



## MISSING CHILDREN POLICY

Signed (HT):

Date agreed: Term 1 2020

Signed (Chair of GB):

Review date: Term 1 2023

## **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 consummate with their emotional/behavioural maturity.

### **Upon discovering a child is missing...**

#### **LSAs & TAs will:**

Remain calm.

Immediately inform the class teacher. If the teacher is not available for whatever reason they must inform the office (who will contact a Senior Leader). They should state the name of the child and what he/she was last seen doing and where, and how long since they last saw the child. Thereafter they should assist with any organised search for the child or supervision of the rest of the class, as directed.

#### **MDS will:**

Remain calm.

Immediately inform the duty Senior Leader. They should state the name of the child (if known) or a description of the child, what the child was last seen doing and where, and how long since they last saw the child. Thereafter they should assist with any organised search for the child or supervision of the rest of the children, as directed.

#### **The Class Teacher will:**

Remain calm.

Conduct a search or direct support staff to conduct a search of the immediate surroundings, i.e.:

Indoors - in the classroom (looking under tables, work surfaces and other possible hiding places such as cupboards), adjacent work areas and classrooms, nearby cloakrooms and toilets.

Outdoors - in the immediate area where the child was last seen including looking under bushes and up trees etc.

NB The teacher should ensure that the remaining class is supervised appropriately and will seek support from other colleagues as required.

If this initial search does not find the child the teacher shall inform a member of the SLT and await instructions on how to proceed.

**The Headteacher (or Senior Leader) will:**

Take charge of the situation and direct as appropriate (actions may include):

- Joining the search
- Deploying additional staff to conduct searches
- Directing the class teacher to return to their class
- Have CCTV checked

Owing to the school's high levels of security and security procedures, the initial assumption will be that the child is on the school site.

When the Headteacher (or senior leader) is satisfied that the child is not on the premises he will instruct the office staff to contact the child's parents and inform them of the situation and to enquire if the child has returned home

If the child is at home the parents will be informed by telephone of the known facts surrounding the child going missing.

If the child is not at home the Headteacher will, in consultation with the parents, begin a search outside of the school premises and will direct the office to contact the police.

If the parents cannot be contacted at home, the Headteacher will

- initiate a search outside of school grounds
- including a visit to the child's home
- will inform the police

Thereafter the Headteacher will follow the instructions of the police regarding the continuation of the search for the child.

**The office staff will:**

Remain calm.

Inform the Headteacher of the missing child and then await further instructions. They will not take part in the search but will await further instructions.

**What if the child is seen running off the premises/running away from the school 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 Head Teacher where they last saw the child and the direction the child was heading.

The member of staff should then return to their normal duties unless directed otherwise by the Head Teacher.

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 open 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.

Where the schools risk assessment shows a child is known to be liable to run off the premises, the school will put in place a specific plan to reduce/mitigate the risk as much as practicable, involving named staff. When enacting these plans staff should be mindful not to put themselves or the child at risk.

## **Investigations**

When the missing child has been located and safely returned to school, the police or the parents; a thorough investigation will be conducted. Information included in this will detail

- How/why the child went missing
- Actions taken
- Reflections on how processes/policies can be tightened and updated to stop the situation occurring.
- The findings of the report will be shared with the parents and Chair of Governors.

## **If a child goes missing on a school trip:**

The above actions remain appropriate, with the additions of:

The party leader is to be informed at the earliest opportunity – they will assume control of the local situation.

The party leader will contact the Headteacher/Senior leader as appropriate on the emergency contact sheet.

## **Policy Review**

The Governing Body of Castlefield School is responsible for ensuring the review of this policy on a 3 year basis.