



Missing Child Procedure

Children's safety is always the highest priority, both on and off school premises. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Child going missing on the premises

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, all staff, including the Headteacher (or most senior teacher), should be alerted. The class teacher and Headteacher (or senior teacher) should carry out a thorough search of the building and outdoor area whilst the safety of the other children is maintained by the remaining staff.

The register should be checked and all children in the class/setting accounted for.

Doors and gates should be checked to ensure that there has been no breach of security whereby a child could wander out.

If the child cannot be found, the parents/carers should be contacted and the missing child reported to the police. As soon as parents/carers are informed, they will need advice and support.

The Headteacher (or senior teacher) should talk to all staff and adults on the premises to find out when and where the child was last seen, and a written record should be made.

A staff member should search within a short walking distance of school, especially if the child lives within walking distance of school in case they have attempted to walk home.

The Headteacher (or senior teacher) will report the incident to the chair of governors immediately.

The governing body will carry out an investigation as soon as possible.

Child going missing on an outing in the local area

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing should 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 should search the immediate vicinity.

The Headteacher (or senior teacher) will be contacted immediately and the incident reported. The Headteacher (or senior staff teacher) will contact the police and report the child as missing. The Headteacher (or senior teacher) will contact the parents/carers, who should make their way to the school or outing venue as agreed with the Headteacher (or senior staff member). The school is normally the best place, as by the time the parent/carer arrives, the child may have returned.

Staff will take the remaining children back to school.

A staff member will stay at the site of the incident until the Police arrive.

The Headteacher (or senior teacher) will report the incident to the chair of governors immediately. The governing body will carry out an investigation as soon as possible.

Child going missing on a trip

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the trip should 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 should search the immediate vicinity.

The Headteacher (or senior teacher) will be contacted immediately and the incident reported.

The person in charge of the trip will report the child as missing to staff at the reception of the visit venue and their security staff who will handle the search and contact the Police.

The school office will contact the parents/carers, who should make their way to the setting or outing venue. Staff will stay to supervise the remaining children in a central location on site until parents/carers come to collect them. Parents/carers will be informed to come and collect their children as soon as possible.

A staff member will stay at the site of the incident until the Police arrive.

The Headteacher (or senior teacher) will report the incident to the chair of governors immediately. The governing body will carry out an investigation as soon as possible.

The investigation

Staff should keep calm and support the other children to ensure that they do not become anxious or worried. The Headteacher (or senior teacher) together with the chair of governors or representative from the governing body will speak with the parents/carers.

The governing body will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the visit.

The Headteacher (or senior teacher) will write an incident report detailing:

1. The date and time of the report.
2. Which staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff member designated responsible for the missing child.
3. When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
4. What took place in the group or outing after the child went missing.
5. The estimated time that the child went missing.
6. How the breach of security happened.

If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will be expected to co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.

The incident will be reported to the local authority Health and Safety Officer, who may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.

The insurance provider will be informed by the School Business Manager.

Managing people

Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.

The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the designated person responsible for the safety of the child. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.

Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger, and they may be afraid. The Head Teacher (or senior teacher) will need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support whilst feeling vulnerable.

The parents/carers will feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the person in charge. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent/carer, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Head Teacher (or senior teacher) and the other should be the chairperson or representative of the governing body. No matter how understandable the parent/carer's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.

The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.

In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. Members of the governing body will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

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