Balcombe C E (C) School



Missing Child Policy

Adopted by Governors:	Sep 2015
Reviewed:	Sep 2018 Feb 2021
Next Review:	Feb 2023

At Balcombe CE Primary School, the safety of all children is given the highest priority. Staff are always very aware of the potential for children to go missing.

All staff are aware of the procedures to be followed if a child goes missing. This can be a very stressful time for all concerned. Every care is taken to ensure that all children are kept safe. Risk assessments are carried out to ensure that the school and setting is as safe as possible and children should never be allowed to leave the premises on their own. It is possible, however, that despite all precautions a child cannot be accounted for and goes missing. This policy is designed to put in place swift and effective actions to locate any missing child and to notify and involve parents and the authorities at every appropriate point.

Preventative Procedures

Systems are in place to ensure that children do not go missing. This includes ensuring that all exits are kept closed.

Children are made aware of the boundaries of the school.

Children are supervised at all times and there are sufficient staff available to ensure this happens.

Head counts take place regularly through the day with younger children and particularly when a class has been out of the classroom.

Parents/carers must sign their children in and out if they come to or leave school at times other than normal start and finish times.

Children are not allowed to leave the school with anyone other than the authorised persons unless the school has been informed otherwise and that alternative person is identified.

Any visitors to school will be signed in and out. They will be let into the school by a member of staff; also seen off the premises by a member of staff to ensure that no doors are left open and the safety of the children is maintained.

Reactive Procedures

If a child cannot be found by their teacher/support worker/lunchtime supervisor, the Headteacher (or assistant Headteacher) must be notified immediately and told when and where the child was last seen. Time is of the essence and prompt action will be taken by all.

The remaining children will be left in the care of a suitable adult(s). All other staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises (child's classroom, storage areas, toilets,

the school building) and the school grounds, with the staff team being careful not to create an atmosphere of panic.

The Headteacher/assistant Headteacher will nominate two staff, to search the area in the immediate vicinity of the school. All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the school site.

If after 5 minutes of thorough searching, the child is still missing, the police will be called by the Headteacher/assistant Headteacher.

If the child is not found in the school, the child's parents/carer will be contacted by the Headteacher/assistant Headteacher and informed of the situation.

While waiting for the police and the parent / carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, the other members of staff will maintain as normal a routine as possible for the rest of the children in the school.

The Headteacher/assistant Headteacher will be responsible for meeting the police and the missing child's parent/carer. The Headteacher/ assistant Headteacher will be responsible for co-ordinating any actions instructed by the police and do all they can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers

The LA will be notified by the Headteacher/assistant Headteacher that a child is missing, so that additional support can be provided. Governors will also be informed as soon as is practicable.

If a member of staff finds the child, the Headteacher/assistant Headteacher must be told at once. Parents, police and other authorities will be notified.

Once the situation has been resolved, a full written account of the incident will be recorded and held on file.

Further risk assessments will be carried out to ensure that the incident does not happen again.

Out of School Visits

When a group of children is taken out of school, risk assessments must be completed in advance and checked by the Headteacher.

A list of children must be carried by staff on the visit.

Regular head counts will be undertaken by staff.

Adult: pupil ratios will be in line with those specified by county.

A mobile phone will be taken on all visits.

If a child goes missing the other children will be gathered together and a member of staff assigned to look for the child. An urgent but thorough search should be made of the immediate vicinity.

If in an enclosed space, the appropriate staff in that environment can be initially informed before calling the police, for instance to give a message over the tannoy.

The Headteacher/assistant Headteacher must be informed immediately, so that the parents/carers can be informed.

If the child is not found immediately, the police must be contacted in the area where the visit is taking place.

If a member of staff finds the child, the Headteacher/assistant Headteacher must be informed at once. Parents, police and other authorities will be notified.

The Headteacher/assistant Headteacher will investigate how the incident occurred and will take appropriate action to ensure that similar events do not happen again.

This policy will be reviewed biannually or sooner if there are any changes in legislation or the need arises.