



Practice Guidance: Children Missing On and Off Site

Tees Valley Education Trust

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Guidance for Children going Missing on/off site

Missing Child On-Site

It is the Head teacher's responsibility to ensure that children do not go missing.

We have the highest regard for the safety and welfare of the children in our care. Staff will always be extremely aware of the potential for children to go missing during sessions of our day.

Systems are in place to register attendance during the academy day/sessions. Staff are responsible for those young people in their care and, alongside session attendance, should undertake periodic checks to ensure all young people are accounted for. There are occasions when young people may leave a learning environment to carry out a task, visit the toilet, receive specialist support and are unsupervised. These children are still the member of staff's responsibility, particularly should an evacuation of the building occur.

If for any reason a member of staff cannot account for a child's whereabouts during a session, the following procedure should be activated:

- The member of staff will inform the Head teacher/SLT, Designated Safeguarding Lead and the rest of the staff team that the child is missing.
- A thorough search of the entire premises will be commenced. The staff team will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure that the other children remain safe, focused on learning and adequately supervised.
- If the child is not on the premises the search will be widened to include the surrounding area.
- If after 15 minutes of thorough searching the child is still missing, the HT will inform the police and then the child's parents/carers.
- While waiting for the police and the missing child's parents/carers, searches for the child will continue. During this period other members of staff will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children. The correct adult child ratios will be maintained at all times.
- The HT will be responsible for meeting the police and the missing child's parent/carers. They will co-ordinate any actions instructed by the police, and do all they can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers.
- Once the incident is resolved, the HT/Manager and the staff team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes (paying particular attention to reviewing security on site).
- Inform all relevant parties of findings, implications and outcomes of review.
- All incidents of children going missing from the setting will be recorded on an incident form.

Missing Child Off-site

It is the party leader's responsibility to ensure that children do not go missing. In order to do this, it is our responsibility to ensure that:

- We regularly count the children when on trips, particularly when moving from one place to another.
- Inform children what to do in the event that they become separated from the group school /setting party
- Remind children to stay close to you at all times.

- Inform children where they can and cannot go without your permission.
- Try to make children distinguishable from others by means of hats/tabards/bands etc. But do not identify with name badges.
- Check the register/take a name call if you are in any doubt that a child may be missing.

If a child goes missing off-site the following procedures will be activated:

- The member of staff will inform the HT/SLT and Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately
- Ask other staff if they have seen the child and instigate a search of the area (as missing child on site).
- Ensure there is suitable supervision for the other children and ensure staff ratios are maintained at all times.
- If after 15 minutes of thorough searching the child is still missing, the HT will inform the local police and the child's parents/carers (or emergency contact if they are unobtainable).
- At least one member of staff will remain at the scene whilst others return to the setting with the children.
- The remaining most senior member of staff will meet the police and parents/carers when they arrive at a designated point.

Once the incident is resolved, the procedure below should be followed:

- HT and the staff team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes.
- Inform all relevant parties of findings, implications and outcomes of review.
- All incidents of children going missing will be recorded on an incident form.
- Do not talk to the press. Be careful who you discuss the situation with.
- The academy need to be prepared for press interest. This would be managed through HT, CEO and PR company employed by the trust. Staff briefing should take place to ensure staff are aware of responses and a script for the whole workforce would be prepared in conjunction with press office and other critical incident support

References

Working together to safeguarding children 2020 update
 LSCB/Safeguarding Partner procedures
 KCSIE 2022 update
 EYFS - Links to 3.8/3.51 in the Statutory Framework EYFS
 Missing from home/missing from education policy
 SCRs return to school interviews
 Read in conjunction with LAC policy