



Bembridge CE Primary School
'Learning to love God, one another and ourselves'

Missing Child Policy

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MISSING CHILD POLICY

All the governors and staff of Bembridge CE Primary School are committed to keeping the children and staff of the school community safe. Consistent and effective safeguarding procedures are in place to support children and staff of the school.

PURPOSE

The purpose of Bembridge CE Primary School's Missing Child policy is to ensure every child who is a registered pupil at our school is safe and protected. Every care is taken to ensure that the children are accounted for at all times when they are in our care. This policy will give clear direction to staff.

AIMS

- To minimise the possibility of a child being lost or missing at school
- To minimise the possibility of a child being lost or missing on an educational visit
- To outline the procedure that should be followed in the event of a child being lost or missing at school or on an educational visit
- To follow up a child having been lost or missing at school or on an educational visit.

MINIMISING THE POSSIBILITY OF A CHILD BEING LOST OR MISSING AT SCHOOL

School entry

The majority of children are brought to school by their parent/carer. From Year 1 onwards children come independently into the classrooms once on the school premises. Staff monitor the arrival of children to ensure that there is a safe route of passage. Children enter the school through either the side gated entrance or through the front door if late. This reduces the possibility of children arriving at school unnoticed.

Registration

All children are registered at 8.55 am and registers are returned to the school office immediately after being taken. Parents/carers are asked to telephone the school in advance if their child will be absent and they have not already given notice through a leave of absence form. As part of the first day response procedure, the registers are checked by the school administrator and any unexplained absences are followed up by a phone call and /or text home by 9:30 am, to ensure that both the school and parent/carer knows the whereabouts of the child.

Registers are taken again at the beginning of the afternoon session at 1:00 pm. Class teachers should check immediately with the school office if a child is unexpectedly not present for the afternoon session. Any child who comes in and leaves the school during the course of the school day for appointments or similar, must be signed in and out by the parent/carer. If the child cannot be accounted for, the procedure outlined in Appendix 1 (1) must be followed.

Lessons

Staff should check whether all children are present at the beginning of each lesson, and if not, establish whether the child has been in school that day. If necessary send a message to the school office to check (via a responsible pair of children if no other adult present).

Staff maintain the appropriate high level of supervision throughout lessons and are aware of the location of all children in their care at all times. If pupils are taken out of the classroom for intervention work etc., this must be communicated to the class teacher who has the overarching responsibility at that time. During break times and lunch time, the staff on duty have the responsibility for knowing the locations of the children.

Doors and gates

All children are told that they must not open any doors or gates that create an exit to the premises. All staff are asked to be vigilant about any open doors and gates and ensure they are closed and padlocked. The button which activates the opening of the door at the school entrance has been placed at an appropriate high level, out of the reach of the majority of children. If a child is waiting at the school office to be collected, and if they are tall enough to do so, they must be reminded not to push the button to exit the building or let someone else in, even if they see someone they know come to the door. Any child being seen leaving the premises unaccompanied at any time, should be challenged.

Class teachers should be present on the classroom exit door to see their class out at the end of the school day. Any uncollected children should be taken to the school office and the school administrator notified. At no time should children be left unsupervised. At no time should a child be permitted to leave unaccompanied or with another parent unless prior notice has been provided by the parent/carer to the class teacher or school office.

After school clubs

All after school clubs should check that the expected number of children are present at the beginning of an activity by taking a register. The school office must be informed immediately if anyone is missing. Office staff must check the whereabouts of the child as outlined in Appendix 1, after checking first with the class teacher as to whether they saw the child being collected and with whom. It is often the case that the child has been collected instead of attending the club, but this cannot be assumed. At the end of a club, the club leader is responsible for ensuring that the child is collected by their parent/carer. If a child is not

collected they should be taken to the school office, who will telephone their parent/carer. It is imperative that if possible at least 2 adults remain on site with any child.

Years 5 & 6

If parents wish children to walk home from school unaccompanied at the end of the day, they must advise the Headteacher in writing, Class teachers will receive a copy of the letter acknowledging this arrangement and a list will be kept in the school office.

MINIMISING THE POSSIBILITY OF A CHILD BEING LOST OR MISSING ON AN EDUCATIONAL VISIT

Reference should be made to the **Educational Visits Policy** for further details.

When on excursions off the school premises, staff implement strategies to maximise the safety and security of the children in accordance with the school's Educational Visits Policy. A list of all children's names is carried by the trip leader and the children are split into small groups according to the staff/pupil ratio and the purpose of the trip/activity. Each group is managed by a separate member of staff. The number of children is checked regularly by frequent roll calls. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for each other and notice if someone is missing.

Children must be briefed before setting off on an educational visit, of the importance of staying together with the group leaders and reminded to encourage each other to keep with the group. Children must be instructed that in the unlikely event of being separated from the group they must either go to a predetermined muster station or stand still so that the rest of the group can retrace their steps to locate the child. Wherever possible and practical children must wear school uniform to ease identification of lost children and to be easily identifiable in a group.

Children can be advised that adults are there to help them and that if they are lost, they must stay still but if approached by a person in uniform, or police or a parent with children, or an adult they should feel they can talk to them and let them know what has happened. Under no circumstances should they go with that person. They should remain where they are but ask that the message is taken so that it can be conveyed by loud speaker or the group leader telephoned.

If the child cannot be accounted for, the procedure outlined in Appendix 1 (2) must be followed.

Appendix 1

1. PROCEDURE IF A CHILD IS LOST OR MISSING AT SCHOOL

- Establish whether the child has been in school that day or whether they have gone on a legitimate visit and have been signed out. Check with the school office to see if there is a message from the parent/carer about collecting them early.
- Check with the school office whether they know if the child has left the school premises.
- Check that the child is not in a lesson, an activity, or after school club.
- Establish where the child was last seen. Endeavour to verify this with an adult rather than just a child's word, without causing alarm.
- Ensure that all other children are safe whilst a thorough search is conducted of the school premises, both inside and out by all available staff. Check everywhere, including unlikely areas - cloakrooms, toilets, changing rooms - anywhere a child could hide. Search places where the child was last seen, tracing the routes that they may have taken and asking other children as to what information they may have as necessary.
- Check all available exits.
- If all possibilities have been explored and the child cannot be accounted for, the Headteacher must be informed and the parents/carers must be telephoned. If the parents cannot account for the whereabouts of the child it will be necessary to telephone the police. It will be helpful to know when and where the child was last reliably seen.
- If after 15 minutes the parents/carers have not been able to be contacted, the Headteacher will contact the police after 30 minutes of the child going missing.
- On arrival, all relevant information about the child will be given to the police, who will then take over the search.

2. PROCEDURE IF A CHILD IS LOST ON AN EDUCATIONAL VISIT

- Establish where the child was last seen and with whom.
- Inform group leader.
- If in groups, check with all other groups to see if the child has joined another group.
- Ensure that the rest of the children are safe whilst a thorough search is conducted of the area.
- Retrace previous steps/areas visited.
- Depending on the location of the visit the group leader should inform any relevant authority for their assistance in locating the missing child - information points, centre staff etc.,

- The group leader should inform the local police or other authority such as coast guard.
- The group leader should contact the Headteacher to inform of the situation and action taken,
- The group leader should liaise with the Headteacher about contacting parents and should inform the Headteacher immediately the child is found.

Follow up a child having been missing at school or on an educational visit

- Once a child has been found it is necessary to establish how the child was missing to minimise the likelihood of the event recurring. An incident form must be completed.
- If the child was missing at school the Headteacher will conduct an investigation into how this occurred and will address any matters arising from this.
- If the child was missing on an educational visit the group leader will need to prepare a report for the Headteacher on the circumstances regarding the incident. The Headteacher will address any issues arising from this and will liaise with the Educational Visits Co-ordinator regarding any amendments that may need to be made to the Educational Visits Policy.

This Missing Child Policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

School Aims

Child Protection Policy

Health & Safety Policy

Staff Code of Conduct

Educational Visits Policy

Attendance Policy

Accessibility Plan

Behaviour Policy

September 2016

Reviewed September 2018

Reviewed May 2021