



The Hutchins School: Children's Services

CS-101: Absconded or Lost Child Policy

Key Legislation	National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care: Standard 2.3: <i>Each Child is Protected.</i>
Commencement Date	1/1/2011
Last Review Date	1/9/2016

1. Purpose

In any Child Care environment, it is the responsibility of the educators to ensure the safety of the children in their care at all times. Part of this responsibility includes a level of preparedness for all scenarios. The purpose of this policy and the embedded procedure is to ensure that staff are aware of the best practice for securing a lost or absconded child.

2. Scope

This policy applies to The Hutchins School: Children's Services.

3. Objectives

This procedure is designed to ensure that staff follow the correct protocols in locating a lost or absconded child. The objective of this procedure is to ensure the best possible outcome in such circumstances.

4. Definitions

Absconded Child	A child who has, by choice, left the licensed area of the Child Care centre.
Lost Child	A child whose whereabouts cannot be accounted for.
ELC	The Hutchins School: Early Learning Centre
JS	The Hutchins School: Junior School
The Hutchins School: Children's Services	A term used to denote The Hutchins School: Outside School Hours Care & Kindergarden (collectively).
OSHC	The Hutchins School: Outside School Hours Care
Kindergarten	The Hutchins School: Kindergarten (including Pre-Kinder)

5. Policy Information

All relevant information contained within the procedures and guidelines below.



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6. Supporting Procedures / Guidelines

When a child's absence is noted, the Director of Child Care or Head of the Early Learning Centre and Junior School will be informed immediately. The Director will:

1. Assign staff to check the building and surrounding grounds thoroughly;
2. Compile an up-to-date description of the child (e.g. hair colour, height, clothing, last known location, last seen by whom), or provide a photograph of that child; and
3. Inform the Headmaster, or, in his absence, the Deputy Headmaster.

This search will involve all possible staff, without jeopardising the children remaining in their care, concentrating on the immediate area. The Director, or staff member in charge, will designate areas. Searching staff are required to report back to the OSHC office after the area is checked.

If this search fails to locate the missing child, the Director of Child Care or Head of ELC & Junior School will contact the Headmaster, who will inform the police that the child is missing. The police will take over the search at this point, while the Critical Incident team will take control of the management of the situation.

Once a child is deemed "lost", and where police are notified, the Head of the ELC & Junior School is also required to notify The Secretary at the Department of Education. Telephone: (03) 6233 5676.

A full report is to be completed after the incident. Copies of this report are to be distributed to the Head of the ELC & Junior School, OH&S Risk Manager and Headmaster. A de-briefing session should be held for all staff involved as soon as possible. This session is to be organised by the School and run by an internal counsellor.

7. Legislative Documentation and Standards

National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Aged Care, Canberra, ACT, 2009.

Quality Area 2: Children's Health and Safety

- **Standard 2.3: Each Child is Protected**
 - Element 2.3.2: *Every Reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.*
 - Element 2.3.4: *Educators, co-ordinators and staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.*



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Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework, Canberra, ACT, 2009.

My Time, Our Place: The Framework for School Age Care in Australia.

Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Section 167.

Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 101(2), 168(2)(a)(iii)

8. Referenced External Documentation

Kennedy, A. & Stonehouse, A.

Shared Visions for Outside School Hours Care. Melbourne: Newton Press, 2004.

Tansey, S.

Quality Improvement and Accreditation System Factsheet #2: Safety in children's services.

NSW: National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc.

9. Record Keeping

This policy is to be kept for three (3) years until review, unless there is a significant legislative or organisational change requiring earlier review.

The master copy is kept on Sharepoint (Policies) and is read-only in PDF form. All printed copies are uncontrolled.

10. Policy Owner

The Hutchins School Headmaster

11. Policy Review Details

Date

Changes made under review

1/9/2013	Minor changes made to reflect continuity between EYLF/NQS and the policy (e.g. references to 'staff' changed to 'educators' and so on). Inserted into new (2013) template.
13/2/2014	Significant changes made to paragraph(s) regarding the procedure following confirmation of a lost child. Information added about Critical Incident Team and Headmaster handling the situation.