Luston and Shobdon Community Primary Schools Federation

including Luston Nursery

Missing Child Policy

Last reviewed	**24 Sept 2026**
Renewal due	**Sept 2027**

1. Aims

The missing child policy and procedures aim to ensure:

- Children's safety is maintained whilst in the Early Years setting – inside and outside as well as when on outings.
- We follow a strict protocol when handling situations where a child is missing from either the setting/school or while on a trip.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on requirements set out in the 2026 statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

3. Policy Statement

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

4. Procedures

4.1 Child goes missing on the premises

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing by the key person/staff, the following actions are put in place:

- Nursery Manager, or in her absence the deputy manager, or the class teacher is informed immediately.
- The school office is alerted to inform the Executive Headteacher and Head of School.

- A thorough search is made of the buildings and grounds.
- Nursery staff and class staff complete a head count/register to ascertain that no other child is missing
- Doors and gates are checked.
- If the child is not found, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police by the Executive Headteacher, Head of School, Nursery Manager or the school office as directed by the Leadership Team.
- The Nursery Manager (or the deputy manager) or the class teacher investigates to find out when and where the child was last seen.

4.2 Child goes missing on an outing

As soon as it is noticed that is child is missing, the key person/staff puts the following actions in place:

- **Head count and registers checked** to ascertain no other child missing
- **Searches made of the immediate vicinity** whilst other children remain in adult child ratio with remaining qualified staff
- **School office contacted immediately** to inform the Executive Headteacher and Leadership Team
- **Police are contacted** to report the child as missing
- **In a specific venue, staff inform venues security and contact the police if the child is not found**
- **Parent/carer contacted** by the school office or Leadership Team and advised to make their way to the nursery, the school or outing venue as agreed with whoever reported incident to the parent.
- The group leader of the outing may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the Nursery or the school**.**

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Investigation Responsibilities

- The Nursery Manager and Executive Headteacher carry out a full investigation, taking written statement from staff in the room or, who were on the outing/in the setting.
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
    - The date and time of the report
    - The date and time of the incident
    - What children/staff were in the group 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

5.2 Reporting Responsibilities

- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements; the Local Authority Health and Safety office may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution
- OFSTED is informed
- Staff must not discuss/report any missing child incident with the press without taking advice from the Executive Headteacher or with the Local Authority

5.3 Managing People Responsibilities

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible. Staff will be worried about the child, especially the Key Person or designated carer responsible for the safety of the child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will raise as the length of time the child missing increases.
- Staff may understandably be the target of parent anger, and they may feel afraid. The Early Years Leader, Nursery Manager, Head of School and Executive Headteacher will ensure that staff under investigation are not only treated fairly but receive support when feeling vulnerable. Procedures will be followed according to 'Allegations against Staff' policy.
- 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 nursery staff, class teachers or school leaders. When dealing with a distraught parent, there should always be two members of staff present, one of whom is the Executive Headteacher, Head of School or the Early Years Lead/Nursery Manager. The Chair of Governors may be involved. It is understandable that a parent may feel angry about the situation however aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated. In such circumstances the police should be called.
- The other children are sensitive to such events. They 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 difficult time. The Executive Headteacher/Chair of Governors will ascertain what action to take.