

# ***SAINT MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY ACADEMY***

Mr J O'Connor – Head Teacher



## **Missing Child / Uncollected Child Policy**

Approved by: Joseph O'Connor Date: October 2023

Last reviewed on: October 2023

Next review due by: October 2024

## Missing Child Policy / Uncollected Child Policy

### **INTRODUCTION**

- A policy for the procedures to be followed in the event of a child going missing
- A procedure to be followed in the event of a child not being collected at the appointed time

### **CONTENTS OF POLICY**

The policy consists of two parts, the first covering a missing child and the second covering the procedure to be followed by the school in the event of a child not being collected at the appointed time. Parents should have their attention drawn to the existence of both procedures. There are also clear linkages between this policy and policies on Child Protection and Safer Recruitment. The policy should be kept under regular review and updated to keep pace with changes

### **MISSING CHILD POLICY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The welfare of all of our children is our paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the school appreciates that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. Our staffing ratios follow statutory guidelines or above, and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care.

#### **ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM THE SCHOOL**

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child was found to be missing, the following procedure shall take place:

Staff will be careful to remain calm and to ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.

Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child

Members of staff (head, office staff and adults not currently supervising or teaching a class) shall check around the school premises. At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the school site, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms etc where a child might hide.

Check the doors, gates for signs of entry/exit

Care should be taken during this time that other children are not left unattended and put at risk. If, after thorough searching, the child is still not found the Police should be informed.

At this stage the child's parents/carers will be telephoned. Further action beyond this shall be taken in consultation with the parents/carers.

While waiting for the Police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue.

During this period, staff will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children at school.

The Head or a senior member of staff will be responsible for meeting the Police and the missing child's parent/carer. The Head or member of SLT will co-ordinate any actions instructed by the Police, and do all she/he can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers.

Once the incident is resolved, the SLT and the staff team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes.

All incidents of children going missing from school will be recorded in the Incident Record Book. Relevant policies and procedures should be reviewed. Media queries should be referred to the Head

In cases where either the police or social services have been informed, the relevant body (Ofsted) will be informed as soon as is practical.

Parents will be informed if their child was temporarily missing during the school day. If the child is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

#### **ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING ON AN OUTING**

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present.
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity.
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search.
- The Party Leader should assess the situation re:
  - Remaining at the venue
  - The possibility of taking the remaining children back to school
  - Number of staff remaining at venue / returning with children
- Inform the Head, Deputy Head and Safeguarding Officer by mobile phone.
- The Head or a member of SLT would ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the venue/ the school at once.

- Contact the Police.
- The Head / Safeguarding Officer would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board.
- The school would cooperate fully with any police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care.
- Ofsted would be informed.
- The Insurers would be informed.
- If the child is injured, report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

#### **ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF ONCE THE CHILD IS FOUND**

- The Head will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Head will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving Social Services/ Local Children Safeguarding Board)
- Media queries should be referred to the Head
- The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements
- The report should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened, the purpose of the outing, the length of time that the child was missing and how s/he appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.

#### **PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED ON TIME**

The school will ensure that all children are collected by a parent, carer or designated adult. If for some reason a child is not collected at the end of a session, the following procedures will be activated:

We undertake to look after the child safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care.

- If a child is not collected within the agreed collection time, a member of the office staff will call the parent, carer or designated adult, and use any other emergency contact details available, in order to try to ascertain the cause for the delay, and how long it is likely to last. Messages will always be left on any answer phone requesting a prompt reply.
- While waiting to be collected, the child will be supervised by members of staff who will offer them as much support and reassurance as is necessary.
- If a child is not collected at lunchtime, while they wait, they will stay with the rest of the group for the afternoon session, for which they may be charged. Staff will continue to

try to contact the parents/carers or other designated adults on the emergency contacts sheet.

- If a child is not collected at the end of the school day, 4.45 pm, a message is left on a parents answer machine explaining that Social Care has been informed.
- If pupils are late collected from the After School Clubs on two occasions they will not be permitted to attend
- If all attempts to contact a parent/legal guardian, designated person or emergency contact fail then the person in charge at the time should inform the Local Authority Social Services Department of the situation without delay.
- The duty social worker will take charge of the situation and decide what happens next, and whether the police need to be involved in helping to trace the parent/guardian of the child.
- Social Care will attempt to find the parent or relative. Emergency arrangements will be made for the child in consultation with the Local Authority Social Care.
- The child will not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file.
- On occasions when parents or the persons normally authorised to collect the child are unable to do so, parents advise how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child
- Under no circumstances should staff go to look for the parent or take the child home with them.
- A full written report of the incident is recorded in the child's file.
- Continual incidents of late collection will be recorded and discussed with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity and reported to The Education Welfare Officer

**Form for Uncollected children/Missing Children**

Procedure when parents fail to collect a child or when a child goes missing: Registered Person in Charge.....

The following child has not been collected (Tick as appropriate)

The following child has gone missing

Name of Child..... DOB .....

Address .....

.....

Tel No .....

Name of parent/guardian .....

For child not collected:

Date & time child should have been collected.....

Name of person who should have collected the child .....

This person is the parent guardian emergency contact

For child gone missing:

Date, time & location of disappearance .....

.....

Who was responsible for caring for the child at the time he/she disappeared? .....

What was the child wearing? .....

Any distinguishing features?.....

Circumstances surrounding disappearance? .....

.....

Duty Social Worker informed for child not collected (date/time) .....

Parents contacted Yes No (Tick as appropriate)

What happens next? .....

Signed by registered person .....Date .....