

Lost or Missing Child Policy



Through respect we will work together in Christ to develop the whole person

Written: September 2021
Date of Review: September 2022
Leader: Mrs C Sime

Mission Statement

This is St Matthew's Catholic Primary School's policy for dealing with a lost or missing child and is set within the context of the whole school aims and Mission Statement:

"Through respect we will work together in Christ to develop the whole person"

Our school is committed to safeguarding children and promoting children's welfare and expects all staff, governors, volunteers and visitors to share this commitment and maintain a vigilant and safe environment. Everyone has a responsibility to act without delay to protect children by reporting anything that might suggest a child is being abused or neglected. It is our willingness to work safely and challenge inappropriate behaviours that underpins this commitment. The school seeks to work in partnership with families and other agencies to improve the outcomes for children who are vulnerable or in need.

This is a whole school policy, which also covers the guidelines set out in the statutory framework for the EYFS.

INTRODUCTION

The welfare of all of our children at St. Matthew's Catholic Primary school is our paramount responsibility. 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 and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care. This policy has two parts; Part One: Missing Child policy and Part Two: Procedures to be followed by staff when a child is not collected on time.

Overview

Children are not allowed to leave the premises during the school day without the permission of the Headteacher or senior leader. It is possible, but highly unlikely, that on some occasions a child may leave the premises without the knowledge or permission of the Headteacher. This policy is in place to ensure that every action possible is taken to ensure the swift and safe return to school of that child.

Objectives

- To locate any missing child quickly
- To ensure that all children are kept safely on the school premises during school hours unless they have the Headteacher's permission to leave
- To ensure that children who leave school during the school day only do so
 - a) with the Headteacher's permission and
 - b) that they are accompanied by an authorised adult
- To ensure that the building, grounds and play areas are safe and secure during school hours
- To ensure that all teachers and school staff maintain full supervision of children at all times
- To ensure that if a child 'goes missing' during the school day he/she is located quickly and returned safely to school

PART ONE: MISSING CHILD POLICY

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Our new parents pack and the school website contains information regarding:

- children whilst they are in school
- The arrangements for registering the children in both morning and afternoon
- The physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to or exit from the building
- The supervision of the playground and the physical barriers that separate it from the rest of the school

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are set out in our policy document: "Educational Visits" which follows LA guidelines. Both documents can be provided to parents on request. We review these policies regularly (at least once a year) in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of young children

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM THE 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 was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

- If a child cannot be found by the Class Teacher, the Headteacher must be notified immediately
- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children are present
- Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) by reading to them
- Time is of the essence and prompt actions must be taken by all.
- 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, washrooms where a small child might hide
- Check the CCTV, doors and gates for signs of entry/exit

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

- 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 school at once
- The Designated Senior Person/Head of the School would notify the Police
- Once the Police arrive, formal responsibility for the search will pass to them but school will assist.
- The Local Authority Child Safeguarding board will be notified by the Headteacher that a child has gone missing.
- Chair of governors will be informed
- The Head would arrange for staff to re-search the rest of the school premises and grounds

- If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her (with a mobile phone)
- In any event, and before leaving the site the headteacher will ensure appropriate reassurance and comfort is provided to children, parents and staff
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- Ofsted would be informed
- The Insurers would be informed
- Once found, [If the child is injured] A report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

The Headteacher internally will investigate how the incident occurred and will take the appropriate action to ensure that similar events do not happen again.

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING ON AN OUTING

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity
- The remaining children would be taken back to school
- Inform the Head and the Designated Senior Person by mobile phone
- 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/ the school] at once
- [Contact the venue Manager and arrange a search]
- Contact the Police
- The Designated Senior Person would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- Ofsted would be informed
- The Insurers would be informed
- Once found [If the child is injured] A report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would

be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted. The Headteacher internally will investigate how the incident occurred and will take the appropriate action to ensure that similar events do not happen again.

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF ONCE THE CHILD IS FOUND

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
- The Head will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident

- The Head will promise a full investigation (if appropriate) involving Social Services/ Local Children Safeguarding Board)
- Media queries should be referred to the Head
- The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements
- The report should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened, [the purpose of the outing], the length of time that the child was missing and how s/he appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.

PART TWO: PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED ON TIME

If a child is not collected within 15 minutes of the agreed collection time, school will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, the class teacher/member of SMT will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after. If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers when the premises are closing, the Head or designated member of SMT will contact Social Care Duty Officer/police. 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. School will make a full written report of the incident.

Final statement

The safety of all children will be given our highest priority. A missing child would be an extremely rare occurrence. This Policy is designed to be put into place swiftly and effectively in order for actions to be taken to locate any missing child, to notify and involve parents and the authorities at every point.

Signed _____ September 2020