



# MISSING CHILD POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Amended: Spring 2019  
Adopted by *Safeguarding Committee* on behalf of the Governing body: Spring 2019

## Missing Child Policy and Procedures

The purpose of this policy is to give all staff a clear understanding of how to respond and whom to inform should they discover a child is missing.

Staff need to be mindful that a child can go missing at any time of the day. Examples of occasions are:

- Failing to return from going to the toilet or having been sent on an errand
- Failing to return from PE or a support lesson/reading outside of the classroom
- Going missing at drop-off when parents and children are freely moving around the building
- At break or lunchtime
- **Goes missing while on an off-site visit or out of hours event (e.g. PTA events)**

In order to minimise the risk of a child going missing:

- Teach children about how to keep safe; remind them about staying with the class, making sure an adult knows where they are. Ensure they are aware of the dangers of 'wandering off'.
- Make sure children know where they are allowed to be in school and where they are not allowed.
- Any child who is known to be 'at risk' of wandering off, getting lost or hiding should have specific support outlined on a behaviour plan
- Ensure parents are clear about drop-off and collection procedures
- **Ensure missing child procedures are included in the risk assessment for any off-site visit / out of hours event**

If a child goes missing during the school day:

- Inform the class teacher and a member of SLT/Inclusion Team immediately- give the name of the child / a description of the child, where the child was last seen, what they were doing and how long it has been since you last saw them.
- Inform the School Office so they can monitor anyone entering or leaving the premises. The office staff should check all exits to make sure there has not been a breach of security. They should also check the online SIMS register and if the child has been signed out for an external appointment or has an internal appointment with a visiting professional (e.g. School Nurse or Speech Therapist).
- All available adults should assist to search immediate surroundings: classroom (under tables, work surfaces and other possible hiding places such as cupboards), adjacent work areas and classrooms, the cloakrooms and toilets, Creative room/Diamond room/Green room/Hall, playgrounds, in case the child is hiding or is locked in somewhere.
- If a search of the immediate surroundings is unsuccessful this should be widened to include all school grounds and the Infant school site at Portland Road.
- **At all times the rest of the class must be supervised by a member of staff.** It is advisable that a familiar staff member stays in the classroom as the child might well return there.

If a child goes missing on an off-site visit or out of hours event:

- Refer to risk assessment for any specific procedures e.g. identified meeting point, staff to carry mobile phones etc.
- Request assistance in searching for the child from any adults around – noting that **at all times the rest of the group must be adequately supervised by a member of staff**. Give the name of the child / a description of the child, where the child was last seen, what they were doing and how long it has been since you last saw them. Any available adults should begin a search of the immediate area. It is advisable that a familiar staff member stays at the point at which the child was last seen as he/she might well return there.
- If appropriate ensure member of staff at the venue is informed and follow any procedures the provider has for lost children.
- If staff are split across a site ensure they are all contacted and made aware by mobile phone. **Do not let party members contact home until contact has first been made with School, an immediate search carried out and the appropriate Service contacted.**

If a child goes missing at the start or end of the school day:

- Immediately make a search of the surrounding area.
- Request assistance in searching for the child from any adults around – give the name of the child / a description of the child, where the child was last seen, what they were doing and how long it has been since you last saw them. Any available adults should begin a wider search of the school: toilet and cloakroom area, corridors, hall, outside areas. **At all times the rest of the class must be supervised by a member of staff**. It is advisable that a familiar staff member stays in the classroom as the child might well return there.
- Alert the Office staff and a member of SLT:
  - Office staff – check for any messages regarding alternative pick-up arrangements. Check all after school clubs. Phone parents/carers and alternative contact numbers if appropriate. Check CCTV cameras.
  - SLT member – ensure a member of staff is placed on each exit to watch for the child. Close/lock gates if appropriate. Co-ordinate staff searching for the child.
- If a search of the immediate surroundings is unsuccessful this should be widened to include all school grounds and the infant school site if missing from the Portland Road site. Office staff should ring the Infant School Office and inform them.

In either case if the search is unsuccessful after 20 minutes:

- Ring the police, providing a description and keep searching the area.
- Advise the relevant parents and/or carers know of the situation as soon as is reasonably practical to do so.

If the police are involved they will co-ordinate the search and staff will comply fully with their instructions. Staff should continue to search unless instructed by the police to stop.

When a missing child has been located and safely returned to school, the Head of School will conduct an investigation into the circumstances of the child going missing. This is to identify any factors that need to be addressed by the school or communicated to the parents to prevent a recurrence of the child going missing.

After an incident:

- Inform Chair of Governors
- Inform Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Record all details in an incident log on CPOMs
- Evaluate processes and make necessary adjustments to ensure future effectiveness
- Meet with parent and child and discuss any support which may prevent an incident occurring again e.g. individual risk assessment, adjustments to behaviour plan
- Incident to be discussed under Health and Safety at the next available staff meeting and any new learning shared. Reminders and any changes to be shared with all staff via email and newsletters
- Incident to be raised and discussed at next Joint Safeguarding Board

**It is the class teachers responsibility to dismiss the children to the correct adult.**