

Hipsburn Primary School

Missing Child Policy

April 2021



Hipsburn Mission Statement:

"The most valuable gift we can give a learner is to enable them to think for themselves, to care for others and thereby acquire a sense of self-worth and confidence which can be used to benefit both society and the individual."

Hipsburn Primary School recognises that children's safety is the highest priority at all times, both on and off premises. Every attempt is made, at all times of day and during all activities, to ensure this. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedure for child going missing on the premises including before & after school clubs:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the class teacher and a senior member of staff will be alerted
- If the head teacher is not on site, he/she should be contacted and notified immediately. The next most senior member of staff will lead investigation until the headteacher arrives.
- A senior member of staff will carry out a thorough search of the school site.
- The register will be checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- If the child is not found, the parent will be contacted and the missing child reported to the police.
- The senior member of staff will talk to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and then records this.
- The Head teacher will carry out an investigation and record their findings.

Child going missing on an outing:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing will ask children to stand with their designated adult and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- One staff member will search the immediate vicinity but not beyond that.
- In an indoor venue, school staff will contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found
- The Head teacher will be contacted immediately and the incident reported.
- The Head teacher will contact the police and report the child as missing.

- The Head teacher will contact the parent, who should make their way to the school or visit site as agreed. The school is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the school.
- Staff will take the remaining children back to school, unless advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.
- The Head teacher will inform the Chair of Governors of the incident.
- The Headteacher and the Chair will carry out an investigation immediately.
- During the investigation staff should keep calm and not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Head teacher and Chair of Governors will speak with the parent(s).
- The Head teacher and Chair of Governors will carry out a full investigation, taking written statements from all the staff that were present at the time of the incident.

The teacher in charge of the visit will write an incident report detailing:

- The date and time of the report.
- What staff/ volunteers / children were in the group/outing and the name of the adult designated responsible for the missing child.
- When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
- What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
- The time it is estimated that the child went missing.

After the incident:

- A conclusion will be drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff should co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address. The incident will be reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.

- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people:

Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.

The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the teacher and adult responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.

Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The Leadership Team and Governors need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.

The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the Head teacher. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is on the Leadership Team. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.

The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.

In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The Headteacher and Governors will use their discretion to decide what action to take. Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without advice from the Headteacher. The Headteacher will take advice from the Local Authority with regards to the press.

SignedDate (Chair of Governors)

SignedDate (Headteacher)

Hipsburn Primary School April 2021

Date of next review April 2023