



Missing Child Policy

Policy Details:

Reviewed: March 2023

Next review: March 2025

Policy history:

March 2023	Policy Reviewed	Steph Watson (Acting Principal)
June 2022	Statement added: The words 'Missing Child Incident' should be used when communicating to staff members about a missing child. Staff members must take any notification of this seriously and should immediately act to help locate the child.	James Bancroft (Principal)
March 2021	Policy updated	James Bancroft (Principal)
February 2018	Policy written using Cheshire East Missing Child Guidance	James Bancroft (Principal)

This policy was reviewed at the Local Advisory Board Meeting in Spring 2 2023



Missing Child Policy

Introduction

The welfare and security of children at Wistaston Church Lane Academy is paramount and all possible and practical procedures have been implemented to ensure that this is our priority. It is recognised, however, that, whilst unlikely, children may go missing. Every member of staff has equal responsibility in ensuring the safety of the children and knowing where they are. It is 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.

Systems in place to minimise the risk

- Rigorous and stringent steps are taken to ensure that the premises and surrounding site is secure by 8.50am each morning when the registers close. The perimeter gates are not re-opened again from 3.15pm.
- The attendance register is taken at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. It is the responsibility of each staff member to be aware of how many children are present in class.
- Absences must always be followed up by the school office (see Pupil Attendance Policy).
- Children who arrive late before the register is closed are recorded with an L in the register by the staff member or the school office. Anyone who arrives after registers are closed are recorded with the correct register code. Registers on display in classrooms will be updated to reflect late arrivals. This applies equally to those children who leave school during the day.
- Children who arrive late will be taken by a member of staff to the classroom and the staff member in charge of the class will be informed of the child's presence.
- Children starting school at any point of the year must be made aware of the boundaries of where they can and cannot go by the adults in class. Children will be reminded at the start of every academic year and whenever necessary.
- At the end of the day children in EYFS and Key Stage One are only released to a known adult.
- Children being collected during the school day can only be released to a known adult via the school office.
- Parents and carers are made aware through welcome evenings and newsletters of the need for close supervision of children before and after school whilst waiting in the playground.
- Staff will patrol all areas of the playground throughout break times and lunch monitoring the safety of the children
- Parents are advised to have a designated meeting point which never changes.
- If there is to be a change to collection arrangements then the school must be informed. Children will not be released for collection by other parents unless the school has been informed
- We regularly reiterate the rules during assemblies.
- In the event of a child being found to be missing it is vital that prompt action is taken.



Missing Child Procedures

All incidents should be logged on CPOMS as a Missing Child Incident by relevant staff.

Once the incident has been dealt with as detailed herein and the child located, the staff member recording the incident must advise on how procedures could be improved to prevent a similar incident.

The words 'Missing Child Incident' should be used when communicating to staff members about a missing child. Staff members must take any notification of this seriously and should immediately act to help locate the child

Procedure for a child missing during the school day, including the very start of the day

- A missing child is identified and the last known whereabouts of the child identified, if possible.
- The Principal and/or a member of the Safeguarding Team are informed that there is a 'Missing Child' incident.
- All internal exits will be checked and everyone will be prevented from leaving classrooms.
- The class teacher present will arrange for the other children to be supervised. The remaining children will be gathered together. Without alarming the children, they should be asked if they have seen the missing child.
- A systematic search will be carried out to see if the child can be located in the surrounding area:
 - All toilets, under tables, storerooms, kitchens, indoor play equipment will be checked.
 - All outside areas, including all play equipment will be checked.
- Make enquiries of any other adults in the vicinity.

If the child cannot be located, then the following procedures are followed:

- The Principal or designated senior member of staff will contact the police and/or any appropriate emergency services. In the case of a pupil on a Child Protection Plan, Social Care will also be contacted.
- Contact parents/carers of the child. Once contacted the parents should be advised to stay at home or ensure that someone remains in the home in case the child arrive there. Advise the parents that the emergency services have been contacted. Parents should be asked for information of anywhere that the child might head. If parents are unavailable then emergency contacts should be used to try and contact parents.
- Based on information from parents, two members of staff could be sent out to trace the child's route home to see if they can be found. Staff should be contactable at all times, e.g. with mobile phone.
- The Principal or most senior member of staff will commence a critical incident log and accurately record all actions/relevant factual information on CPOMS. Times and dates will be recorded.
- If the child is not located or is known to have been abducted, the Principal will alert The Learning for Life Partnership and also the Chair of the Local Advisory Board.
- No press briefing should take place unless directed by the police and with the input from the Media Relations Team. Social Media will be monitored and staff should be reminded not to respond to anything on social media sites.



- The Principal will hold a staff briefing as soon as possible to advise of the current situation and explain protocols.
- Under the direction of the Principal, all staff should work with multi-agency partners to ensure that parents/carers/staff/pupils are supported whilst the matter is resolved.
- Post event: The principal will arrange an emergency Local Advisory board meeting to review the school's critical incident paperwork and safeguarding arrangements.

Procedure for a child missing at the end of the school day/event

- If a child is found who isn't sure who is collecting them, they should be taken to the School Office and parents contacted.
- When a child is identified as missing, the last known whereabouts of the child will be identified, if possible.
- The Principal or Vice Principal is informed.
- All staff members are expected to assist with the search for a missing child unless supervising children.
- All exits will be secured, and everyone will be prevented from leaving the building and/or site.
- The school office will be contacted to see if any information is known about the child, including possible attendance at after school clubs.
- The first places to be checked will be Swan Stars, the child's classroom, the child's cloakroom area, the child's toilet, followed by checking siblings' classrooms, cloakrooms and toilets.
- The parent will either return home to trace a child's steps or contact other possible locations, e.g. child's grandparents. The parent must ensure that the school is made aware of the safe location of the child as soon as possible.
- The parent may choose to phone the police.
- A systematic search will be carried out to see if the child can be located in the surrounding area:
 - All toilets, under tables, storerooms, kitchens, indoor play equipment will be checked.
 - All outside areas, including all play equipment will be checked.
 - Make enquiries of any other adults in the vicinity.

If the child cannot be located then the following procedures are followed:

- The Principal or designated senior member of staff will contact the police and/or any appropriate emergency services if the parent hasn't already done so. In the case of a pupil on a Child Protection Plan, Social Care will also be contacted.
- The Principal or most senior member of staff will commence a critical incident log and accurately record all actions/relevant factual information. Times and dates will be recorded.
- If the child is not located or is known to have been abducted, the Principal will alert The Learning for Life Partnership and also the Chair of the Local Advisory Board.
- No press briefing should take place unless directed by the police and with the input from the Media Relations Team. Social Media will be monitored, and staff should be reminded not to respond to anything on social media sites.
- The Principal will hold a staff briefing as soon as possible to advise of the current situation and explain protocols.
- Under the direction of the Principal, all staff should work with multi-agency partners to ensure that parents/carers/staff/pupils are supported whilst the matter is resolved.



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- Post event: The principal will arrange an emergency Local Advisory board meeting to review the school's critical incident paperwork and safeguarding arrangements.

Procedure for a child going missing on a school trip

The following procedure should be added to all school visit preparation and planning records.

Precautions to prevent a child going missing must include:

- Behaviour discussions with the children pre-trip, including telling the children what to do if they become separated from the group:
 - Stay where you are – we will come back to look for you
 - Look around you – can you see your group or one of the other groups?
 - If it seems like a long time before we find you, whom can you talk to? (Someone from the venue, a shop worker, a uniformed police officer)
- The risk assessment will identify the safe staff to pupil ratio
- All adults should be briefed.
- Individual pupils may need a risk assessment to assess their suitability for the trip and any necessary precautions should be taken.
- Pupils should be in manageable groups. The adult with the group should count the children frequently and always before departing via any transport.
- Pupils should be given clear instructions about which adult they should be with and where to go if lost.
- If areas become too crowded or too difficult to manage, then the children must be taken to a safer place immediately.
- Adults should have all phone numbers for all adults on the school trip to help with communication.

Whilst on trips, children may be given a high-vis tabard to wear. In addition, children may be asked to wear wrist bands with emergency contact details on. These are at the discretion of the trip leader and will be detailed in the trip Risk Assessment.

Procedure

- The teacher in charge must ensure the safety of the remaining children and at least one member of staff should stay with them. The group leader should make a professional judgement at the time with respect to the size of the pupil group, the needs of the pupils, time of day, etc. about how many and which staff supervise the children.
- One or more adults should immediately start to search for the child.
- The group leader should immediately contact a senior member of staff in school to alert them.
- If the child is not found within 5 minutes, the group leader must contact the police by phoning 999 with a description of the child.
- The group leader should alert school that the police have been called.
- The school will make arrangements to contact parents/carers, after which the missing child procedures above should be followed.

Children who abscond (run away from school)



- If a child runs away from school the adult should inform another member of staff immediately. They may choose to ring the Police. In the case of a pupil on a Child Protection Plan, Social Care will also be contacted. The member of staff should call after the child and try to encourage them to return. Care should be taken not to alarm the child and cause them to run further away.
- A child should not be physically restrained unless they are in immediate danger of hurting themselves or putting themselves in a dangerous situation, e.g. running into the road.
- The member of staff should try to always keep the pupil in eye line whilst following them, and should try to do this without alarming the child. One member of staff must stay on the school grounds supervising.
- The moment that the adult loses eye line of the child the Police should be called (they can be called before, if the adult feels it is necessary).
- As soon as is possible, the Principal or senior member of staff should be contacted.
- This incident must be logged on CPOMS.
- After the incident, a risk assessment and plan for the child should be reviewed and amended accordingly, or one put in place.
- The Principal may consider a fixed-term exclusion if the event reoccurs.

Conclusion

In the case of any such incident occurring, the incident will be fully documented on CPOMS, reviewed and any breach identified. Further actions may be implemented, and all staff will be made fully aware.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Advisory Board will:

- Ensure the policy is implemented and will monitor Principal reports to the Local Advisory Board under Health and Safety

The Principal will:

- Monitor the policy and procedures ensuring they are implemented effectively
- Report to the Local Advisory Board through Principal reports or other means as required
- Ensure procedures are known to staff and followed.

Staff members will:

- Follow the policy
- Report all incidents in the agreed format

Swan Stars Missing Child Policy

At Swan Stars we are always alert to the possibility that children can go missing during sessions. Swan Stars recognises that the safe arrival and departure of the children in our care is paramount. We use an online booking system called Kids Club HQ. This systems holds booking data and daily registers for each club. The Manager will ensure that accurate registers are kept and up to date. The registers will be kept in accessible locations at both clubs.

Registration



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- When parents register their child with Swan Stars they provide a list of authorised people who are permitted to collect their child from Swan Stars. Details will be recorded on to the collection lists and saved on their online account.
- Staff will refer to the collection list when unfamiliar adults arrive to collect a child. We will ask for a form of ID to be produced before releasing the child.

Breakfast Club

- Parents arrive via the separate Swan Stars entrance. Each Club operates an intercom system and access to the outer doors can only be opened from the inside.
- Parents are greeted by a member of staff.
- Staff will ensure that the door is secured after the Parent has gone.
- Before dismissing the children to class, a head count is carried out against the register. The Infant children are escorted directly to their class by a member of Staff. The Junior children make their own way to their classrooms and staff are placed at strategic points in the corridor to ensure the children enter their classrooms.
- Messages from Parents are passed onto Class Teachers.

Absences

- Parents are encouraged to report all absences via e-mail or phone to Swan Stars. Reasons for absences are recorded on the registers.
- Parents send cancellation requests in advance via e-mail. The school office will amend the child's session directly onto the online booking system and register. Prior to each session Swan Stars staff check the register for any messages from the office.
- Children returning from Trips will be collected by Swan Stars staff from the classrooms/coach. Parents are asked to notify Swan Stars of any changes to the collection arrangements. If the coach has been delayed and will not be returning in Swan Stars opening hours, Parents will be notified that Swan Stars has closed and they will be responsible for collecting their child.

After School Club

Swan Stars and School have a clear agreement concerning the transfer of responsibility for children's safety. We risk assess the route for escorting children to both clubs (school led and external clubs) and review it regularly. At the beginning of each day, Swan Stars staff will record the names of children attending after school on the outside of each classroom door. Teaching staff will check this at home time to remind the children to come to Swan Stars. If a booking has been made on the same day, the school office will let the Class Teacher know to inform the child that they will be going Swan Stars after school.

A list of children attending extra-curriculum activities is kept and updated by the Parents. Swan Stars Staff will collect the child from the activity location in School.

- The infant children will be collected directly from their classrooms. There will be one member of staff responsible for each class. Children will be marked off the collection register. After all the children have arrived in the hall the Manager/Deputy will take the main register.
- The Junior children will make their way to the hall and will be marked off the main register upon arrival. New Starters will be collected from the classroom on the first visit.



Outdoor Play

Before the children go outside, the school grounds will be secured by a member of the Swan Stars team. Periodic head counts will be carried out when transporting the children between locations. Staff will be alert to visitors and will direct them to the school office. Staff will be placed to ensure all exits are supervised.

When we expect a child to arrive at Swan Stars at the end of the day but they do not arrive

- Swan Stars will locate the Class Teacher and ask if the child has gone home or is absent from School.
- Swan Stars will refer to the extra curriculum club list and absence record on the Kids Club HQ register for any changes to the session.
- The School office will be contacted to see if they have received any messages. Swan Stars mobile/email account will also be checked for any messages.
- One member of staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises and surrounding areas.
- Without alarming the other children, they will be asked if they have seen the missing child.
- If the child cannot be located then the senior member of the team will contact the Parent/Carer. If the child has been collected by the Parent, Swan Stars will remind the parent of the absence reporting procedure.
- If the child is not with the Parent then the Manager will inform the Principal or senior leader who will start the missing child procedure.