

# Missing Child Policy



## St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

### The School Mission Statement

*To love and serve as Jesus shows us*

### DOCUMENT STATUS

<u>Drafted:</u>	<u>Last review:</u>	<u>Adopted by Governors:</u>	<u>Implemented:</u>	<u>Next review:</u>
November 2015	September 2018	September 2018	September 2018	September 2019

# Missing Child Policy

<b><u>CONTENTS</u></b>	<b><u>PAGE</u></b>
Overview	2
Objectives	2
Responsibilities	3
Procedures aimed at reducing the risk of a missing child	3
Procedures in the event of a child going missing:	
• In school	4
• When off site during school hours	5
Outcomes	5

## **Overview**

The safety and well-being of our children is our priority whilst they are in our care at school. Children should never be allowed to leave the premises during school time without the head teacher's permission. However, despite every effort to minimise the occurrence, it is possible that a child may leave the premises during the school day without the knowledge or permission of the head teacher. This policy is put in place to ensure that every action possible is taken to ensure the quick and safe return of that child to school.

### *Related Policies/documents:*

- Emergency Contingency Plan
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Foundation Stage Outdoor Play Provision Risk Assessment

## **Objectives**

1. To ensure that all children are kept safely on the school premises during school hours unless they have the head teacher's permission to leave.
2. To ensure that children who leave school during the school day only do so with the head teacher's permission and that they are accompanied by an authorised adult.
3. To ensure that the building, grounds and play areas are safe and secure during school hours.
4. To ensure that teachers and staff keep children under proper supervision at all times.
5. To ensure that if a child 'goes missing' during the school day, he / she is located quickly and returned safely to the school.

## **Responsibilities**

*It is the Head teacher's responsibility* to ensure that all staff are aware of this policy, to ensure relevant staff are aware of their responsibilities, what is expected and 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. From the very outset, staff must make children aware of the boundaries of the setting.

*It is the specific responsibility of the Maintenance Officer* to lock and unlock the playground gates at the beginning and end of the day.

*It is the responsibility of the parents and carers* to ensure they provide correct and updated contact information on a timely basis and that they know and follow the procedures for handover of their child at the beginning and end of sessions.

*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.

## **Procedures aimed at reducing risk of a missing child**

### **Start of the day**

- 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. For all children, this is when they enter the school building after 8.35am.
- Ensure there are clear procedures for welcoming children into the school:
  - All children enter school through their classroom door from 8.35am.
  - All doors and gates with the exception of the main entrance gates and external front door are locked at 8.50am.

### **During lesson time**

- *(Refer also to the Foundation Stage Outdoor Provision Risk Assessment)*
- Staff mark registers promptly and accurately. These must be returned to the office immediately following the close of registration in a morning and after lunch.
- All staff must ensure that the external gates to any outside area are secured when children are playing outside. The exception is the main gate, which is not an exit from any area accessible to children.
- If children leave the classroom to work in other parts of the school adequate supervision must be maintained at all times and all children accounted for on return to the classroom.

### **Playtime and Lunchtime**

- Children must be escorted out by staff.
- Staff on duty must be out on the playground before children come onto the playground.
- External gates must be checked to ensure that they are locked.
- Staff must remain vigilant at all times
- At the end of play, external doors are closed behind the last member of staff as they come off the playground. Children on Play Leader duty must have finished their duty and be in the school building before the staff member closes the door.

- A member of Senior Leadership Team will be available at lunchtime to support the management of children as required.

### Home time

- Gates are opened 10 minutes before home time to allow access for parents / carers.
- Children leave the school building with their class teacher via their classroom door.
- Staff must be present as children leave the building to ensure their safe pick up by a known adult (unless alternative arrangements are in place and school has clear notification of these arrangements). Staff must have sight of parent / carer before the child leaves their supervision.
- Staff must have access to an up to date list detailing how children are to go home and with whom.
- After 10 minutes children who are left go to main entrance to wait with a member of staff, who will make telephone contact with parent / carer

### Visits

- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff/child ratios are provided when children leave the school premises.
- Adequate communication and a contact list of children/groups to be taken on visits out of school.
- Mobile phones taken on every visit and mobile contact numbers left at the school.

### After School Clubs

- Thorough risk assessments in place
- Register of children with contact numbers and details of how the children are to go home and with whom.

### **Procedures in the event of a child going missing from school**

In the event of a member of staff fearing that a child has gone missing, the following procedures must be adhered to:

1. If a child cannot be found by his / her teacher, the Head Teacher or, in his absence, the Deputy Head Teacher must be notified **immediately and told when and where the child was last seen**. Time is of the essence and prompt actions must be taken by all.
2. Safe supervision of the remaining children must be put in place promptly and calmly.
3. All other available staff will conduct a thorough search of the child's classroom, play areas, storage areas, toilets, the school building and the school grounds.
4. The safety and care of other children is paramount so the security of the school and the number of staff remaining to supervise the other children in the school must be adequately maintained while the search continues
5. If the child has not been found after 10 minutes from the initial report of them as missing then parents / carers should be notified and the police contacted. When contacting parents or carers please ask them to bring with them a recent photograph of their child.
6. Members of staff, who are not supervising children, will be sent to search the area in the immediate vicinity of the school.
7. If the missing child has any special medical or learning needs then these need to be noted and to be disclosed to police or other agencies.
8. The LA will be notified by the Head Teacher that a child is missing.

9. If a member of staff finds the child the Head Teacher must be told at once. Parents, police and other authorities will be notified.
10. The Head Teacher will investigate how the incident occurred and will take appropriate action to ensure that similar events do not happen again.

### **Procedures in the event of a child going missing when off site during school hours**

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

- Visit leader must ensure safety of remaining children. At least 2 staff must stay with them.
- One or more adults should immediately start searching for the child.
- Visit leader should contact school to alert them.
- If the child is not found within 5 minutes Visit Leader must contact police by phoning 999.
- Visit leader should alert school that the police have been contacted and school will make arrangements to notify parents, after which procedures above to be followed.

### **Outcomes**

The safety of all children will be given our highest priority. A missing child should be an extremely rare happening. This policy is designed to put into place swift and effective actions to locate any missing child and to notify and involve parents and the authorities at every appropriate point.