



# WINDERMERE SCHOOL

FOUNDED 1863

## Windermere School - Missing Child Policy

**Review Date:** September 2022

**Reviewed by:** SLT

**Review Period:** 12 months

**Staff Responsibility:** Head of Ellera and Deputy Head Pastoral

This Policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

### Aims of the Policy

At Windermere School, children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every attempt is made to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our Missing Child Procedure is followed as set out in the three flow charts which follow:

The procedure has been written, for ease of use, under the following headings:

- **Daytime** – For all pupils between 08.30 and 18.00 – see Chart 1
- **Boarding** – For boarders and pupils staying for late activities between 18.00 and 08.30 and at weekends – see Chart 2
- **Educational Visits** – see Chart 3
- **Child not arriving** - Another situation which must be monitored carefully is the procedure followed when a child does not arrive at school at the allotted time. The procedure is slightly different on the two campuses, Chart 4 sets out the timeline of actions to be taken in this situation along with policy 14a/14c – the Supervision Policy
- **Child leaving with no forwarding address** - In the case of a child leaving Windermere School without a forwarding address, then the school will make every effort to contact the family to ascertain the child's next place of education. In the event of this not been possible then the school will inform the local authority. (Cumbria Children's Services)

CHART 1

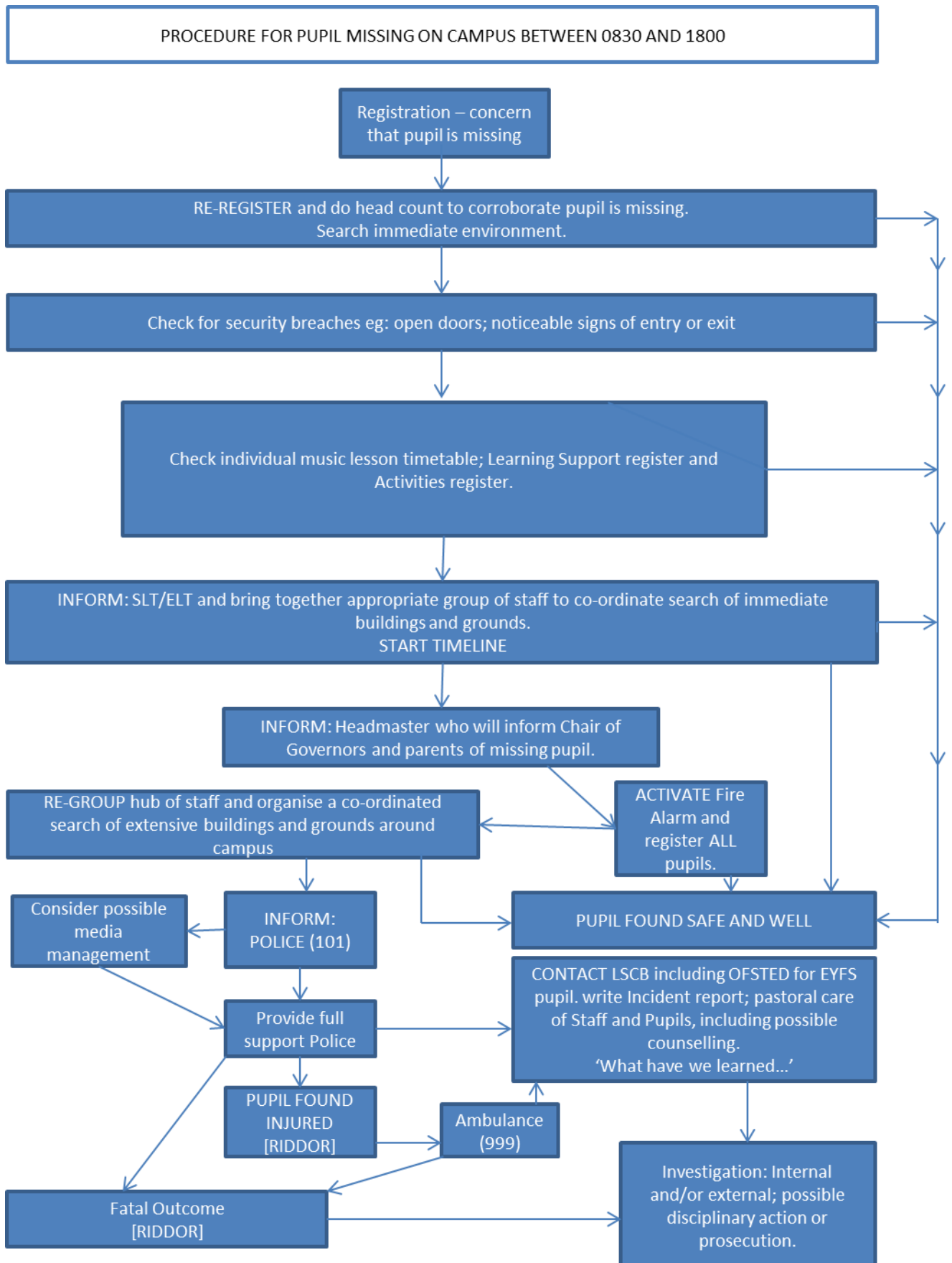


CHART 2

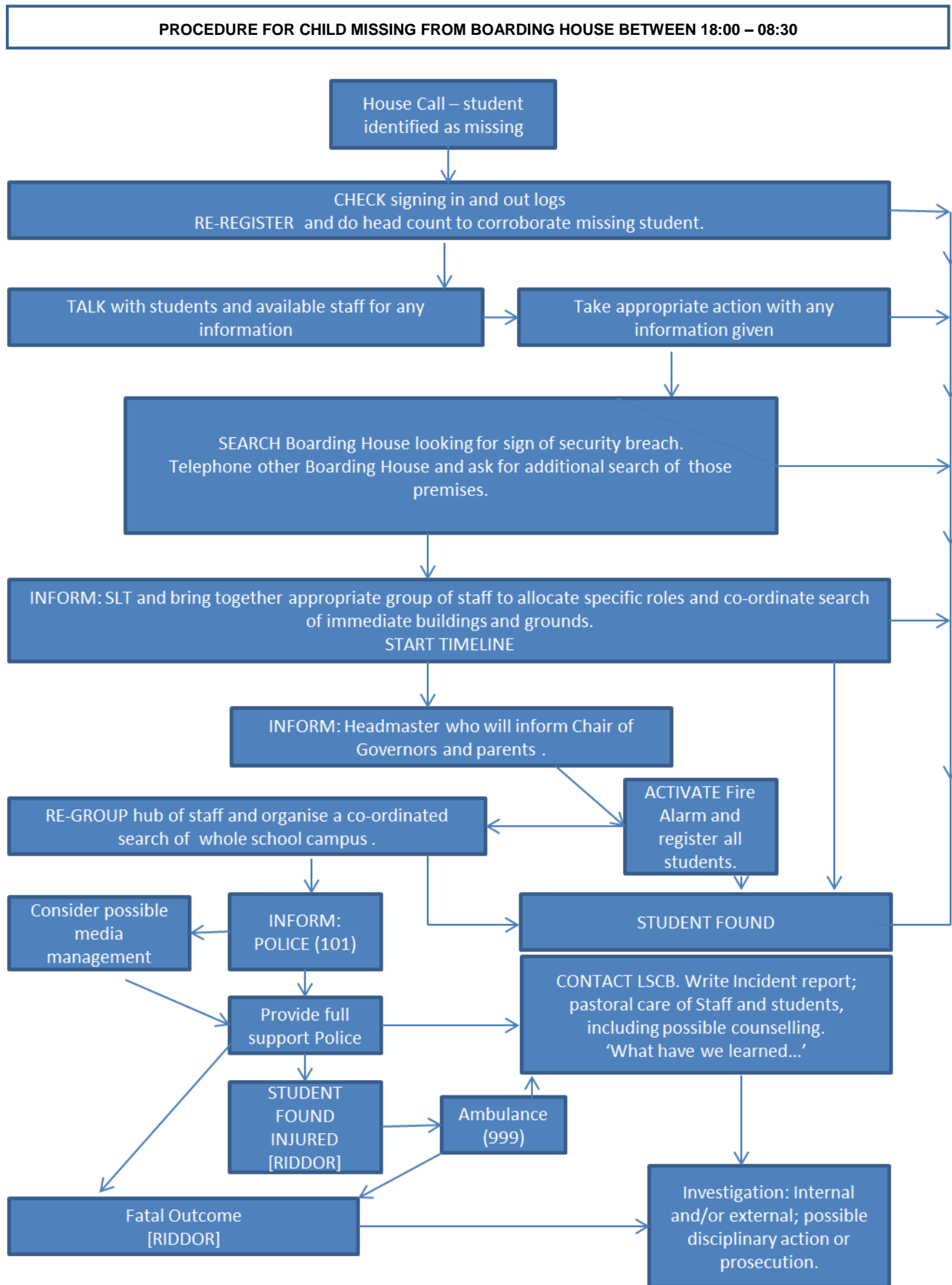


CHART 3

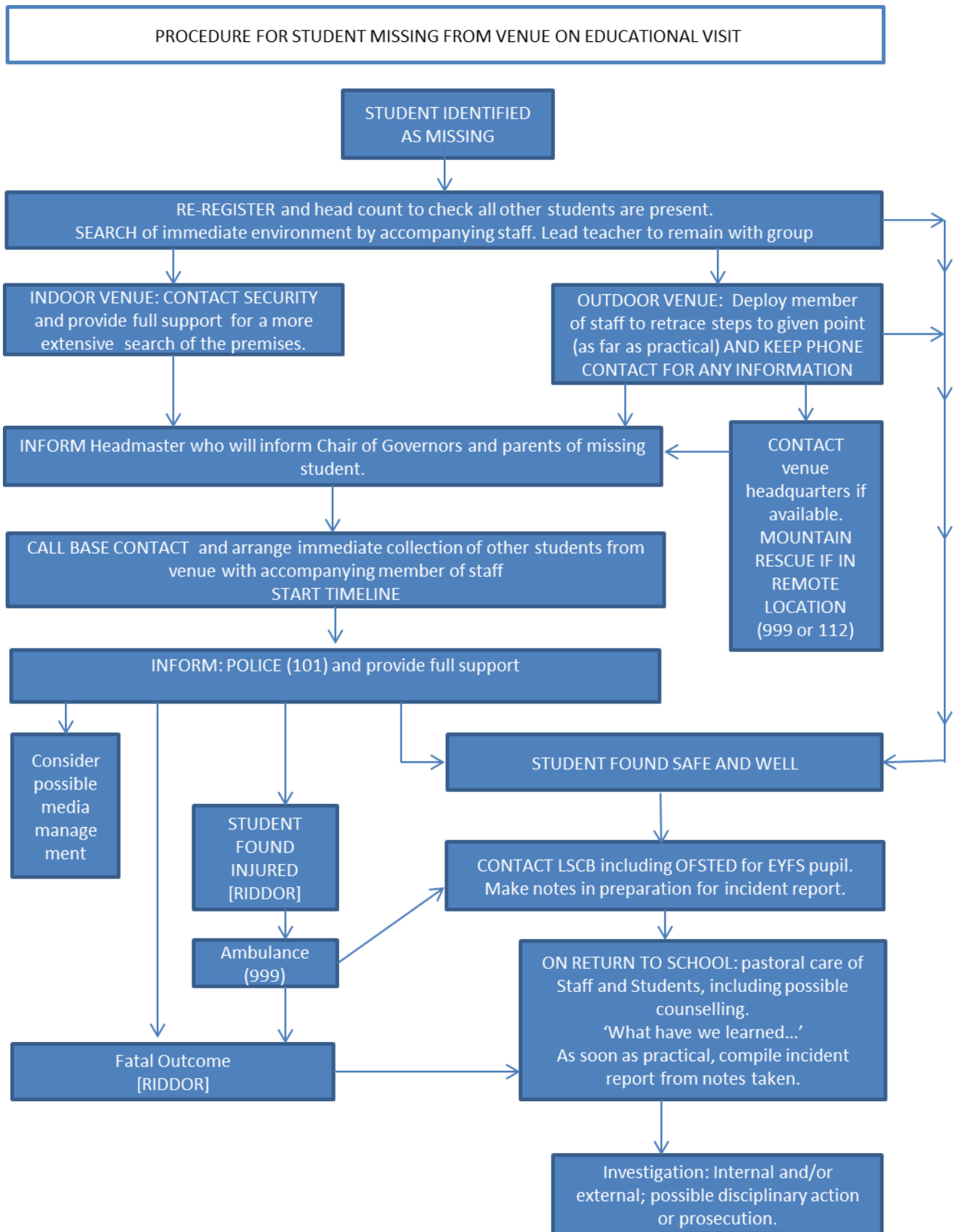
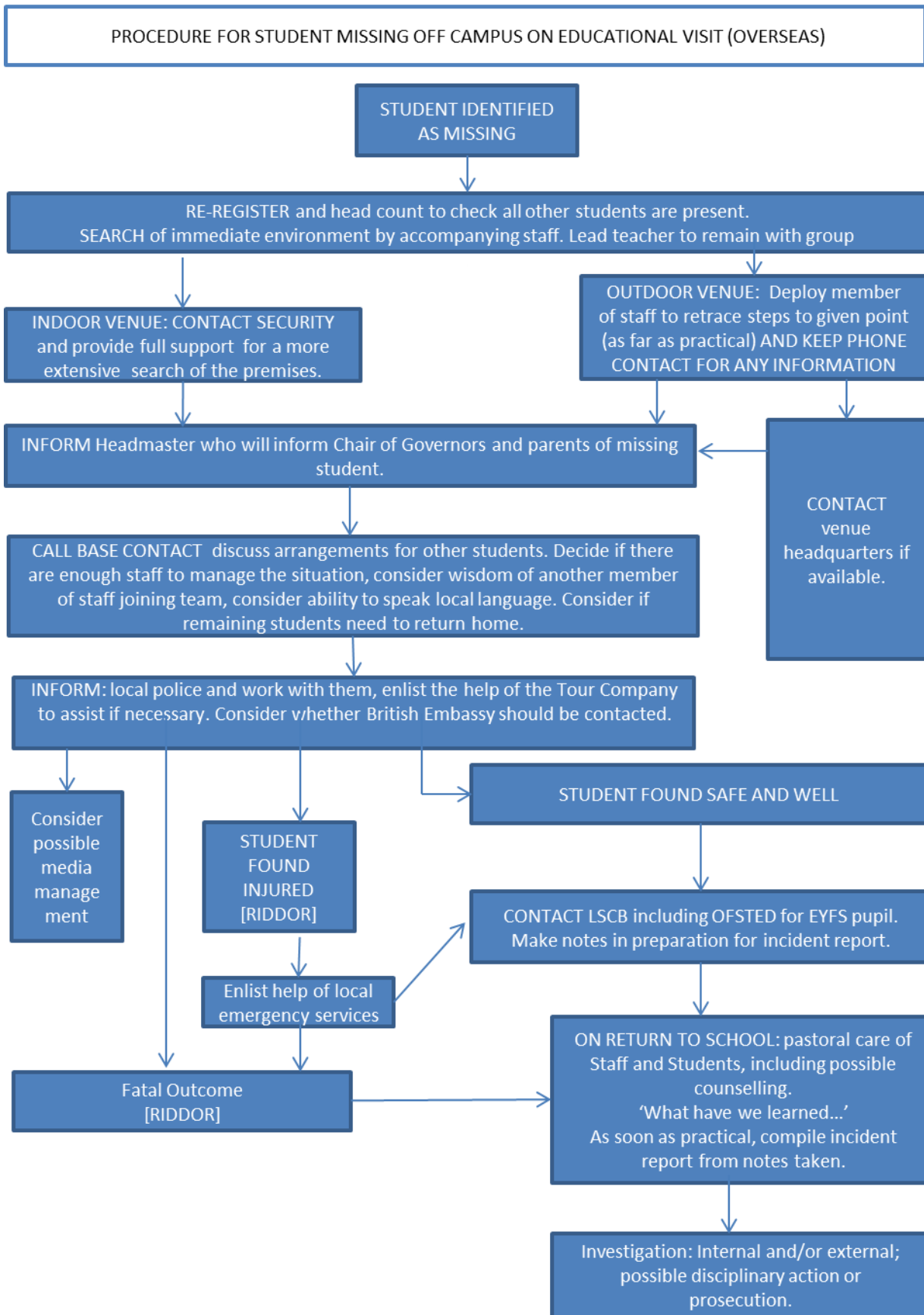


CHART 4



## **Chart 5 - Procedure for children who do not arrive after morning Registration Time**

1. Registration taken and noted on SIMS
2. Registrations lists checked by assigned staff on both sites and matched with any authorised absences including messages from parents re illness.
3. Allocated staff to then follow up any unexplained absences with boarding houses and parents
4. DSL to be notified of any pupils who cannot be accounted for.
5. DSL to advise on next steps depending on individuals involved, continuing with regular phone calls, leaving messages, contacting other family members or instigating the missing child procedure are all possible options.
6. If the missing child procedure is instigated then follow Chart 1 – Daytime – 0830 – 1800.

## **Actions Following an Emergency Situation**

It is critical that following a situation when a child has gone missing and has been found that the effect on that child and the other member of the community is evaluated and appropriate actions are taken. Below is a list of suggested actions but you must be aware that every situation is different:

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child.
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing.
- The Head or member of SMT will speak to the parents(s)/carer(s) to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
- There will be a full review of the incident and the procedure evaluated in light of what has happened.
- Media queries should be referred to the Head or Chair of Governors only; staff should not engage in conversations with the media about the incident, nor should they contact any third party until told to do so.

## **Managing People**

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key worker or staff responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The Head, Head of Elleray Campus and members of SMT will ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff from the Senior Management Team. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too 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 very difficult time. The Head will use his discretion to decide what action to take.
- Any contact or questions from the media will be dealt with solely by the Head or the Chair of Governors.

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