

Missing/ Escaped Child Policy

St. Thomas More's Catholic Primary School

RATIONALE

This policy has been written with reference to the DfE guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2016) and Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014). The policy applies to all members of our school community and is non-discriminatory (UK Equality Act, 2010). This policy should be read in conjunction with the schools Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

All staff are aware that they have a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. We are alert to the possibility that a missing child could potentially be at risk of abuse or neglect and will notify the police and other relevant authorities immediately where deemed necessary, to minimise this risk.

The school has rigorous safeguarding procedures in place in order to ensure children's safety. Where a child is identified as being specifically vulnerable to escape (such as pupils with Autistic Spectrum Condition), a risk assessment is carried out to manage that additional risk.

Aims:

This policy aims to:

- Define what we mean by a missing/escaped child
- Outline what should be done in the event of a child being missing at register time.
- Outline what should be done if a child is missing/escaped while on the school site.
- Outline what should be done if a child is missing/escaped while on an off-site visit.

Missing Children

All children are registered at the beginning of the school day and again after lunch. A list of absentees is held on a spreadsheet and then transferred to SIMS.

Therefore, for the purpose of this policy, the term 'missing/escaped child' refers to a child who is not present without either authorisation or explanation.

When a staff member identifies a child as missing from their expected location, immediate action is required as outlined in the procedures below.

Communications with parents and the appropriate services (particularly the police) are an integral part of the procedure and all instances of a missing/escaped child must be reported to the Headteacher and/or DSL and the appropriate investigations made.

A child is identified as missing when:

- A child is absent at morning registration is not confirmed by a parent or guardian.
- a child is missing during afternoon registration , when their presence is expected.
- a teacher/ TA, who is caring for the needs of a vulnerable child, reports a child as having escaped from their immediate supervision.
- a lunchtime supervisor reports that a vulnerable child, reports a child as having escaped from their immediate supervision.
- a child is absent from the after-school club registration list.
- a child is absent from the homework club register.
- a child reports that they cannot find a peer/ classmate.

Any member of staff discovering a discrepancy will:

1. Contact the relevant member of staff to find out if the absence is expected or to check if there have been any medical emergencies or other reason to explain the absence.
2. Check all lists of events not on the School premises.

In the event of a child escaping/going missing, staff should stay as calm as possible and follow this procedure:

For a Missing/Escaped Child on School premises the procedure is as follows:

1. Member of staff who becomes aware that a child is missing immediately informs the School Office/ Headteacher/ Deputy Head (DSL) or member of the Senior Leadership Team. They should report when and where the child was last seen.
2. The Headteacher/ Deputy Head (DSL) or member of the Senior Leadership Team, will delegate a member of staff to ensure the safety of the remaining children with regard to appropriate supervision.
3. The Headteacher/ Deputy Head (DSL) or member of the Senior Leadership Team, will organise a thorough search of the whole school premises, checking exits and possible hiding places.

When the child is found reassurance is given, and questions asked to ascertain how the incident occurred. A written account should be made, and a review of procedures for supervision and safety is carried out. A copy of this is given to the DSL. The child's parents are informed.

Where a child has escaped from school.

In the extremely unlikely event that a child manages to escape over a perimeter fence, the member of staff should immediately ask another member of school staff to inform the office and ask for the assistance of The Headteacher/ Deputy Head (DSL) or member of the Senior Leadership Team. The office staff will contact and inform the police (999), inform The Headteacher/ Deputy Head (DSL) or member of the Senior Leadership Team and inform the parents. They should attempt to keep the child in their line of sight but should not chase after the child as there is a risk they may run into the road. Where possible, the child should be stopped by persuasion, however if the child is in immediate danger and within easy reach (e.g. is likely to run into the road), reasonable restraint can be used to protect the child's safety.

'Missing/Lost Child' on a Visit Off Site

In the extremely unlikely event that a child was to become detached from the group and become 'lost' whilst on a visit off the School premises then staff should follow the following procedure:

1. All staff and helpers to be alerted and a thorough search made of the immediate and surrounding areas.
2. Depending on location, other staff at the off-site facility should be alerted.
3. A member of staff should inform the School Office, so that the Headteacher/ Deputy Head (DSL) or member of the Senior Leadership Team can be informed.
4. If the search proves negative then the School together with parents and police are informed.
5. Staff must ensure the welfare, both physical and emotional, of other children in their care.
6. Visit Leader to provide the police with details of the child and incident.
7. The Headteacher/ Deputy Head (DSL) or member of the Senior Leadership Team is responsible for gathering all relevant information and liaising with the required authorities and parents.
8. A full report of the incident will be made as detailed below.

After the Incident -

The Senior member of staff involved will sensitively discuss with the child's parents the events surrounding the disappearance of the child.

The Headteacher/ Deputy Head (DSL) or member of the Senior Leadership Team, will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all staff present at the time.

The Incident Report will detail:

- The date and time of the incident
- What staff/children were in the group/class
- When the child was last seen in the group
- What had taken place in the group/class since then and the time it is estimated that the child went missing.

- Whether the risk assessment carried out prior to the event was adhered to.

A conclusion is drawn as to how the incident happened and, if appropriate, procedures (including risk assessments and training) may be updated.

Members of staff must refrain from making comments to members of the public; any questions must be referred to SLT.

| Policy Written By | Signature | Date |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Laura Flanagan | | 2.7.17 |
| Policy Approved By | Signature | Date |
| Curriculum and Pastoral Committee | | 12/7/17 |

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be revisited by all staff and Curriculum and Pastoral Committee as part of the 2 year review cycle.

Date to Staff: 6/7/17

Date to Governors: 12/7/17

Review data: Summer 2020

Review Date

Reviewed by-

Signature