



HENLEY GREEN

Primary School

Missing child policy and procedure

Missing Child Policy and Procedure

Henley Green Primary School takes the safety of children very seriously and will take every precaution necessary to ensure that the children in their care do not leave a session unaccompanied.

The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child's absence is soon discovered.

Procedures aimed at reducing risk of a missing pupil

Start of the day

- Ensure parents are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of their child passes from staff to them and vice versa.
- Clear procedures for welcoming pupils into the breakfast club and school.
- Staff meeting and greeting on the door.
- Doors closed at 9.00am.
- All gates covered by staff members.
- Gates are locked at 9.00am.
- Updated contact information for 2 parents and carers is sought and maintained.

During Lesson Times

- Staff mark registers promptly and accurately – mornings and afternoons.
- All external gates to any outside area are locked when pupils are both in lessons and playing outside.
- If pupils leave the classroom to work in other parts of the school, staff ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times and all pupils are accounted for on return to the classroom.

During Play Times and Lunch Times

- Staff are on the playground with the pupils.
- External gates are locked.
- Staff patrol zoned areas in playground.

At Home time

- SLT patrol and are available at home time.
- A clear expectation that children in Reception to Year 6 are collected from school promptly at 3.15pm, Nursery and Little Acorns children by 11.30am for a morning session and 3.30pm for the afternoon session. (or at the specified end of any after school club).
- A clear expectation that parents notify school in good time if they are going to be late to collect their child.
- Gates opened 10 minutes before home time to allow access for parents.
- Members of staff on the exit doors and gates.
- Pupils wait with a member of staff or in the classroom until they are called to leave.
- Up to date lists (Green Forms) which inform staff who can collect.
- Staff are responsible for their own class and ensure that all pupils are collected by the appropriate adult
- Staff contact the parents of any child who has not been collected by 3.40pm

Visits

- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff/pupil ratios are provided when pupils leave the school premises.
- Adequate communication contact and a list of pupils/groups to be taken on visits out of school.
- Mobile phones taken on every visit and mobile contact numbers left at school

After school clubs

- Thorough risk assessment in place.

- Register of pupils with contact numbers and details of how the pupils are to go home and who with.
- Parents informed of where to collect children from.
- Parents contacted by staff if children are not collected from the designated place.

Early Years

- All gates are covered by staff members.
- For end of am sessions gates are open from 11.25am and locked by 11.40am.
- For the start of pm sessions gates are open from 12.30pm and locked by 12.40pm.

Procedure for a child going missing from the school or leaving the school unaccompanied:

The school is responsible for the missing child and all the other children.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff member will inform SLT, who must establish who last saw the missing child, where and when.
- A walkie talkie call will be made for available staff to support to search for the missing child.
- Available staff members will search areas of the school known to the child first, before searching the wider grounds.
- The exit/ entry doors will be checked to see if these has been a breach of security.
- Staff will keep in contact via the walkie talkies to ensure searching is systematic and inform each other if the child is found.
- The safety and care of other pupils is paramount, so the security of the school and the number of staff remaining to supervise the other pupils in the school must be adequately maintained while the search continues.

If the child cannot be found in school, the Head teacher, or next most senior member of staff on site, will decide at which point the police need to be contacted.

The lead staff member or office staff will:

- Call the police immediately if the child is seen to have left the site.
- Call the child's parents to let them know that the child may be attempting to get home.
- If parents/carers are unavailable school will use the emergency contact number.
- Ensure that, if the child lives within walking distance of the school, staff will make the journey on foot or by car in order to catch up with or intercept the child if possible.
- Ensure, that as soon as parents are informed, they will need advice and support.
- HT will inform social care/LCSB/Chair of Governors as necessary.

Procedure for when a child is found

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child.
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing.
- A member of SLT will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
- The Head Teacher will oversee a full investigation (if appropriate involving the police, social care LSCB or LADO).
- The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements which are recorded on CPOMS.
- The report should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened, the length of time that the child was missing and how they appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future.
- Consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.
- Media queries should be referred to the Head Teacher.

Procedure for a child going missing on an outing

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members on the outing will ask children to stand with their adult and carry out a headcount.
- The visit leader will ensure the safety of the remaining pupils and sustain adequate ratios.
- Staff members will search the area for the child.
- Staff members will contact the venue manager to arrange a full search of the area.
- The visit leader on the outing will contact the police and report the child as missing.
- The emergency school contact will be contacted by the visit leader and the incident will be recorded.
- A member of SLT at school will contact the child's parent(s).
- The remaining children will be taken back to school as soon as possible.
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority/Social care or LCSB.
- HT will inform social care/LCSB/Chair of Governors as necessary.

Procedure to be followed for a child who travels independently to school but does not arrive at school

- Family support team to carry out attendance checks for all children after registers close at 9am.
- Family support team to contact the parent of the child who has not arrived.
- Family support team to liaise carefully with the parent regarding details of movements.
- If parents cannot be contacted, family support team to carry out a home visit.

Procedure to be followed for a child who travels independently to school but does not arrive home

- SLT staff and reception staff to liaise carefully with the parent (or emergency contact if parent not available) regarding details of movements.
- Check if the child was seen to leave school premises by staff and who they left with.
- Identify the last time the child was seen – location and time and by whom.
- If possible, speak to the child's friends – did the child mention going anywhere other than home? Has there been a miscommunication? Did they go to a friend's house?
- If the child walked home, an available member of staff should trace that route by foot/by vehicle.
- If the child has not made it home within a reasonable period of time / beyond the time they were expected to arrive, the police should be informed.

Managing people

We accept that in such circumstances powerful emotions are involved and people's behaviour can be unpredictable. Those who may seem quite calm about the incident at the time can later become angry, threaten legal action or approach the local press.

We will be clear about the circumstances surrounding the incident and will respond sympathetically to questions without implications or admission of responsibility.

- Our staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- They may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Our Headteacher ensures that any staff under investigation are not only fairly treated, but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame our staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at our Headteacher.
- When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is our Headteacher. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against our staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called.
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. Our remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions honestly, but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, our staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. Our Headteacher will use their discretion to decide what action to take.

- Our staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

Dealing with the media

Distressed parents may contact the local press, or reporters may hear about the incident if the police are involved. It is sensible for one person, the Headteacher, to speak for the school. All adults will be asked to refer all enquiries to the Headteacher.

The governing body reviews this policy every two years. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Education Visits and Activities Policy
- Collection of Children Policy
- Complaints Policy

Reviewed and agreed: September 2025

Review date: September 2027