



Responding to a Missing Child or a Child who has Run Away from School

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Spring Meadow Infant and Nursery School Responding to a Missing Child or a Child who has Run Away from School

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Overview

The safety of all children at Spring Meadow Infant and Nursery School is paramount. The environment where children are, should be managed to ensure children are safe. It is important that for young children there are regular headcounts, such as when returning to the classroom from outside, or moving from one area to another (such as from the forest to the playground or returning from break time). Children should never be allowed to leave the premises without an adult. This policy is put into place to ensure that every action possible is taken to ensure the swift, safe return of that child to school.

This procedure is not for 'Children Missing in Education' (CME) – children in this situation will be followed up using the Cambridgeshire protocol for CME.

1. Objectives

- To locate any missing child quickly.
- To ensure that all children are kept safely on the school premises during school hours unless they have prior permission to leave with an adult
- To ensure that children who leave school during the school day, do so with the Headteacher's or other designated member of staff's permission and that they are accompanied by an authorised adult.
- To ensure that teachers and staff keep children under proper supervision at all times.
- To ensure that if a child goes missing during the school day, s/he is located quickly and returned safely to the school.

2. Strategies

- If a child cannot be found by his/her teacher, the Headteacher must be notified immediately and told when and where the child was last seen. Time is of the essence and prompt action must be taken by all.
- The remaining children will be left safe in the care of suitable staff. All other available staff will conduct a thorough search of the child's classroom, play areas, storage areas, toilets and the whole of the school building and school grounds.
- If the child is not found within a short period of time, this period of time will depend on the age and development of a child, for children in Nursery the police will be called as soon as the (appropriate) site search has been conducted, the police must

be called by the Headteacher or designated staff member. For all other children, the police will be called once the senior member of staff has ensured that a full site check and registration has been conducted.

- Members of staff, who are not supervising children, will be sent to search the area in the immediate vicinity of the school/pre-school.
- If the child has gone missing at the end of the school day, members of staff may take the most appropriate route home to look for the child. They would also enquire whether the child is likely to have gone to a relative or friend's house and explore these routes as well.
- If a child goes missing during an outing or school visit, the teacher in charge must ensure that the remaining children are safely cared for by the other staff and adults on the trip. An urgent and thorough search should be made of the immediate vicinity and if the missing child is not found quickly, the police must be called and the Headteacher notified.
- As soon as possible, the parents will be notified that their child is missing.
- The LA will be notified by the Headteacher that a child is missing.
- If a member of staff finds the child, the Headteacher must be told at once. Parents, police and other authorities will be updated where applicable.
- The Headteacher will investigate how the incident occurred and will take appropriate action to ensure that a similar event does not happen again.

3. Children who run

If a child runs away from school and is in the eye-line of adults, the adult should call after the child or try to talk to the child to persuade them to come back. Staff who have not been trained should not physically restrain or handle the child, unless the child is in imminent danger of hurting themselves or others e.g. running into the road. Staff who have been trained in 'Step Up' should assess the situation and use guides to bring the child to safety. Only if absolutely necessary to keep the child safe and as a last resort, trained members of staff should use restraint. Adults should not run after the child as this could encourage the child to run further or into the road. Please see guidance on restrictive physical intervention guidelines.

A member of staff should not put themselves at risk in the process and should not attempt to intervene without assistance, unless it is an obvious emergency. The member of staff should ring the police, inform the Headteacher and ring parents.

4. Outcomes

The safety of all children will be given our highest priority. A missing child should be an extremely rare occurrence. 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 the earliest appropriate point.