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**Missing Persons Procedure**

**Reviewed: Feb 2025**

**To be Reviewed: Feb 2026**

The ratio of staff to pupils, their qualifications and experience gives excellent margins of safety. However, despite this Missing Persons Procedure is applied for all activities on or off site.

**Procedure for staff before leaving the school site for off-site activities:**

* Leave details of the learning outside the classroom sessions in the Off-Site folder.Details to include;
  1. Nature and location of session
  2. Names of all participants’ Inc. staff.
  3. Contact phone number
  4. Expected time of return.

**Missing Persons procedure off-site:**

* If a young person runs off remain calm
* If appropriate follow the direction they went in and try to keep them in sight
* **Phone the school** and say that they have absconded and your location. Also let them know if you have a plan outlined if this differs from the missing person’s procedure below.
* If the young person continues to run away (out of eyesight/have been out of eyesight for some time) go to a central point where you can see and be seen by them if they are looking for you. Eg: the place you were working, the car you came in, or an agreed meeting spot.
* **After 20 minutes** if you have still not seen the young person phone the school again and let them know what is happening
* If you have no reception drive to the nearest point to make a call.

**Dial 999** and ask for the Police and give details of:

* + 1. **Location and nature of session**.
    2. **Names and age of participants** inc. staff.
    3. **Any other information** the police require. (e.g.: description of clothing)
* **Stay by the phone.**
* **If possible, write *everything* down, incl. details of conversations and timings etc**.

**Missing Persons procedure on-site:**

In the unlikely event that a child is noted to be missing from school premises, the school puts into practice agreed procedures. These ensure the most effective resolution of this potentially distressing situation.

Stage One – Get support:

Put out a call: ‘Does anyone have eyes on (pupil name). If no positive answer then begin a systematic search.

All available staff to check toilets, shared areas, rooms and outdoor areas to ensure the child is not hiding or locked in anywhere.

One member of staff to immediately inform school office and the Early Years Manager or member of staff in charge and check whether the child has been signed out for an external appointment or has an internal appointment with a visiting professional. (School Nurse/Speech Therapist etc).

Staff will ensure that all other pupils are kept safe and closely supervised throughout incident should it be during the school day.

A calm approach should be taken.

**Stage Two**

After stage one is completed without resolution (no more than 20 minutes), school staff will contact the police and parents/carers with parental responsibility. At this point, school will support the police who will now lead the response to this incident. The Early Years Manager will liaise with emergency services and parents/carers.

On call staff will check in all classes to confirm presence of other pupils.

**Stage Three**

The Early Years Manager should communicate the incident to the appropriate Local Authority Office and the Chair of Board.

A written record of the incident and any action taken should be made as soon after the incident as practicable and placed in the pupil’s confidential record. Staff should input any relevant information; including conversations with parents, carers, child minders, police, the Local Authority and any other person they feel has contributed to the collection of evidence.

The Early Years Manager should conduct an internal investigation to establish how the situation occurred, how effective was the response and whether action could be taken to ensure it does not happen again.

If the police are called then the local MASH /MARU are also informed.

If the Early Years Manager is not on the premises, she will be informed as soon as possible via the Deputy Manager or staff member in charge.

We will build a record as soon as possible including:

What happened?

The last definite sighting of the child.

Any unusual behaviour of the missing child or other children.

How many children were there?

How many adults were there and who?

What steps have been taken and when, by whom.

What we did, at what time and in what order.

Who we informed and when.

What systems are in place for preventing such occurrences?

Dealing with people’s reactions,

We understand that the child’s parents/carers may be frightened, distressed and angry. If the setting shares all policies with parents/carers, the situation will be easier for all because there will be an understanding of working within a framework of mutual trust and understanding. We accept that in such circumstances powerful emotions are involved and people’s behaviour can be unpredictable. Those who may seem quite calm about the incident at the time can later become angry.

We will be clear about the circumstances surrounding the incident and will respond sympathetically to questions.

Dealing with the media

Distressed parents/carers may contact the local press, or reporters may hear about the incident if the police are involved. It is sensible for one person, usually the Chair of Board to be the one who speaks for the setting. All adults will be asked to refer all enquiries to the agreed spokesperson.

When the child is found

We recognise that during the time a child is missing, however briefly, all involved, parents/carers and others suffer great fear, guilt and distress. It is not always easy to control all these emotions when the child is found. We will accept that it is important to remember that the child also might have been afraid and distressed and might now be in need of comfort.

• Remain calm, reassure the child and acknowledge it is not the child’s fault.

• Ensure the child is not hurt.

• Take the opportunity to talk to all the children to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises, and why.

After the Incident

We will review our current procedure. We will evaluate processes and make necessary adjustments to ensure future effectiveness.