



Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust

Policy and procedures for a missing child

The Board of Trustees adopted this policy on: 7th March 2018

To be reviewed: Spring 2021 or earlier if required

The safety of pupils is paramount, and is given the highest priority at all times both on and off 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 Trust's:

- registration procedures
- pupil absence monitoring procedures
- entrance/exit procedures at the beginning and end of the school day,
- Off-site Educational Visits Policy
- Child Protection/Safeguarding Policies and Procedures.

1. Missing Child (from school)

If at any time during the school day a child is noticed as missing the following procedure will take place:

- Immediately alert a senior member of staff.
- The senior staff and any other available staff will carry out a thorough search of the school buildings, playground and other school outdoor areas and check doors/gates to establish whether there has been a breach of security.
- The registers will be checked to make sure no other child is missing.
- If the child is not found, the parent/guardian is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police (101)

The police will want to know:

- Who and where you are.
- The name, date of birth and address of the child.
- The next of kin of the child.
- A detailed description of the child (going from head to toe, 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.

When the police arrive they will co-ordinate the search and staff will comply fully with their instructions.

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 immediately before the child left the school premises.
- 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 re-assure them and to take the opportunity to debrief.
- An incident report should be completed by the staff member co-ordinating the search and handed to the designated senior leader. This will be placed in the school's Safeguarding File.
- The Headteacher will inform the Chair of Governors and any other relevant body as appropriate.

- A Risk Assessment review 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 and shared with the Governing Body.
- 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:

- Involvement of the SENDCo, other staff member or identified professional.
- An individual risk assessment being reviewed or put in place.
- A behaviour or learning support plan being reviewed or put in place.
- An adult 'check-in' or buddy system being established.
- Potential referral to an external agency where the pupil's safety, mental or emotional health and well-being are felt to be at risk.

2. Missing Child (Off-Site school visit)

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 person in charge informs the Headteacher who will then liaise with the police and contact the family.
- If appropriate, the Headteacher may make their way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as to 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 is 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:

- The date and time of the report.
- Staff/children who were in the group.
- When the child was last seen in the group.
- What has taken place in the group since then.
- The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- Any other relevant details, including the recovery of the child.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements.

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. After School Clubs

Every club will have a register of children attending. Unless permissions have been obtained in writing to the contrary, all pupils will be signed over to their parents/carers at the end of the club by the club leader or a member of staff. In the event of a missing child, **the above procedures will still apply.**

5 Unaccompanied Children

Legally the decision and responsibility for children walking alone to and from school remains with parents/carers and they may make the decision to allow their child to walk unaccompanied when appropriate for the individual child. If a parent/carer wishes their child to walk unaccompanied, then the parent/carer needs to inform school accordingly.