WINDERMERE SCHOOL
FOUNDED 1863

Windermere School - Missing Child Policy

Next Review Date: September 2026

Reviewed by: SLT

Review Period: 12 months

Staff Responsibility: Head of Prep School and Deputy Head

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:

1. **Daytime** –
   1.1. For pupils who do not arrive at school after morning Registration Time. See also policy 14a – Supervision of Pupils including EYFS.
   1.2. For all pupils missing between 08.30 and 18.00 – see daytime procedure 1.1 and Chart 1
2. **Boarding** – For boarders and pupils staying for late activities between 18.00 and 08.30 and at weekends – see Chart 2
3. **Educational Visits** – see Chart 3
4. **Educational Visits (overseas)** – see Chart 4
5. **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 and the Child Missing in Education (CME) Officer. (Cumbria Children's Services)

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1. Daytime

1.1 Procedure for pupils who do not arrive at school after morning Registration Time

a) Registration taken and recorded on SIMS
b) Registrations lists checked by assigned staff on both sites and matched with any authorised absences including messages from parents re illness.
c) Allocated staff to then follow up any unexplained absences with boarding houses and parents

d) DSL to be notified of any pupils who cannot be accounted for.
e) 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.
f) If the missing child procedure is instigated then follow the procedure for Daytime: pupils missing between 08.30 – 18.00 in Chart 1.

1.2 For all pupils missing between 08.30 and 18.00

In the first instance when a child does not appear when they are supposed to:

a) Double check in the immediate area against a register and head count.
b) Check for any security breaches eg noticeable signs of exit/entry
c) The child is reported missing (missingchild@windermereschool.co.uk), the time is noted.
d) Admin staff to check the following:
    - Has the child signed out with a parent?
    - Do they have Senior Privilege?
    - Is the child on a fixture?
    - Is the child in Learning Support?
    - Is the child on a trip?
    - Is the child in a music or speech and drama lesson?

    If not:-
e) Whoever is available, instigates a search. Please ensure that you have you mobile so that you can be contacted or call back to reception. The only things that would stop a staff member from joining the search would be teaching/ medical consultation/dealing with a vulnerable child.
f) If the child is known to be vulnerable - an email will go to all staff.
g) When the child's whereabouts have been established, it must be recorded as an out of class incident - with a time the child was found and the reason they were missing.
h) The person finding the child must ensure that an email updates Missing Child that the child has been found. This is extended to all staff if that email was sent.

If the child cannot be found:-

i) If the search is unsuccessful, or there are concerns about a vulnerable child's safety, a decision will have to be made by the Head or a member of SLT as to whether the school needs to be evacuated.

CHART 1

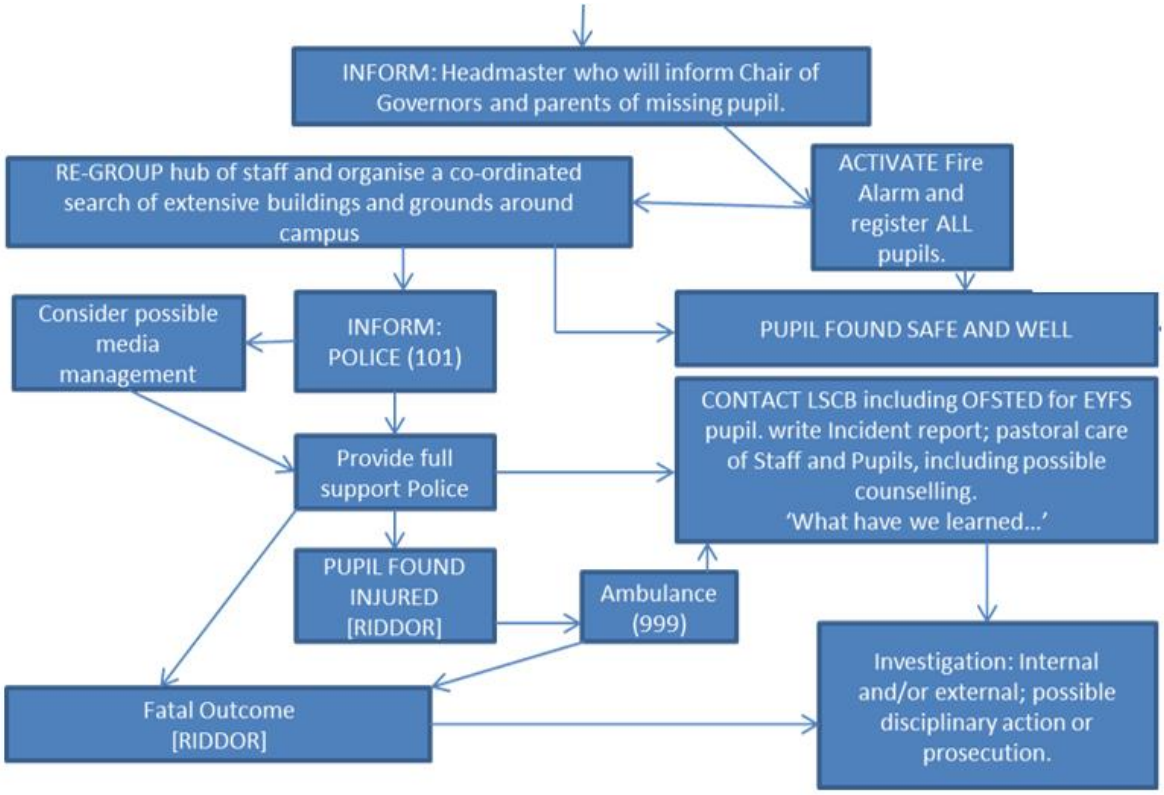

INFORM: Headmaster who will inform Chair of Governors and parents of missing pupil.
RE-GROUP hub of staff and organise a co-ordinated search of extensive buildings and grounds around campus
ACTIVATE Fire Alarm and register ALL pupils.
Consider possible media management
INFORM: POLICE (101)
PUPIL FOUND SAFE AND WELL
CONTACT LSCB including OFSTED for EYFS pupil. write Incident report; pastoral care of Staff and Pupils, including possible counselling.
'What have we learned...'
Provide full support Police
PUPIL FOUND INJURED [RIDDOR]
Ambulance (999)
Fatal Outcome [RIDDOR]
Investigation: Internal and/or external; possible disciplinary action or prosecution.

CHART 2

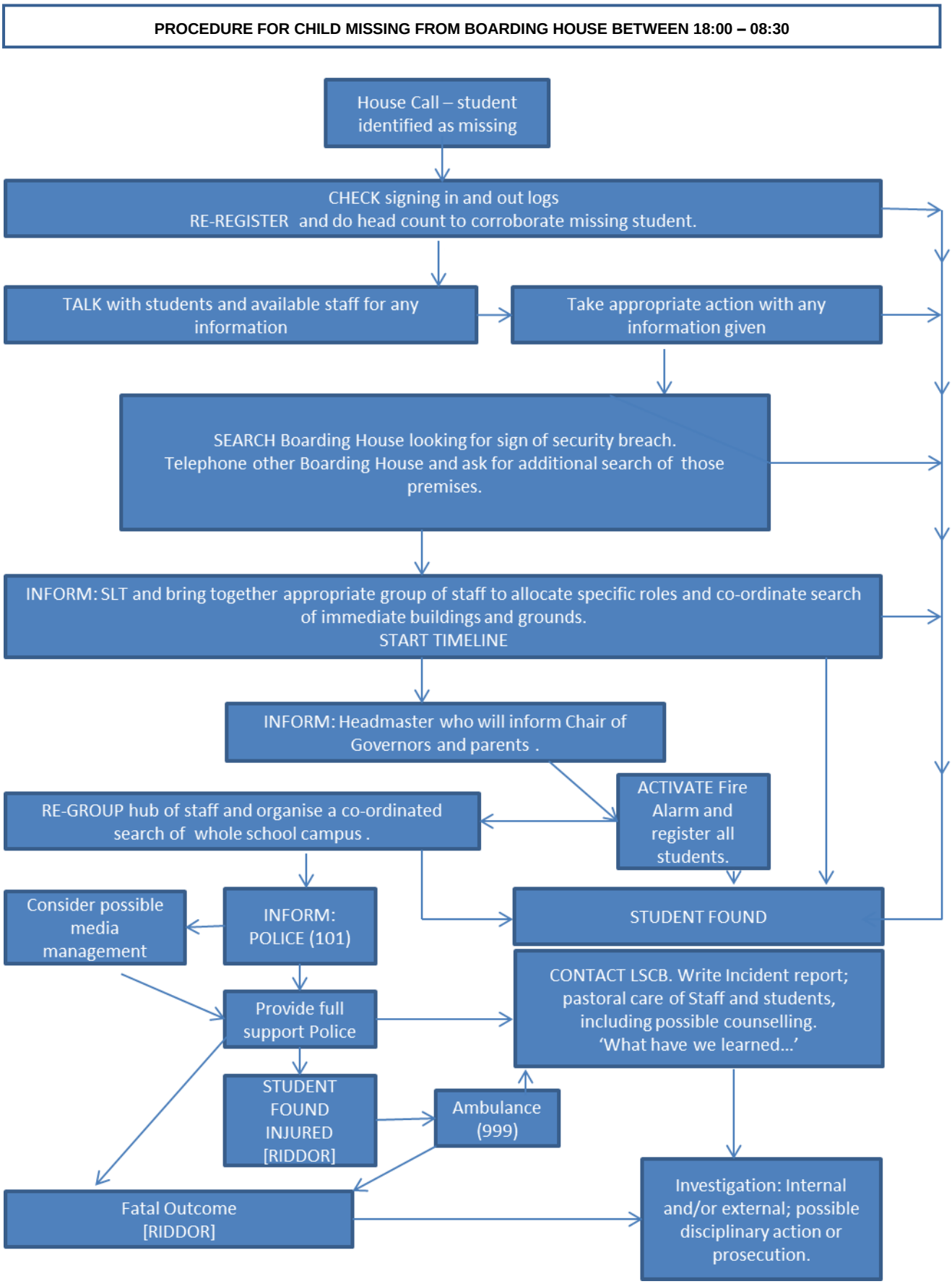

PROCEDURE FOR CHILD MISSING FROM BOARDING HOUSE BETWEEN 18:00 – 08:30
House Call – student identified as missing
CHECK signing in and out logs
RE-REGISTER and do head count to corroborate missing student.
TALK with students and available staff for any information
Take appropriate action with any information given
SEARCH Boarding House looking for sign of security breach.
Telephone other Boarding House and ask for additional search of those premises.
INFORM: SLT and bring together appropriate group of staff to allocate specific roles and co-ordinate search of immediate buildings and grounds.
START TIMELINE
INFORM: Headmaster who will inform Chair of Governors and parents .
RE-GROUP hub of staff and organise a co-ordinated search of whole school campus .
ACTIVATE Fire Alarm and register all students.
Consider possible media management
INFORM: POLICE (101)
STUDENT FOUND
CONTACT LSCB. Write Incident report; pastoral care of Staff and students, including possible counselling.
'What have we learned...'
Provide full support Police
STUDENT FOUND INJURED [RIDDOR]
Ambulance (999)
Fatal Outcome [RIDDOR]
Investigation: Internal and/or external; possible disciplinary action or prosecution.

CHART 3

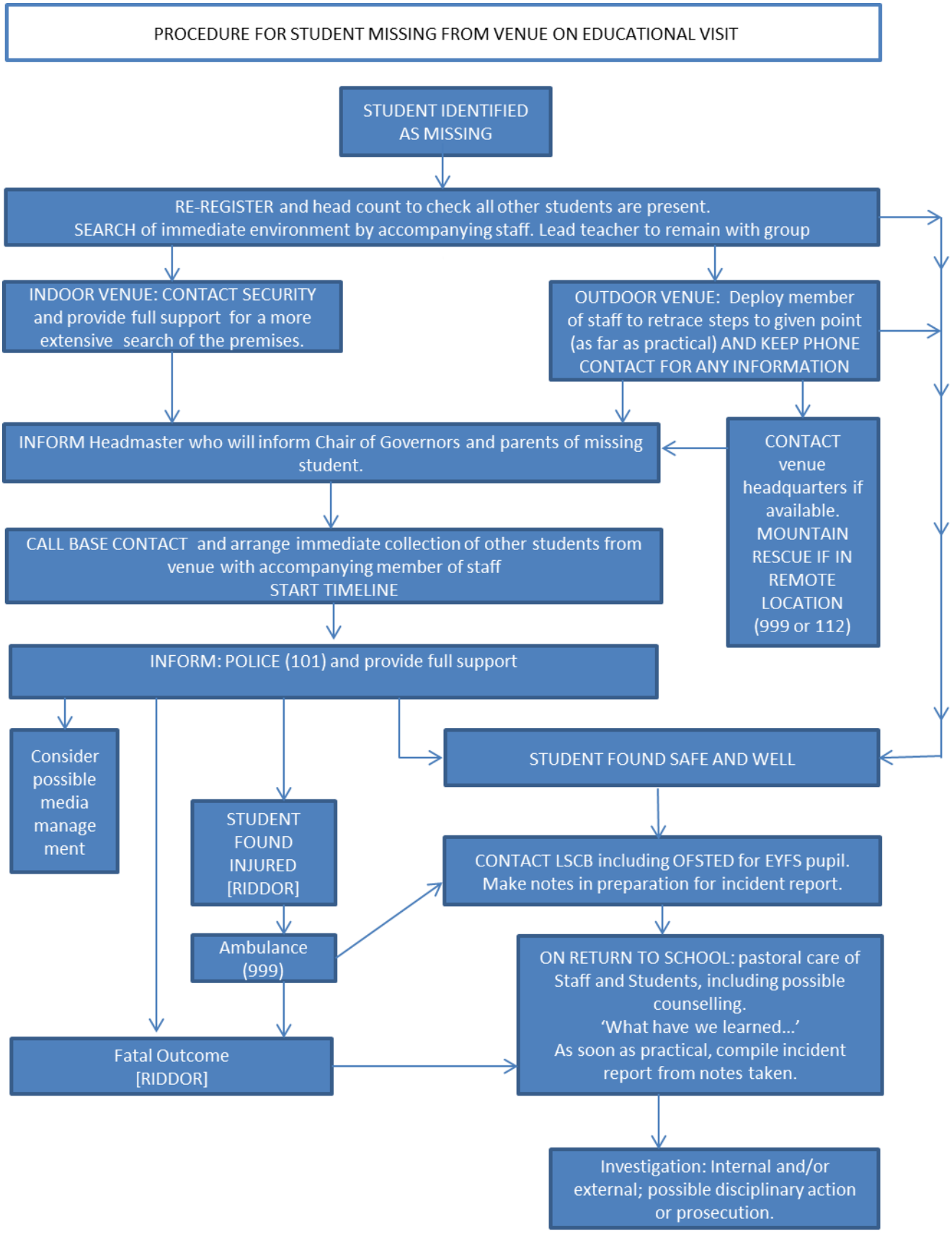
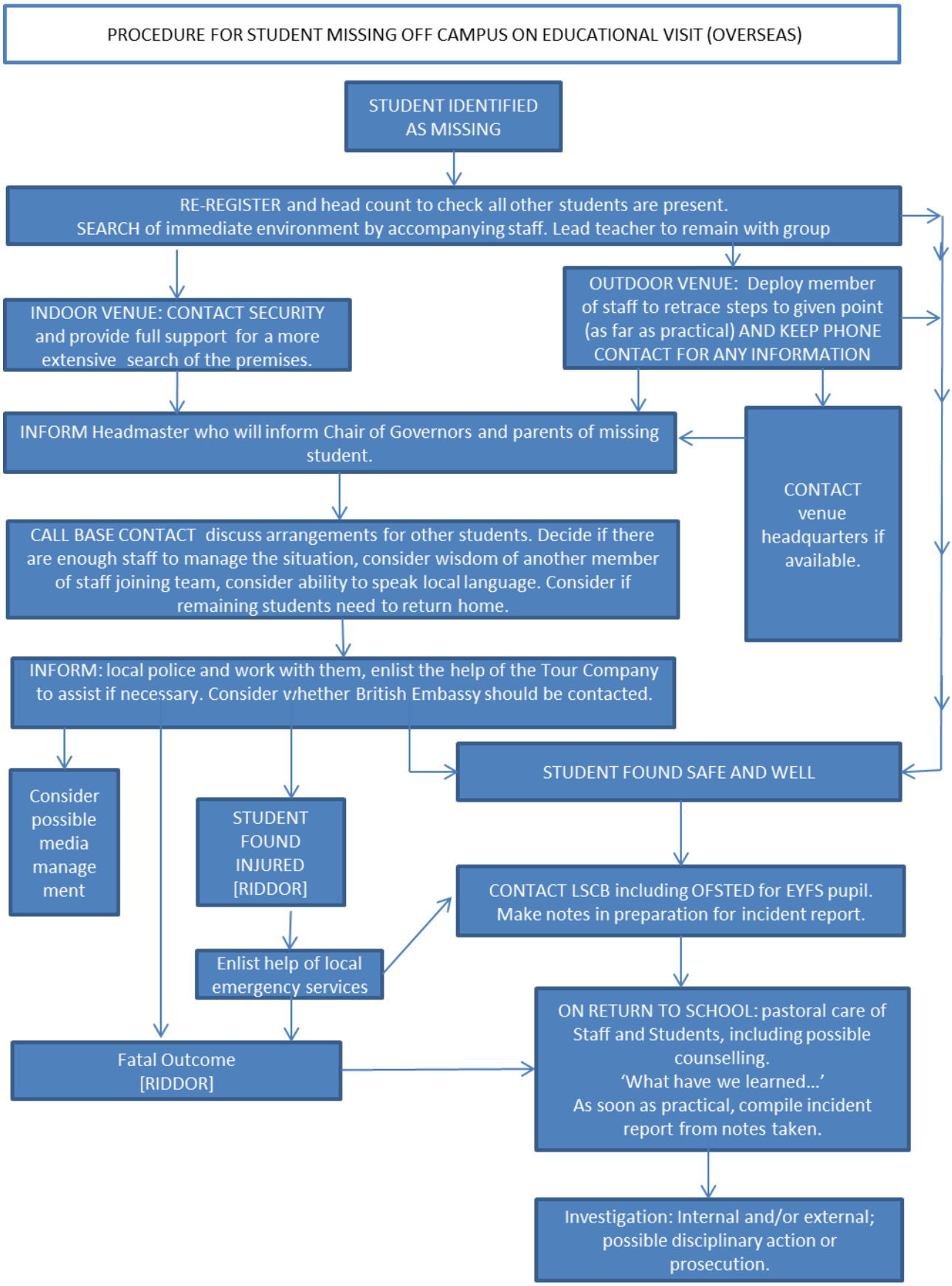

PROCEDURE FOR STUDENT MISSING FROM VENUE ON EDUCATIONAL VISIT
STUDENT IDENTIFIED AS MISSING
RE-REGISTER and head count to check all other students are present.
SEARCH of immediate environment by accompanying staff. Lead teacher to remain with group
INDOOR VENUE: CONTACT SECURITY and provide full support for a more extensive search of the premises.
OUTDOOR VENUE: Deploy member of staff to retrace steps to given point (as far as practical) AND KEEP PHONE CONTACT FOR ANY INFORMATION
INFORM Headmaster who will inform Chair of Governors and parents of missing student.
CONTACT venue headquarters if available. MOUNTAIN RESCUE IF IN REMOTE LOCATION (999 or 112)
CALL BASE CONTACT and arrange immediate collection of other students from venue with accompanying member of staff
START TIMELINE
INFORM: POLICE (101) and provide full support
Consider possible media manage ment
STUDENT FOUND INJURED [RIDDOR]
STUDENT FOUND SAFE AND WELL
CONTACT LSCB including OFSTED for EYFS pupil.
Make notes in preparation for incident report.
Ambulance (999)
ON RETURN TO SCHOOL: pastoral care of Staff and Students, including possible counselling.
'What have we learned...'
As soon as practical, compile incident report from notes taken.
Fatal Outcome [RIDDOR]
Investigation: Internal and/or external; possible disciplinary action or prosecution.

CHART 4


PROCEDURE FOR STUDENT MISSING OFF CAMPUS ON EDUCATIONAL VISIT (OVERSEAS)
STUDENT IDENTIFIED AS MISSING
RE-REGISTER and head count to check all other students are present.
SEARCH of immediate environment by accompanying staff. Lead teacher to remain with group
INDOOR VENUE: CONTACT SECURITY and provide full support for a more extensive search of the premises.
OUTDOOR VENUE: Deploy member of staff to retrace steps to given point (as far as practical) AND KEEP PHONE CONTACT FOR ANY INFORMATION
INFORM Headmaster who will inform Chair of Governors and parents of missing student.
CONTACT venue headquarters if available.
CALL BASE CONTACT discuss arrangements for other students. Decide if there are enough staff to manage the situation, consider wisdom of another member of staff joining team, consider ability to speak local language. Consider if remaining students need to return home.
INFORM: local police and work with them, enlist the help of the Tour Company to assist if necessary. Consider whether British Embassy should be contacted.
Consider possible media manage ment
STUDENT FOUND INJURED [RIDDOR]
STUDENT FOUND SAFE AND WELL
CONTACT LSCB including OFSTED for EYFS pupil. Make notes in preparation for incident report.
Enlist help of local emergency services
Fatal Outcome [RIDDOR]
ON RETURN TO SCHOOL: pastoral care of Staff and Students, including possible counselling.
'What have we learned...'
As soon as practical, compile incident report from notes taken.
Investigation: Internal and/or external; possible disciplinary action or prosecution.

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 SLT 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

1. Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
2. 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.
3. Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The Head, Head of the Infant & Junior School and members of SLT will ensure that staff under an investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
4. 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 SLT. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police may be called.
5. 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.
6. In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need support and/or counselling. 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.
7. Any contact or questions from the media will be dealt with solely by the Head or the Chair of Governors.