



The Weatheralls Primary School

# **Procedures when a child is missing on or off school site (including off-site visits)**

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### Statement of policy

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at our trust primary schools, both on and off premises. This means that every attempt is made to ensure that we know where children are while under school supervision. Through the strict monitoring of registers, regular checks of site security and rigorous application of off-site protocol, we achieve this

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's behaviour policy which details the school's approach to behaviour management and the school safeguarding policy which outlines the risk of children missing from education.

In the unlikely event that a child cannot be accounted for, during the school day, our missing child procedure is followed.

### **Child unaccounted for on the school premises**

1. As soon as staff become aware that a child does not appear to be present, the headteacher or – in their absence – a member of the leadership team is alerted, as well as the school office.
2. If staff know or have seen the child leave the school site, call the police on 999 immediately and follow child absconded procedures as below.
3. If the child is thought to still be in school, the headteacher or delegated staff members conduct a thorough search of the premises. All staff on site will be notified by the school's office team, and any available staff will be allocated zones of the school to search (see appendices 1-3). Teaching staff will be asked to check their classroom areas. The external gates will be locked immediately if before 9.00am or after 3.15pm.
4. Staff will communicate via walkie-talkies and confirm with the headteacher when zones and classrooms have been checked.
5. The office should use the security cameras, where applicable, to check visible areas of the school.
6. The register is checked to ensure that the child was in attendance, and that no other children cannot be accounted for.
7. Doors and gates are checked to ensure there has been no breach of security whereby a child could leave the site unobserved.
8. If the child is not found within 20 minutes, or earlier if the search is completed, police are informed using 999 and then parents or carers will be contacted.
9. The headteacher talks to the staff to ascertain when and where the child was last seen and records this.
10. The executive headteacher is informed of the incident and will arrange to carry out an investigation.
11. If appropriate, the executive headteacher will contact the Local Authority's designated officer for safeguarding.

## **Child has absconded from school site and a staff member has sight of them**

If a pupil has absconded from the school site and a staff member has sight of them the following procedure should be followed:

1. Alert the headteacher or – in their absence – a member of the leadership team and the school office
2. The member of staff with sight of the child should follow them from a distance and try to persuade them to return to school. The pursuing member of staff should inform the pupil of the need to contact the police if they do not return to school. If a pupil is deemed to be high risk to themselves or others then staff should follow the pupil's individual risk assessment/behaviour support plan if one is in place.
3. If the pupil does not move to return to school the staff member should call the police immediately. The staff member contacting the police should provide a full description of the child including clothes they were wearing when last seen.
4. At all times staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the pupil to place themselves in further danger e.g. running into a busy road
5. Staff should ensure that they have a walkie talkie or mobile phone with them to communicate with the school office. If they do not, they must signal to another adult that they need this so it can be arranged
6. The headteacher may direct additional staff to join the search in a vehicle and to support the pursuing member of staff. These staff will take a mobile phone or walkie talkie with them to ensure contact with the school
7. The headteacher or office staff to contact the child's parent/carer and where applicable other agencies to inform them of the situation
8. If the pupil returns to the school site of their own volition a senior member of staff or office will inform parents/carers, police and any other significant agencies involved.
9. The executive headteacher will be informed of the incident and will arrange to carry out an investigation
10. If appropriate, the executive headteacher will contact the Local Authority's designated officer for safeguarding.

### **Child Unaccounted for During Off-Site Activity**

1. As soon as staff become aware that a child does not appear to be present, staff must ask the children to stand with their designated person so that a head count can be completed to ensure that the child is not present and that no other children are unaccounted for.
2. The home-base contact at the school is contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
3. The police are contacted, and the missing child reported.
4. The headteacher or delegated staff member, contacts the parent/carer, who is asked to make their way to the school. If the trip is local and it is reasonable to expect that a child may be returning to their own home then the parent/carer will be informed of this and it will be recommended someone is at home in case the child returns there.
5. If on an off-site visit which is within walking distance of the school staff should return to school as quickly as possible with the remaining children. If a coach has been used to travel to the off-site visit staff should return the remaining children to the coach.
6. In an indoor off-site venue, staff will contact the venue security who will handle the premises search and contact the police if the child is not found.
7. The headteacher will talk to the staff to ascertain when and where the child was last seen and records this. They will also advise staff on the trip how to proceed with the remaining children on the visit.
8. The executive headteacher will be informed of the incident and arrange to carry out an investigation.
9. If appropriate, the executive headteacher will contact the Local Authority's designated officer for safeguarding.

### **Investigation**

1. Staff keep calm and offer reassurances to the children.
2. Immediately following the event, the headteacher (or designated senior leader) must establish the facts and record these verbatim, where possible.
3. Staff involved should be asked to write a statement as soon as is practicable following the event.
4. The headteacher and staff involved must cooperate and support any subsequent investigation undertaken by the executive headteacher or a trustee.
5. Parents or carers should be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation.