately 020 7226 4454.
- Search coordinator: On an outing the trip leader/class teacher will be the "the search coordinator". The search is extending from where the child was last seen.

Extended search and risk assessment:

- Gather details: Last seen location, child's emotional state, level of vulnerability.
- Decide urgency: Police and parents contacted within 10–20 minutes (or sooner for vulnerable children).
- Siblings and children in the class may be asked for information, if relevant.
Kindergarten children: Police called after maximum 10 minutes if not found
- Organize extended search: continue to extend from where child is last seen
- Admissions Officer to gather all information about child; photo, D.O.B. description etc.

Communication:

Calling Police (999): Provide child's name, D.O.B., description, photo if available, last known location and time, clothing and belongings, medical and safeguarding info, contact details of DSL and Headteacher.

The information required by the Police to assist in locating and returning the pupil to a safe environment:

- The pupil's name and date of birth
 - Where and when the child went missing
 - Who, if anyone, they went missing with
 - Circumstances or events around going missing
 - Description – picture if available
 - What the child was wearing and any belongings such as bags, phone etc., include mobile number
 - Medical history, if relevant
 - Relevant safeguarding information
 - Details of family, friends and associates
 - Previous missing episodes and where they went, if relevant
 - Contact details of Designated Safeguarding Lead and Headteacher
 - Details of responsible local authority
- Calling Parents: Headteacher, DSL, or Class Teacher calls parents. Advise parents to stay at home in case child returns there.

If a child is found outside the boundary:

- Take care when approaching. Do not run after the child; follow calmly and keep them in sight. Avoid causing panic
- Observe if the child appears distressed.
- Stay calm and use de-escalation techniques when approaching.
- Aim to bring the child back to school without using force unless absolutely necessary for safety.
- Call the school office or 999 immediately if the situation or child's vulnerability requires urgent intervention.
- Remain with the child or keep them in sight until help arrives.

After the incident:

- Focus on welfare and calm reassurance.
- Class teacher with the DSL or Headteacher will look after the child with the aim to reunite with parents as soon as possible or join the class.
- DSL or Headteacher meets child and parents.
- Complete incident report promptly with accounts from all involved.
- Review incident in Health & Safety Group; Identify causes and future preventative measures.
- Inform Trustees, Ofsted, and insurance provider.
- Any new measures arising from the review of any incident will be circulated amongst staff by Headteacher or DSL and shared in Early Childhood and Teachers Meetings.

Quick Reference Checklist:

- Supervise and headcount other children
- 5 min search
- Inform Headteacher/DSL
- Extended search
- Call 999 and Parents (max 10 min for Kindergarten & 20 min for School Children)
- Give child's full details
- If found/seen, follow calmly and notify
- Welfare of Child

- Incident report & Review

Quick Reference Flowchart:

