



Spring Grove School

EYFS

Missing Child Procedure

Policy Statement

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the Outing procedures and the Maintaining Children's Safety and Security procedure to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. 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:

- The staff member alerts the person in charge
- Make other members of staff aware a child is missing
- The person in charge will carry out a thorough search of the building and outside area
- The register is checked to make sure that no other children are missing
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out
- Establish when the child was last seen and records this
- If a child is not found the parent is contacted and missing child is reported to the Police
- Staff from the main school will assist in the search for the child

Child Going Missing on an Outing

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone missing. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.

- The Headmaster is contacted immediately and the incident reported.
- The setting leader contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The setting leader contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the setting leader. The setting is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the setting.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting.
- The staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The Headmaster contacts the representative from the Governors and reports the incident. The representative from the Governors with the Headmaster carries out an investigation and should come to the setting immediately.
- The setting leader or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The Investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The setting leader together with the Headmaster, representative from the Governors speak with the parent(s).
- The Headmaster, representative from the Governors carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff and adults who were on the outing.
- The staff leader writes an incident report detailing:
 - date and time of the report
 - what staff/children were on the outing and the name of the designated person responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the group.
 - What has taken place in the group since the child went missing.
 - The time it is estimated that the child went missing.

A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.

If the incident warrants police investigation, all staff cooperate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a Child Protection issue to address.

The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents Policy). The Local Authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.

In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, OFSTED is informed.

The insurance provider is informed.

Managing People

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try and keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The staff will feel worried about the child especially the staff or designated adult responsible for the safety of that child on the outing. 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 Headmaster needs to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one member of staff over others. They may direct their anger at the setting leader. When dealing with a distraught or angry parent there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Headmaster. No matter how understandable the parents 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 childrens 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. The representative of the governors will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

Carol Clarke
Head of Early Years
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