

PRINCEFIELD FIRST SCHOOL and NURSERY

Missing Child and Child Collection Policy

February 2024

(See Educational Visits Policy, Safeguarding & child protection, Coping with a Crisis, Attendance Policy)

1. Introduction

The welfare and security of children in our school is paramount and policies and procedures have been implemented to ensure this remains a priority. 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.

2. Systems in place to minimise the risk

- Steps are taken to ensure the premises and surrounding site is secure. The perimeter gates are locked at 9am and re opened at 3.05pm.
- Main entry and exit doors are alarmed or security coded.
- 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. 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.

If the office staff are not given any reason for a child's absence they will contact the parents on receipt of the register that same morning. If this is not successful contact is then attempted on the following day. After 2 days VIP attendance or the Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher would be used to conduct a safe and well check.

Regular (at least weekly) communication with parents is maintained throughout the child's absence.

- 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 children in Nursery are released to a known adult. In Reception and Key Stage 1 children are only released from the classroom to a known adult. Children in Years 3 & 4 are given more independence and released en masse with class teachers being a visible presence at the edge of the playground for the children to return to if needed. They are regularly reminded that they must only go with a known adult and must come straight back into school/ to a teacher if the person they are expecting is not there to collect them. Children being collected during the day for appointments etc. must be collected from the school office so they can be registered as leaving/ arriving out of normal registration times.
- Parents are made aware, through initial meetings and newsletters, of the need for close supervision of children at all times before and after school while waiting in the playground.
- When on excursions off the school premises, staff implement strategies to maximise the safety and security of the children in accordance with the school's Educational Visits Policy. Full risk assessments are carried out. A list of all the children's names is carried by the trip leader and the recommended staff/pupil ratios for the age of the children and the purpose of the trip or activity are adhered to.

In the event of a child being found to be missing it is vital that prompt action is taken.

3. Procedure

3.1. The missing child is identified and the last known whereabouts of the child identified if possible.

3.2 The Head teacher or the Deputy Head are informed (in the event of both of these personnel being off site the designated senior member of staff for that day).

3.3 The Class teacher present will arrange for the other children to be satisfactorily supervised.

(The remaining children should be gathered together. Without alarming them the children should be asked if they have seen the missing child.)

3.4 All available staff should be alerted and systematic search will be carried out to see if the child can be located in the surrounding area.

• Toilets, cupboards, under tables, and other areas where a child might hide are checked. Exits are checked to ensure they remain secure. If there has been any breach of security search outside areas in the vicinity.

3.5 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

- **Immediately Contact the police and/or any appropriate emergency services.**
- **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 and that a staff member is searching the route a child may take home. Parents should be asked for information of anywhere else a child may head for e.g., grandparent, other relatives the park etc.
- **Checking any possible route home**
If the child cannot be located on site premises a member of staff should search along any possible routes home that the child might take to get home. They must take a mobile phone and keep in contact with the school. If the member of staff arrives at the home without finding the child they should make contact with the school immediately and await instructions.
- **Contact the Chair of Governors / Trust executive/ Chair of Trustees.**
- **Contact the appropriate Ofsted officer.** We are required to inform them of our systems for preventing this occurrence and a report of the events regarding the incident.

3.6 If a child were to go missing on an outing

- Children should be briefed on what to do should they get lost before the outing commences
- An immediate head count would be carried out. The missing child is identified and the last known whereabouts of the child identified if possible.
- Without alarming them the children should be asked if they have seen the missing child.
- The Class teacher present will arrange for the other children to be satisfactorily supervised whilst other available adults search the immediate vicinity
- A designated adult will contact the venue manager and arrange a search, then contact the Headteacher or the next most senior member of staff in their absence, who will then follow procedures as outlined in 3.5 above.

3.7 Record of events and subsequent report

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

1. Date time and location of disappearance
2. Who was responsible for the care of the child at the time
3. What was the child wearing
4. Any distinguishing features
5. Circumstances surrounding disappearance
6. Time parents and other agencies were contacted
7. In the case of an accident, the incident is to be reported under RIDDOR arrangements and is recorded in the incident book
8. If the incident warrants a police investigation then all staff are required to give full co-operation

3.8 Informing other people

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

1. The schools Insurance company.
2. Other parents

- 3. The Local authority
- 4. Social Care and health

3.9 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 Headteacher or Deputy Head.

4. 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.

5. Procedures to be followed by staff when a child is not collected on time

If a child is not collected within 10 minutes of the agreed collection time, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If the parent is stuck, for example, in traffic, the child may be left, in the after school club. If there is no answer, we will begin to call the other contact numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after in the after school club. If a child has to go to after school club on more than one occasion, the parent will be charged for the session. If there is no response from any of the contact numbers and the child has been left for over an hour, the Headteacher or next most senior member of staff in her absence, will contact the Police on 101, or **First Response during office hours on 08001313126** or the Emergency Duty Service, out of office hours on 0845 6042886. These numbers are kept in the front of the Emergency Contacts folder. We will make a full written report of the incident.

6. 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

The Staff will

- Ensure procedures are followed

This policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if necessary.