

Abbey Lane Primary School



Missing Child Policy

Reviewed: September 2022
M Stafford

Abbey Lane Primary School
Lost / Missing Child Policy

Introduction

The welfare and security of children in our school is paramount and all possible and practical policy and procedures have been implemented to ensure this remains a priority. Children may go missing and EVERY member of staff has equal responsibility in ensuring the safety of the children and knowing where they are. It is however important that in the unlikely event of a child going missing, staff quickly follow agreed procedures. This will ensure the child is located as soon as possible and that the correct people are informed.

Systems in place to minimise the risk

- Rigorous and stringent steps are taken to ensure the premises and surrounding site is secure by 9.00am each morning. These gates are not re opened again until 3.00pm.
- Staff are stationed on the playground in the morning and are vigilant should any children attempt to leave the gates in search of parent/carer.
- The attendance register is taken at the start of the morning and afternoon session. It is the responsibility of each staff member to be aware of how many children are present. Children who arrive late are recorded in the late book in the main office. Staff need to have regard of these children in the total head count of the class. This applies equally to those children who leave school during the day.
- In Reception classes the names of the children present will be displayed.
- Children starting school at the beginning of the term or part way through a term must be made aware of the boundaries of where they can and cannot go.
- At the end of the day KS1 and Foundation children are only released to a known adult. This system is followed for children being collected during the day for appointments etc.
- Parents are made aware, through initial meetings and news letters, of the need for close supervision of children at all times before and after school while waiting in the playground.
- In the event of a child being found to be missing it is vital that prompt action is taken.

Procedure

- The missing child is identified and the last known whereabouts of the child identified if possible. (The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child's absence is noted as soon as possible)
- The Head teacher or the Deputy Head are informed.
- The class teacher present will arrange for the other children to be supervised. (The remaining children should be gathered together. Without alarming them the children should be asked if they have seen the missing child.)
- A systematic search will be carried out to see if the child can be located in the surrounding area.
 - All toilets, cupboards, under tables, kitchen areas, cushions and all other areas where a child might hide
 - All outside areas including play houses, passage ways, climbing frames, bushes and trees.
 - Check all exits to ensure they remain secure. If there has been any breach of security search in the vicinity of this area.
 - Make enquiries of any other adults in the vicinity
- If the child cannot be located then the following procedures are followed:
 - The head teacher or the deputy head (in the event of both of these personnel being off site the designated senior member of staff for that day) will
 - Contact the police and/or any appropriate emergency services. Police have the resources to conduct a search and speed is important.
 - Contact Parents/Carers of the child. Once contacted the parents should be

advised to stay at home or ensure someone remains in the home in case the child arrives there. Advise the parents that the emergency services have been contacted. Parents should be asked for information of anywhere else a child may head for e.g. grandparent, other relatives the park etc.

Record of events and subsequent report

The following details will be noted in order to help in any search and subsequent investigations

- Date time and location of disappearance
- Who was responsible for the care of the child at the time
- What was the child wearing
- Any distinguishing features
- Circumstances surrounding disappearance
- Time parents and other agencies were contacted
- The incident is to be reported under RIDDOR arrangements and is recorded in the incident book
- If the incident warrants a police investigation then all staff are required to give full co-operation

Informing other people

In very serious cases due consideration must be given to notifying the following people

- The School's Insurance company.
- Other parents
- The Local Authority
- Social Care and Health

Dealing with reactions

If such an incident does occur it will be natural for the child's parents to be frightened, distressed and angry. Other parents will also be rightly concerned for the safety of their children. Staff will be upset and shocked that any such lapse in security has occurred. Emotions and reactions must be dealt with professionally and in a caring and understanding way. Should any staff be approached by parents or media regarding the situation they must refer them to the head teacher or deputy head.

Off the premises

- On trips away from school, children should be divided into groups with no more than 10 children with each responsible adult. The class teacher will decide in advance how to arrange the groups
- Each adult will have details of which children they are responsible for. Trip consent forms and contact details for parents/carers will be taken on the trip so that parents/carers can be contacted in an emergency.
- We will make sure that children know who is responsible for them, that they know not to stray and that they know if they want to go anywhere e.g. to a shop or to the toilet they ask.
- We will tell the children what to do if they become separated from the group:
 - Stay where you are - we will come back to look for you
 - Look around you - can you see your group or one of the other groups?
 - If it seems like a long time before we find you, whom can you talk to?
 - a. Someone from the attraction/venue you are visiting
 - b. A shop worker if you get lost while travelling
 - c. A uniformed policeman or woman
- We will take a regular headcount of the group. This will depend on the children and the activity. If on taking a headcount a child appears to be missing, the class teacher will be contacted immediately.

- The group should stay still and keep together. If there is another adult with the group, one of them will should retrace their steps (to a pre-agreed distance, for no more than five minutes), to look for the child.
- If the child is still missing after 5 minutes, the staff of the site will be informed and asked for their help in finding the child and contact the police. We will be prepared to give them the following information:
 - The school's name and phone number and where we are.
 - What has happened.
 - Name, age and address of the child.
 - Time of incident.
- We will contact the parent/carer of the missing child and inform them of what has happened and the steps that are being taken to find their child.
- We will ensure the School and Head teacher are aware of what actions have been taken.
- We will continue the search after calling the police.
- The lead teacher involved will complete an Incident Form as soon as possible.

Conclusion

In the case of any such incident occurring the breach of security will be identified, further actions will be implemented and all staff made fully aware.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will

- Ensure the policy is implemented and will monitor through HT reports to
- Governing Body under Health and safety

The Head teacher will

- Monitor the policy and procedures ensuring they are implemented effectively
- Report to the Governing Body through HT reports
- Staff
- Ensure procedures are followed

Reviewed September 2021