

Missing / Lost Child Policy

This policy has been written with reference to the DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016) and Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014)

Introduction

The welfare of all our children is our paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the School is aware that they have a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. We make every effort to ensure that all children are closely supervised so that they remain safe.

This is especially important when we undertake outings – please see the Health and Safety policy and the section below for the procedures to be followed on a visit off the School Premises.

Missing Children

It should be noted that a missing child could potentially be at risk of abuse or neglect. We are alert to that possibility and will notify all relevant authorities if it is deemed necessary.

All children are registered at the beginning of the school day. Registration is then taken again after lunch for all children. A list of absentees is held on SIMS. Therefore, for the purpose of this policy, the term 'missing/lost child' refers to a child who is not present without either authorisation or explanation. On occasions when a staff member identifies a child as missing from their expected location, immediate action is required as outlined in the procedures below.

Communications with parents and the appropriate services (particularly the police) are an integral part of the procedure and all instances of a lost/missing child must be reported to the Head of School/Deputy Head of School and the appropriate investigations made.

This policy applies to all members of our school community, as the School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the School's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection – Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Procedure

A child is identified as missing when:

- absent at morning registration is not confirmed by a parent or guardian.
- comparing children in a class with the day's absence e-mail.
- a fellow child reports a missing friend or classmate.

Any member of staff discovering a discrepancy must immediately notify the School Office/Family Support Worker who will:

- Contact the relevant member of staff to find out if the absence is expected or to check if there have been any medical emergencies.
- Check all lists of events not on the School premises.

In the event of a child going missing staff should stay as calm as possible and follow this procedure.

For a Missing/Lost Child on School premises the procedure is as follows:

1. Member of staff who becomes aware that a child is missing immediately informs the School Office/Head of School/Deputy Head of School. They should ascertain when and where the child was last seen.
2. The Head of School/Deputy Head of School delegates a member of staff to ensure the safety of the remaining children with regard to appropriate supervision.
3. Head of School/Deputy Head of School organises a thorough search of the whole school premises, checking exits and possible hiding places.
4. When the child is found reassurance is given, and questions asked to ascertain how the incident occurred. *A written account is made, and a review of procedures for supervision and safety is carried out. A copy of this is given to the Head of School. The child's parents are informed.
5. Should the search prove negative the school office, informs the police (999) and parents under the direction of the Head of School/Deputy Head of School.

'Missing/Lost Child' on a Visit Off Site

In the extremely unlikely event that a child was to become detached from the group and become 'lost' whilst on a visit off the School premises then staff should follow the following procedure:

1. All staff and helpers to be alerted and a thorough search made of the immediate and surrounding areas.
2. Depending on location, others alerted, for example if in a shop/farm/museum then the relevant staff.
3. A member of staff should inform the School Office so that the Executive Headteacher/Head of School are alerted
4. If the search proves negative then the School together with parents and police are informed.
5. Staff must ensure the welfare, both physical and emotional, of other children in their care.
6. Visit Leader to provide the police with details of the child and incident.
7. The Head of School to be responsible for gathering all relevant information and liaising with the required authorities and parents.
8. A full report of the incident will be made as detailed below.

*After the Incident

The Senior member of staff involved will sensitively discuss with the child's parents the events surrounding the disappearance of the child.

The Executive Headteacher/Head of School will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all staff present at the time.

The Incident Report will detail:

- The date and time of the incident
- What staff/children were in the group/class
- When the child was last seen in the group
- What had taken place in the group/class since then and the time it is estimated that the child went missing.

A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened and, if appropriate, procedures (including risk assessments and training) may be updated.

Members of staff must refrain from making comments to members of the public; any questions must be referred to SLT..