

# Wolverham Primary and Nursery School

## Lost/Missing Child Policy

### Statement of intent

In the event of a child becoming lost or going missing, while in the care of the school, the school will immediately put into place the procedures detailed below. These ensure that a systematic approach to find the child is taken and consideration is given to the levels of risk to the child.

### Aim

We will ensure a search is made for the child as soon as possible, parents and authorities are notified at the appropriate stage, and a high level of care is maintained to other children at the school while procedures are followed.

### Procedures

#### If a Child Goes Missing During the School Day

- If a child goes missing from the Foundation Stage, A Foundation Teacher will teach all children together e.g. for a story and all other staff will carry out a thorough search of all the rooms in the building, outside perimeter and the school grounds.
- If a child goes missing from another year group the class teacher will continue to work with the rest of the class and initially the class teaching assistant will look for the child. If the child cannot be located quickly then they will ask other teaching assistants to support them to look in all rooms, outside on the playground and within the school grounds and finally outside the perimeters.
- If a Teaching Assistant isn't present in the room, a child will be sent with a message to the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher or in their absence another teacher who will then mobilise the search for the missing child by searching of all the rooms in the building, outside perimeter and the school grounds.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray. The children will be sensitively asked whether they have seen the child who is missing, as will all adults, so that it can be established who was last to see the missing child, when and where.
- Doors and gates are checked to ensure that they are closed and locked. The school cctv camera will also be viewed to ensure that the child has not left the school grounds as soon as possible.
- The person in charge talks to staff to establish what happened.
- If the child is not found the parent or carer is contacted (alarming them as little as possible) and the missing child is reported to the police.
- If the child lives within walking distance of the group, one adult should make the journey on foot in order to catch up with the child if possible.

#### If a Child Goes Missing At the End of The School Day

If a child goes missing at the end of the school day, the procedures for collecting the child that day will be reviewed immediately with the Senior Leadership/Head Teacher. School will liaise closely with the parents/carers to establish if the child has been collected by another authorised person, if they may have walked home or if they have left school without consent. School will work closely with the family to locate the child. In the event of the child not being located or concerns over safety the police will be contacted.

#### If a Child doesn't return home when expected

The class teacher/member of the leadership team will contact all relevant staff including class teachers, teaching assistants, administrative officers/assistants to establish the exact time of departure, if the child was with a friend/who they were collected by. If the child was permitted to walk home but failed to return home at the expected time the school will contact school friends immediately to see if the child has gone to their house or areas such as the local park. School will work closely with the family and help to facilitate and locate the child. In the event of the child not being located and all possibilities exhausted the police will be contacted.

### **If a Child Goes Missing From An Outing.**

If a child goes missing from an outing, where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the school ensures the following procedures are put into place:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with a designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that. The venue will be informed immediately and a wider search will be initiated.
- The person in charge is informed, if s/he is not on the outing and makes his/her way to the venue to aid the search and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the school if decided by person in charge of visit or take the children to a quiet and calm location to await further instructions.
- The person in charge of the school contacts the child's parent or carer and asks them to make their way to the school or outing venue as agreed with the person in charge.
- The staff contact the police using the mobile phone and report the child as missing.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The person in charge contacts the Headteacher/Chair of the Governors who comes down to the school as soon as possible.

### **When the child is found**

- Two members of staff will care for and talk with the child, bearing in mind that he/she may be unaware of having done anything wrong or, alternatively, may also have been afraid and distressed and may now be in need of comfort.
- Other adults present will take the opportunity to speak to the remaining children to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises and why.

### **After the incident**

- The Headteacher or member of the SLT will sensitively discuss with the child's parents the events surrounding the disappearance of the child.
- If appropriate, a short meeting will be held at the end of the session/start of the following session or a note sent home with the children to give parents brief, accurate information about the incident, as soon as possible, for reassurance.
- Liability should not be discussed until the incident has been fully investigated by the school
- Staff and parents should be asked to refer any enquiries they have or any enquiries from the media, about the incident, to the Headteacher or Chair of Governors.

### **School will review its policies and practices for school trips.**

#### **The Investigation**

- The Chair of Governors, Mr Paul Jenkins, carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or by those who were on the outing.
- The key person/staff write an incident report detailing:
  - the date and time of the report;
  - what staff/children were in the group/outing;
  - when the child was last seen in the group/outing;
  - what has taken place in the group/outing since then; and
  - the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. The Local Authority may be involved if it seems likely that there is a safeguarding children issue to address.
- The incident is reported using Local Authority guidelines arrangements and is recorded in the incident book; the local authority health and safety officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- OFSTED may be informed.
- The school's insurance company may be informed.

Policy Written January 2015

Date for next review: January 2018