ECCLESTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

incorporating

Beechbuds Pre-School

Missing Child Procedure

Inspiring independent learners to thrive in a changing world

MISSING CHILD PROCEDURE

Policy Statement

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, the following procedures are followed:

Children going Missing on the Premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child in school or pre-school is missing, the member of staff will alert the Headteacher, pre-school manager or member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- The Headteacher, pre-school manager and or member of SLT, will carry out a thorough search of the building and grounds.
- The register will be checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If the child is not found, the Headteacher, pre-school manager or member of SLT will call the police and report the child as missing immediately. If it is suspected that the child may have been abducted, the police will also be informed of this.
- A recent photo (if available), a description of the child and a note of what the child is wearing will be given to the police.
- The parents will then be called and informed.
- The Headteacher, pre-school manager, or member of SLT will talk to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and record this.
- The Headteacher, pre-school manager, or member of SLT will contact the Chair of Governors and report the incident. The Chair of Governors, together with the Governing Board, will carry out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.

Children going Missing on an Outing

This procedure describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving the Headteacher, pre-school manager or member of SLT and other children and staff back in the setting. If the pre-school manager or teachers have accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing will ask children to stand still with the adults and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other children are missing.
- One staff member will search the immediate vicinity but will not search beyond that.
- The Headteacher will be contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident will be reported.
- The Headteacher will contact the police and report the child as missing.
- According to the advice of the police, a senior member of staff will remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- A recent photo (if available), a description of the child and a note of what the child is wearing will be given to the police.
- Staff and children will remain in a designated safe area until advice from the Headteacher, pre-school manager or SLT is given.
- The Headteacher will contact the parent, who will make their way to the setting or outing venue as agreed with the Headteacher. (The setting is advised as the best place to go to as by the time the parent has arrived at the venue, the child may have been returned to pre-school).
- If at an external venue, staff will contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The Headteacher will contact the Chair of Governors and report the incident. The Chair of Governors, together with the Governing Board, will carry out an investigation and may come to the setting immediately.
- Staff will keep calm and not let the other children become anxious or worried.

The Investigation (applies to a child going missing on premises or on an outing)

- Ofsted will be informed as soon as possible and be kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- The Headteacher, together with the Chair of Governors or other Governing Board member, will speak with the parents and explain the process of the investigation.
- The Headteacher and Chair of Governors will carry out a full investigation, taking written statements from all the staff and volunteers at school and pre-school of when the incident happened.
- Each staff member will write an incident report detailing:
  - The date and time of the incident.

- When the child was last seen in the school or pre-school building/on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- Which staff/ children were in the premises/ on the outing and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child.
- What had taken place at school/pre-school or on the outing since the child went missing.
- The time estimated that the child went missing.

- A conclusion will be drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will corporate fully. In this case the police will handle all aspects of the investigation including interviewing all staff.
- Children's social care may also be involved if it appears that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident will be reported on CPOMS – our school safeguarding software.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted will be informed
- The insurance provider will be informed.

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, 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 Headteacher will 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 staff member over others. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police will be called.
- Other children will also be sensitive to what is going on around them; they too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them will remain focused on their needs and will not discuss the incident in front of them.
- In accordance with the severity of the incident and 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 Chair of Governors will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

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

Review of the Missing Child Procedure
Reviewed: November 2026
Next Review Date: November 2027