



Name of policy: Missing Child Policy

Version	Date	Approved by governors	Description
1	Dec 2018	10.12.18	New policy
2	Jan 2021	19.01.21	Policy Review
3	Dec 2024	2/12/24	Minor adaptations (registration times) and emergency contact numbers updated

This policy is due for review on: Spring 2023





WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY (including Early Years Foundation Stage) – MISSING CHILD POLICY

Statement of Intent

The safety of pupils is paramount, and is given the highest priority at all times both on and off the school premises.

Every attempt is made to ensure that the security of pupils is maintained at all times throughout the school day through the rigorous implementation of the school's:

- registration procedures (completed by 8:55am and 1.20pm)
- pupil absence monitoring procedures (including 'first-day absence' calls)
- entrance/exit procedures at the beginning and end of the school day,
- Off-site Educational Visits Policy Child Protection/Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.



Missing Child (School site)

If at any time during the school day a child is noticed as missing the following procedure will take place:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff will alert a senior member of staff.
- The senior staff and any other available staff will carry out a thorough search of the school buildings, playground and other outdoor areas including the field and copse.
- The registers will be checked to make sure no other child is missing.
- External doors and gates are checked to establish whether there has been a breach of security.
- If the child is not found, the parent/guardian is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police (999)

The police will want to know:

1. Where you are.
2. The name of the child.
3. The next of kin of the child.
4. A detailed description of the child (going from head to toe, clothing etc.)
5. When they were first noticed missing.
6. When and where they were last seen.
7. Circumstances of the disappearance (any trigger, arguments etc.).
8. Who is looking for the child at the moment, where they are and their mobile phone number.

When the police arrive, they will co-ordinate the search and staff will comply fully with their instructions; staff should continue to search unless instructed by police to stop.

Missing Children Seen Running Off the Premises

If, during the search, the missing child is seen leaving the premises, the member of staff witnessing this must inform the most senior member of staff immediately available or, if none is available, send a message to the office without losing sight of the child if possible.

As a general rule staff should not pursue a child beyond the school boundary. Instead they should report to the Head Teacher where they last saw the child and the direction the child was heading so that this information can be communicated to the parents or police as appropriate.

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for the member of staff to go beyond the school boundary, e.g. to retrieve a child who has accidentally wandered out of an open gate, or to follow/retrieve a child with additional needs who has deliberately left the premises but in doing so does not understand the gravity of their action.

Staff are expected to use their professional discretion in deciding whether or not it is appropriate to go beyond the school boundary in pursuance of such children.

If a child is followed beyond the school boundary the member of staff must behave in a manner that is not threatening to the child. They must not run after the child as this may cause the child to run into a dangerous situation, e.g. the child might run into a road without looking out for traffic in an attempt to evade the pursuing, running adult.

In exceptional circumstances where a child is known to be liable to run off the premises, the school may prepare and enact contingency search plans involving named staff. When enacting these plans staff should be mindful not to put themselves or the child at risk.

Follow-up to the incident

When the child is found their needs and those of the parent are paramount. Emotions are likely to be running high, and this should be considered when trying to establish what happened immediately before the child left the school premises.

- It should be established whether the child is injured or has been harmed in any way, and the appropriate action taken.
- After the search there will be a need to meet with staff to re-assure them and to take the opportunity to de-brief.
- An incident report should be completed by the staff member co-ordinating the search and handed to the designated Child Protection staff member. This will be saved onto the schools electronic safeguarding logs (CPOMs).
- The Headteacher will inform the Chair of Governors and any other relevant body as appropriate.
- A Risk Assessment review will take place in the area from which the child went missing as soon as possible, and no longer than 3 days after the event. Any identified security improvements should be put in place as soon as possible.

A meeting should be held with both the parent and the child to establish how the incident occurred, and what actions or support will be necessary to prevent such an incident from happening again in the future.

This may include:

- Pupil Support with the involvement of the Head of Inclusion, other staff member or identified professional.
- An individual risk assessment being reviewed or put in place.
- A behaviour or learning support plan being reviewed or put in place.
- A 'check-in' or buddy system being established.
- Potential referral to an external agency where the pupil's safety, mental or emotional health and well-being are felt to be at risk.
- A consequence being applied in line with the school's Behaviour Policy, if appropriate.
- The incident should be discussed at the next staff meeting and any recommendations for improvements in the procedure should be made to the Governing Body.

Missing Child (Off-Site School Visits)

If a child goes missing from an educational visit where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the following procedure applies:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the visit ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- One staff member will search the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The staff contact the police using a mobile phone and report the child as missing
- The person in charge informs the Headteacher who will then liaise with the police, inform the local authority and contact the family.
- If appropriate, the Headteacher may make his way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff.
- In an indoor venue or other secure site, the staff contact the venue's security staff who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- Refer to the "IMMEDIATE ACTION CARD FOR A SERIOUS ACCIDENT OR INCIDENT" – APPENDIX 1

Investigation following the safe recovery of the child

- The Headteacher, with the support of the police if appropriate, carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time.
- An Incident Log Sheet should be completed detailing:
 1. the date and time of the report
 2. staff/children were in the group
 3. when the child was last seen in the group
 4. what has taken place in the group since then
 5. the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 6. Any other relevant details, including the recovery of the child.
 7. A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff.
- If required, the incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements and to the Local Authority Health and Safety Officer as appropriate.

Missing Child from Parental Care

At busy times of the day and during family events at school, children occasionally go missing from the care of their parents. In order to try to ensure that the child is found quickly and safely the above procedures will still apply.

Arrangements at the end of After School Clubs

Every After School Club will have a register of children attending. Unless permissions have been obtained in writing to the contrary, all pupils will be released to their parents at the end of the club by a member of staff.

Arrangements at the end of Wrap around care

After School Club (Wrap around care) will have a register of children attending. Unless permissions have been obtained in writing to the contrary, all pupils will be signed over to their parents at the end of the club by a member of staff.

APPENDIX 1

IMMEDIATE ACTION CARD FOR A SERIOUS ACCIDENT OR INCIDENT

Contact Personnel at School (In and out of normal hours)

Be prepared. Carry these procedures and the information, and means to use them, at all times.

1 FIRST STEPS

Listen carefully and write down

What happened?

To who;

Where;

When

And what has happened since.

Try and get a telephone number for the group and leader.

2 NEXT STEPS

Inform Headteacher or, if not available, a senior member of staff immediately. Telephone numbers and other details can be written in the space below for reference

SCHOOL - 0118 9265493

WBC - 0118 908 8002

OUT OF HOURS - 01344 351999

If you cannot make contact immediately, telephone your local education authority, explain that it is an emergency and ask to speak to a senior education officer.

3 WARNINGS AND ADVICE

- Do not speak to the press or media other than to refer them to the Council Education Department.
- Never admit liability of any sort
- Do not allow anyone to see the people involved without an independent witness being present.
- No one, unless they are in a relevant official capacity, has the right to see anyone who does not wish to see them.
- If someone tries to force a confrontation do not do anything and call the police.
- Be compassionate with anyone involved.
- Keep a written record of all that happens.

A SERIOUS ACCIDENT OR INCIDENT IS DESCRIBED AS:

- An accident leading to a fatality, serious or multiple fractures, amputation or other serious injury.
- Any circumstances in which a party member might be at serious risk.
- Any situation in which the press or media are involved or might become involved.