St. Helen's College

Missing Child Policy & Child Not Collected On Time Policy

This is a whole-school policy which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage

Introduction

The welfare of all of the children at the school is our paramount responsibility. A child going missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. Our staffing ratios are generous – particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage - and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of young children.

Vulnerable children

For a variety of reasons, individual children may meet circumstances or be prone to behaviour patterns which create a greater than normal risk that they might go missing. Examples of such situations are:

- immature or irresponsible behaviour linked to special educational needs;
- being prone to outbursts of angry, confrontational or irrational behaviour;
- being subject to inter-parental conflict concerning contact rights and arrangements or
- general stress or anxiety.

Where such vulnerabilities are identified, staff need to communicate appropriately with colleagues and, as necessary, increase levels of supervision and monitor after-school collection arrangements carefully.

Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing from school

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child were found to be missing, the teacher in charge would carry out the following actions without delay:

1. Summon the Head and staff assistance.
2. Deploy staff to search the immediate vicinity.
3. Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children are present.
4. Ask all of the adults and children calmly to say when they last remember seeing the child.
5. Request a colleague to occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) by e.g. reading to them.
6. Check the signing in/out book.
7. At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the School, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards and washrooms where a small child might hide.
8. Check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit.

If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

1. Inform the Head and the DSL. The Head would ring the child's parents, explain what has happened and what steps have been set in motion and ask them to come to the school at once.
2. The Head would notify the Police.
3. Staff would be deployed to search the rest of the school premises and grounds.
4. If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with the child.
5. The Head/DSL would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Partnership.
6. The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care.
7. ISI/Ofsted would be informed.
8. The Insurers would be informed.
9. If the child was found subsequently to be injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health and Safety Executive.

Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing on an outing

1. An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present.
2. Supervising staff would search the immediate vicinity.
3. Inform the management of the venue, request their assistance and arrange a search.
4. Extend the search to surrounding areas within the venue.
5. Inform the Head/DSL by mobile phone.
6. Ask the Head to ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the venue or the school at once.
7. Contact the Police.
8. The remaining children would be taken back to school as soon as is reasonably practicable. At least one member of staff would remain at the venue.
9. The DSL would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Partnership.
10. The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care.
11. ISI/Ofsted would be informed.
12. The Insurers would be informed.
13. If the child is injured, report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE.

Actions to be followed by staff once the child is found

1. Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child.
2. Reunite the child with parents as soon as possible.
3. Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing.
4. The Head will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
5. The Head will conduct a full investigation (if appropriate involving Social Services/the Local Children Safeguarding Partnership).
6. Media queries should be referred to the Head.

The investigation would involve all concerned providing written statements and would be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and children; when the child was last seen; what appeared to have happened; the length of time that the child was missing and how s/he appeared to have gone missing; and lessons for the future. Security and supervision procedures would then be revised.

Procedures to be followed when a child is not collected on time

If a child is not collected on time and the parent has not rung, follow this procedure.

1. Ask the child if s/he knows who is coming to collect him/her.
2. Wait for 10 minutes. If the child still has not been collected, take the child to the office.
3. Ring the child's parents. Inform them that you still have their child in your care.
4. If you are unable to reach the child's parents, try the emergency contact numbers.
5. After 20 minutes, if you are still unable to contact a responsible adult to collect the child,

contact the Head.

6. During this time, the child must be safely looked after.
7. If you manage to contact an adult, inform him/her that the child will wait at Funtasia (this should be the normal action unless the child is excessively upset).
8. Funtasia staff must make a note of the time the child is collected on the signing out sheet. The child must also be signed out by the adult and the parent should be charged for Funtasia attendance.
9. If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers before the premises are closing, the Head will contact the Social Care Duty Officer. Social Care will make emergency arrangements for the child and will arrange for a visit to be made to the child's house and will check with the Police. The School will make a full written report of the incident.

Points to note:

- When the adult collects the child, explain that if there is a problem collecting the child in future, they must ring the school as early as possible.
- Inform the Head, Deputy Head or Head of Lower School if a parent has been very late without phoning or if a parent is consistently late.
- We undertake to look after the child safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care.
- The DSL will keep a record of incidents where parents/carers do not collect a child from school or are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents. If any concerns about the child's safety and welfare result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the school's child protection policies and procedures.

Person Responsible	MG
Date	September 2024
Review Frequency	2 years
Next review	September 2026