Missing Child

Policy and Procedure

The staff responsible for the Missing Children Policy and Procedure are

Mrs S. Bradford Mrs A. Plowman

The governor responsible for the Missing Children Policy and Procedure is

The EYFS Governor

Agreed by governors: 10th January 2025

Review Date: January 2027

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 at 8.50am 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;
- Safeguarding (including Child Protection) Policies and Procedures.

1. Missing Child (School Site)

If at any time during the school day a child is noticed as missing, the following procedure will be followed:

- staff will alert a senior member of staff immediately;
- all available staff will carry out a thorough search of the school buildings, mobile classrooms, indoor and outdoor toilets, The Green and the field;
- class lists will be checked to make sure no other child is missing;
- perimeter gates will be checked to establish whether there has been an obvious breach of security;
- if the child is not found, the parent or carer is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police (101). The police will want to know:
    - where you are
    - the name of the child
    - the child's next of kin
    - a detailed description of the child (appearance, clothing, etc.)
    - when they were first noticed missing
    - when and where they were last seen
    - circumstances of the disappearance (any trigger, arguments, etc.)
    - who is looking for the child at the moment, where they are and their mobile phone number if they are off-site.
- 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.

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 and why.

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 reassure 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 one of the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads (Sarah Bradford, Cas Davies, Clare Campbell, Katharine Walsh or Ann Plowman). This will be recorded on CPOMS.

The Headteacher will inform the Chair of Governors. A risk assessment 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 SENDCo (Katharine Walsh), other staff member or identified professional;
- referral to the school's pastoral teaching assistant (Zoë Feavearyear);
- referral to the school's child counsellor (Stacey Howe);
- referral to the school Parent Support Advisor (Simon Andrew);
- 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;
- referral to an external agency where the pupil's safety, mental or emotional health and well-being are felt to be at risk;
- a sanction being applied in line with the school's Positive 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.

2. 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 visit leader informs the Headteacher who will then liaise with the police, contact the family and inform the Local Authority;
- if appropriate, the Headteacher may make her 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, the staff contact the venue's security staff who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.

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 and children who 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.

3. 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.

4. 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 handed over to their parents at the end of the club by a member of staff.