Lost or Uncollected Child Policy

Approved by:	**Date:**
Last reviewed on: **Sep 2026 by Deb Thwaites**	
Next review due: **Sep 27**	

Statement of intent

At Ronald Tree Nursery School the safety of children in our care is our primary concern. Staff will always be aware of the potential for children to go missing during sessions.

Measures in place to ensure a child does not go missing

- All staff are vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the setting and will always challenge unknown persons on the premises and at the door
- Password system for collection of children by an unknown, but authorised, adult
- Bell entrance at reception; doors into the school from reception are locked at all times
- Visitors recorded in Visitors Book and issued with passes; supervised by a member of staff at all time while on the premises.
- Supervision of children at all times
- Regular headcounts and area searches at transition times
- Sufficient staff to maintain ratios
- Clear collection procedures for children (see Arrivals and Departures Policy)

Lost child

Even when all precautions are properly observed, potentially emergencies could still arise. Therefore staff will undertake periodic head counts, especially at the transition points between sessions or activities (in addition to the registration procedures set out in the Arrival and Departures policy). If for any reason a member of staff cannot account for a child's whereabouts during a session, the following procedure will be activated:

- The member of staff in question will inform both the Head Teacher and other school staff that the child is missing and a systematic search of the entire premises will be organised. CCTV will be scrutinised by office staff. Staff will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.
- The Head Teacher will nominate at least one member of staff to search the nearby area.
- If, after 15 minutes of thorough searching, the child is still missing, the Head Teacher will inform the police and then the child's parent/carer.
- While waiting for the police and the parent/carer 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.
- The Head Teacher will be responsible for meeting the police and the missing child's parent/carer. The Head Teacher will co-ordinate any actions instructed by the police, and do all she/he can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers.
- The Head teacher will inform the Chair of the Governing Body.
- Once the incident is resolved, senior management team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes (paying particular note to the relevant Risk Assessments). These will be reported to the Governing Body.

- We will notify Ofsted within 14 days of any incident where police or children's social care have been informed.
- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. The parents may feel angry and fraught. The staff may blame themselves and feel anxious and in distress. When speaking with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff; the Head Teacher and another member of the Senior Management Team.
- Staff involved will be treated fairly and will receive support. Physical or verbal abuse against staff will not be tolerated. The police will be called in such circumstances.
- If appropriate, we will inform other parents using the Tapestry journal.

Uncollected child

At the end of every session, the school will ensure that all children are collected by a parent, carer or designated adult, in accordance with the Arrival and Departures policy. If for some reason a child is not collected at the end of a session, the following procedures will be activated.

- If a parent, carer or designated adult is more than 10 minutes late in collecting their child, office staff will telephone the parent, carer or designated adult to find out the reason for the delay. Messages will always be left on any answer phone requesting a prompt reply.
- A member of the nursery staff will supervise the child and offer them support and reassurance as is required.
- If, after repeated attempts, no contact is made with the parent, carer or other listed contacts, and a further period of 30 minutes has elapsed, the Head Teacher will call our PCSO and/or MASH (0300 126 7000) for advice.
- In the event of the Police or MASH being called, the Head teacher will attempt to leave a further telephone message with the parent/carer or designated adult's answer phone, where available.
- If the child is taken from the setting to a place of safety, a further message will be left on all contact telephone numbers directing the parent or carer to the relevant agency.
- Under no circumstances will a child be taken to the home of a member of staff, or away from the premises unless absolutely necessary.
- The child will remain in the care of the school until they are collected by the parent, carer or designated adult, or until alternative arrangements are initiated by the Police or MASH.
- Incidences of late collection will be recorded. Parents and carers will be informed that persistent late collection may result in the imposition of a fine or the loss of their child's place at school.