



# Northbrook Primary School Missing Child Policy



Adopted by Governors/HT  
Last Review Date : September  
2018  
Next review : September 2019  
Person Responsible : HT



## *Navigating pathways to success*

### Missing Child Policy

#### INTRODUCTION

At Northbrook Primary School, the safety of our pupils is given the highest priority whilst they are in our care at school. Staff must always be very aware of the potential for children to go missing.

This policy is intended to raise staff awareness of the possibility of such occasions and sets out our procedures for dealing with the unlikely event of a child going missing, assisting staff in preparing and planning a response if such action is required. This policy has been reviewed in response to the following legislation:

- **DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2018.**

#### LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

#### PURPOSE AND AIMS OF THIS POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this policy statement is to give all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, a clear understanding of how to respond and who to inform should they discover a child is missing. The aims of this policy statement are to:

- provide a clear procedure which is understood and effectively implemented by all staff,
- enable the missing child to be located as quickly as possible and given the appropriate level of safety and security appropriate to the pupil's age and emotional/behavioural maturity.



## RESPONSIBILITIES

- It is the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of this policy, what is expected, the procedures to follow and to ensure that the policy is reviewed on a timely basis.
- It is the responsibility of all staff to read the policy and act at all times according to its guidance.
- Staff are responsible for completing Attendance Registers. They must be completed accurately and promptly according to guidelines. Completed registers must be returned to the school office before 9:30 am and again before 1:30 pm.
- If a member of staff takes a pupil, group or class out of school they are responsible for informing parents and staff at the school office.
- It is the responsibility of parents to ensure they provide correct and updated contact information on a timely basis and know the procedures for handover of their child at the beginning and end of sessions.
- If a parent takes a pupil out of school during the day, they must sign them out at the office.
- It is the responsibility of Governors to ensure they are aware of the school's procedures and to challenge / support the school in its review of this policy.

## OCCASIONS WHEN A CHILD MAY GO MISSING

Staff need to be mindful that a child can go missing at any time of the day. These times and examples of the occasions providing opportunities for a child to go missing are:-

### a) From an Indoor Lesson

This could occur when a child is allowed to leave the classroom unaccompanied by an adult and fails to return; e.g.

- To go to the toilet.
- To collect something from his/her bag in the cloakroom.
- Being sent to another class or teacher as a consequence of behaviour.
- Undertaking errands for the teacher such as taking the register to the office.

### b) From an Outdoor Lesson

This could occur when the class are outside the building with the children spread out and/or engaged in a variety of activities that make it is easy for a child to wonder away unnoticed; e.g.



- During games lessons on the playground or field.
- During other outdoor lessons (e.g. measuring parts of the building).
- At the beginning or end of outdoor lessons when children are getting changed or using the toilet, etc.

### c) Travelling about the School

This could occur when the children are spread out and beyond the teacher's direct total supervision; e.g.

- Going to and from the hall or outdoors before and after a PE lesson.
- Going to and from the hall before and after assembly.
- Going to and from the classroom at the beginning/end of lunch/break times.

### d) Other Times

Including:

- At the start of the school day when children are freely moving about the grounds and building to get to their cloakroom and classroom.
- At break and lunch times.
- At the end of the school day when children and parents are freely moving about.

## PROCEDURES AIMED AT REDUCING RISK OF A MISSING PUPIL

### Start of the School Day:

- The school will ensure parents are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of their child passes from staff to them and vice versa.
- Teachers are in their classroom from 8:45 am.
- The school doors are closed at 8:55 am. After this time pupils report to the main school office via the main entrance.
- The perimeter gates are closed by 9.30 with the exception of the staff car park gates which are only accessible from school via the main reception area.
- By 10.00 a phone call is made to any parent whose child is absent.

### During lesson time:

- Staff mark registers promptly and accurately – morning and afternoons and return them to the school office.



- If pupils leave the classroom to work in other parts of the school, the class teacher must ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times and all pupils are accounted for on return to the classroom.
- Updated contact information for parents and carers is sought and maintained.

### During playtime:

- Duty staff should be on the playground before pupils come out.
- External gates remain closed.
- Staff patrol all areas in the playground throughout the session.

### During lunchtime:

- Duty staff should be on the playground before pupils come out.
- External gates remain closed.
- Staff patrol all areas in the playground throughout the session.
- A member of the SLT is always available at lunchtime.

### At hometime:

- The gates are opened at 2.45 pm.
- Pupils leave by assigned exits.
- Pupils in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 / 2 are collected by their parent / carer from the relevant door. All FS/KS1 children must be collected by a known adult. Staff call the children when they see the parent/ carer.
- In KS2, children are escorted to the cloakroom and staff should ensure pupils leave the building in an orderly manner.
- Children who are not collected are dealt with in accordance with our Uncollected Child Policy.

### General :

- Parents/carers must sign their children in and out if they come to or leave school at times other than normal start and finish times.
- Children will not be allowed to leave the school with anyone other than the authorised persons unless the school has been informed otherwise and that alternative person is identified.
- Any visitors to school will be signed in and out. They must be let into the school by a member of staff; also seen off the premises by a member of staff to ensure that no doors are left open and the safety of the children is maintained.
- All children are made aware of the school boundaries.



### **Educational visits:**

- All school visits are arranged in full compliance with the EVOLVE website as required by LCC.
- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff / pupil ratios (at least following national guidance and often in excess of this) are provided when pupils leave the school premises.
- Permission from parents is obtained generically at the beginning of each academic year and once again specifically for each trip.
- The visit leader takes a mobile phone on every visit and is able to contact school at all times. Emergency mobile contact numbers are left at school unless the trip is outside of school hours and then these are taken with the visit leader.
- Other staff may take mobile phones as is deemed necessary, depending on the nature of the visit.
- A list of children must be carried by staff on the visit.
- Regular head counts will be carried out throughout the trip.

### **After School Clubs:**

- Thorough risk assessments are in place.
- A register of pupils is taken.
- Consent forms should be obtained from parents with contact numbers and details of how the pupils are to go home and who with.
- Children not collected after an after school club will be dealt with following our Uncollected Child Procedures.

### **Procedures In The Event Of A Child Going Missing**

In the event of a child going missing, a full chronology of the action taken must be kept. (Appendix 1)

1. If a child cannot be found by their teacher/teaching assistant /lunchtime supervisor, the Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher) and school office must be notified immediately and told when and where the child was last seen. Time is of the essence and prompt action must be taken by all.
2. The following lists held in the school office will be checked:
  - Attendance Registers
  - Off site record
  - Lists of those attending other schools (eg Transition activities)



3. Staff will count and name check all the pupils present against the register while the group are assembled in one place.
4. The remaining children will be left in the care of a suitable adult(s). All other staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises (child's classroom, storage areas, toilets, the school building) and the school grounds, with the staff team being careful not to create an atmosphere of panic. A thorough check of all exits will be made, to ensure all gates / doors were locked / bolted and there are no other ways a pupil could have left the school. If something is discovered this needs to be drawn to the attention of the SLT immediately.
5. The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will nominate two staff to search the area in the immediate vicinity of the school. All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the school site.
6. If after 10 minutes of thorough searching, the child is still missing, the police must be called by the Headteacher/ Deputy Headeacher. At this stage staff members need to follow the advice given by the Police. If the child has any medical or learning needs these need to be disclosed to the police or any other agencies which may become involved.
7. If the child is not found in the school, the child's parents/carer will be contacted by the Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher and informed of the situation.
8. While waiting for the police and the parent / carer to arrive, thorough searches for the child will continue and will be carried out by senior members of staff with the help of any other members of staff who are available. During this period, the other members of staff will maintain as normal a routine as possible for the rest of the children in the school.
9. The Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher will be responsible for meeting the police and the missing child's parent/carer. The Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher will be responsible for co-ordinating any actions instructed by the police and do all they can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers.
10. The LEA will be notified by the Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher that a child is missing, so that additional support can be provided. Governors will also be informed as soon as is practicable.
11. If a member of staff finds the child, the Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher must be told at once. Parents, police and other authorities will be notified.
12. Once the situation has been resolved, a full written account of the incident will be recorded and held on file.



13. Further risk assessments will be carried out to ensure that the incident does not happen again.

### **In the event of a member of staff fearing that a child has gone missing while off school premises:**

1. If a child goes missing, the other children will be gathered together. The Educational Visit Leader (EVL) must ensure the safety of remaining pupils. At least two adults must stay with them.
2. One or more adults should immediately start searching for the child. An urgent but thorough search should be made of the immediate vicinity.
3. If in an enclosed space, the appropriate staff in that environment can be initially informed before calling the police, for instance to give a message over the tannoy.
4. The EVL should contact school to alert them.
5. If the child is not found within 5 minutes, the EVL must contact police by telephoning 999.
6. The EVL should alert school that the police have been contacted and school will make arrangements to notify parents.
7. All staff involved in the visit should then follow the advice given to them by the Police.
8. If a member of staff finds the child, the Headteacher must be informed at once. Parents, police and other authorities will be notified.
9. The Headteacher will investigate how the incident occurred and will take appropriate action to ensure that similar events do not happen again.

### **MISSING CHILDREN SEEN RUNNING OFF THE PREMISES**

If, during the search, the missing child is seen leaving the premises, the member of staff witnessing this must inform the most senior member of staff immediately available or, if none is available, send a message to the office via a reliable messenger without losing sight of the child if possible.





As a general rule staff should not pursue a child beyond the school boundary. Instead they should report to the Headteacher where they last saw the child and the direction the child was heading so that this information can be communicated to the parents or police as appropriate. The member of staff should then return to their normal duties unless directed otherwise by the Headteacher.

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for the member of staff to go beyond the school boundary, e.g. to retrieve a child who has accidentally wandered out of an gate, or to follow/retrieve a child with special needs who has deliberately left the premises but in doing so does not understand the gravity of their action. Staff are expected to use their professional discretion in deciding whether or not it is appropriate to go beyond the school boundary in pursuance of such children.

If a child is followed beyond the school boundary the member of staff must behave in a manner that is not threatening to the child. They must not run after the child as this may cause the child to run into a dangerous situation, e.g. the child might run into a road without looking out for traffic in an attempt to evade the pursuing, running adult.

In exceptional circumstances where a child is known to be liable to run off the premises, the school may prepare and enact contingency search plans involving named staff. When enacting these plans staff should be mindful not to put themselves or the child at risk.

### **MONITORING & REVIEW**

Anonymised information about incidents where children have gone missing will be reported to the Governing Body at the next Full Governors' Meeting.



## Appendix 1

### CHRONOLOGY OF EVENT

This form should be completed as the events are taking place. It is crucial that times are included and that staff initial the log as it is being completed.

CHILD'S NAME		
Time	Action	Signature

All additional notes taken at the time must be kept with the log and handed to the most senior member of staff present.