

Missing Child Policy



Foreword

Protected characteristics:

These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

At The Divine Mercy RC we believe that every child has the right to equality of outcome and to achieve their full potential. In order to achieve equity we embrace the principles of fairness, social justice, inclusion, global citizenship and community cohesion.

The Divine Mercy RC Primary School is a happy, safe and welcoming environment where everyone is valued. Our Catholic faith is central to moral development, mutual respect and an appreciation for the cultural diversity within our community. It is our intention to provide opportunities for every child to succeed and to strive towards excellence in everything they do.

We are a family, our strength is in our love and respect for one another.

Missing Child Policy and Procedures

Introduction:

The welfare and security of children in our school is paramount and all possible and practical policy and procedures have been implemented to ensure this remains a priority. It is however important that in the unlikely event of a child going missing, staff quickly follow agreed procedures. This will ensure the child is located as soon as possible and that the correct people are informed. A child going missing is a very rare occurrence but complacency is a hazard that must be avoided at all costs.

Systems in place to minimise the risk

Rigorous and stringent steps are taken to ensure the premises and surrounding site is secure at 8:55 each morning. The perimeter gates are not reopened again until 2.55 pm.

Staff are stationed on all main entry doors in the morning and are vigilant should any children attempt to leave the doors in search of parent / carer.

The attendance register is taken at the start of the morning and afternoon session. It is the responsibility of each staff member to be aware of how many children are present. Children who arrive late come through the office and are recorded on the INVENTORY which is then transferred to SIMS. Staff need to have regard for these children in the total headcount of the class. This applies equally to those children who leave school during the day in which we use a pass system on INVENTORY to record the names of these children.

Children starting school at the beginning of the term or part way through a term must be made aware of the boundaries of where they can and cannot go.

At the end of the day children are only released from the classroom to a known adult. This system is followed for children being collected during the day for appointments etc.

Parents are made aware, through initial meetings and newsletters, of the need for close supervision of children at all times before and after school while waiting in the playground.

In the event of a child being found to be missing it is vital that prompt action is taken.

Procedure

1. The missing child is identified and the last known whereabouts of the child identified if possible. (The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child's absence is noted as soon as possible)

2. Headteacher or the Deputy Head are informed.

3. The Class teacher present will arrange for the other children to be satisfactorily supervised. (Without alarming them the children should be asked if they have seen the missing child.)

4. A systematic search will be carried out to see if the child can be located in the surrounding area.

All toilets, cupboards, under tables, kitchen areas, cushions and all other areas where a child might hide

All outside areas including play houses, passage ways, climbing frames, bushes and trees.

Check all exits to ensure they remain secure. If there has been any breach of security search in the vicinity of this area.

5. Make enquiries of any other adults in the vicinity. If the child cannot be located then the following procedures are followed

The head teacher or the deputy head (in the event of both of these personnel being off site the designated senior member of staff for that day) will

1. **Contact Parents / Carers of the child.** Once contacted the parents should be advised to stay at home or ensure someone remains in the home in case the child arrives there

2. **Contact the police and/or any appropriate emergency services.** Police have the resources to conduct a search and speed is important.

3. Advise the parents that the emergency services have been contacted and that a staff member is searching the route a child may take home. Parents should be asked for information of anywhere else a child may head for e.g., grandparents, other relatives, the park, etc.

4. Checking any possible route home.

5. If the child cannot be located on site premises a member of staff should search along any possible routes home that the child might take to get home. They must take a mobile phone and keep in contact with the school. If the member of staff arrives at the home without finding the child they should make contact with the school immediately and await instructions.

Record of events and subsequent report

The following details will be noted in order to help in any search and subsequent investigations :

1. Date time and location of disappearance

2. Who was responsible for the care of the child at the time

3. What was the child wearing

4. Any distinguishing features

5. Circumstances surrounding disappearance

6. Time parents and other agencies were contacted

7. If the incident warrants a police investigation then all staff are required to give full cooperation

Informing other people

In very serious cases due consideration must be given to notifying the following people:

1. The school's Insurance company.
2. Other parents
3. The Local authority
4. Social Care and health

Dealing with reactions

If such an incident does occur it will be natural for the child's parents to be frightened, distressed and angry. Other parents will also be rightly concerned for the safety of their children. Staff will be upset and shocked that any such lapse in security has occurred. Emotions and reactions must be dealt with professionally and in a caring and understanding way. Should any staff be approached by parents or media regarding the situation they must refer them to the head teacher or deputy head.

Conclusion

In the case of any such incident occurring the breach of security will be identified, further actions will be implemented and all staff made fully aware.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

Ensure the policy is implemented and will monitor through HT reports to Governing Body under Health and safety

The Headteacher will:

Monitor the policy and procedures ensuring they are implemented effectively
Report to the Governing Body through Headteacher Reports

Staff

Ensure procedures are followed

Equalities Statement:

The Divine Mercy RC Primary School is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities. The Governing Body recognises that it is unlawful to take into account anyone's gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age or sexual orientation. Full consideration has been given to this during the formulation of this policy as it is the governors' aim that no-one at The Divine Mercy RC Primary school should suffer discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or harassment on any of these grounds.