



UT VOCE ITA VITA

EXETER CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

Nursery | Pre-Prep | Prep

Missing Child Policy and Procedure

Last reviewed: May 2026

Next review: May 2027

Governor Oversight: Pastoral

1. All colleagues have a duty to ensure that they are aware of who should be within their responsibility at any time, whether in a classroom lesson, at a games session, on an outing etc. and that every child has arrived to take part in the lesson, activity etc. It is recognised that, given the appropriate freedom given to children at break time, lunch time, moving between lessons, an interval may pass before a member of staff is aware that a child has gone missing.
2. All colleagues should have ready access to a list of children who should be in their care. A list must be taken (as part of the risk assessment) on any outing.
3. A child may be identified as missing
 - If an absence from school cannot be confirmed by contacting the home contact
 - Off-site if there is a child missed at a head count or role call
 - On-site if a child does not show at a lesson or activity
 - By a report of missing by a fellow pupil
4. On discovering that a child is missing from the location or group where he/she should be the following procedure should be followed:
 - Ensure initially by asking other children and subsequently by checking the register that the child was in school at the start of the session.
 - Check by asking the children, consulting the music timetable, team lists etc whether the child should be elsewhere involved in a school activity.
 - Check with the child's peers and with the office whether or not the child was unwell and may be in sick bay or have gone home.
 - Check with the child's peers and with the office whether or not the child has been collected from school for a dentist/doctor appointment, visit to another school etc.
 - Notify the school office that the child is missing. The office should then notify the Headmaster and or his Deputies.
 - Enquire of the child's peers when and where the child was last seen, whether the child was upset or might have had reason to go missing and whether anyone knows where he/she might have gone.

Ensure the safety of the children you are responsible for by enlisting the help of a colleague to look after the children or to expedite a search.

4. Initial searches may be conducted by the member of staff responsible with the help of colleagues and/or older children. If these are unsuccessful a more thorough search should be coordinated from the school office by the Headmaster, his Deputies or a senior member of staff.

Arrange a search of likely areas of the school: where the child was last seen, toilets, cloakroom, changing room, empty classrooms, less visible areas of the playground, the musical instrument store, any known favourite place. These should be carried out swiftly and if they have not borne fruit it should be assumed that the child may have left the premises. It may be appropriate to hold a fire drill.

5. Parents should be notified by the senior member of staff present (contact numbers kept on Engage) trying not to alarm them unduly and emphasising that they are being told as a precaution. They should be asked if the child has been in touch and be asked to keep phone contact lines open to facilitate prompt liaison. They should be asked about the possibility of the child trying to go home or visiting nearby friends or relatives. Any likely route or method of transport should be considered. Wherever possible someone should remain at home in case the child arrives there or tries to get in touch. A parent may be able to search along any route likely to be taken by the child.
6. The police should be notified by telephoning 999 (if the child is thought to be in immediate danger), or 101, giving the name and age of the child and a physical description, including clothing.
7. Any available staff should be sent to check the surrounding area as the child may not have ventured far from school. Wherever possible staff should carry mobile phones, first ensuring that the office has a record of the mobile number. Areas of search should be coordinated by the senior member of staff present to avoid duplication.
8. Depending upon the child and any likely destination, train and bus stations and the routes to them should be checked.
9. Further questioning of peers may reveal information about the cause of the child leaving school and/or the child's possible intentions. The possibility that the child may yet be in school or return to school of his/her own choice must be kept in mind.
10. The school must maintain good communication with the parents and with the police, taking further instructions from the latter if the child is not quickly found.
11. A written record must be made of any incident of a pupil missing from school where that involves the pupil leaving the school premises without permission from a member of the school staff. This will include the circumstances, the action taken and any reasons given by the pupil for being missing.
12. If a pupil has been missing from school and is then returning to school after the incident, the school will decide if an individual risk assessment is to be put in place, a copy of which will be shared with parent/guardian.