



Mount Pleasant School

Missing Child Policy and Procedure

September 2020

Mount Pleasant 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. In the unlikely event that a child is noted to be missing from school premises, the school puts into practice agreed procedures. These ensure the most effective resolution of this potentially distressing situation. Many of our school routines and procedures are in place to contribute to the prevention of a child going missing and to ensuring the safety and security of all children at all times.

If, in the event of a member of staff not being able to account for a child's whereabouts, the following action will be taken:

Stage One - Search systematically

- All available staff to immediately check toilets, shared areas, rooms and playground to ensure the child is not hiding or locked in anywhere.
- One member of staff to immediately inform school office and the Headteacher and check whether the child has been signed out for an external appointment.
- The register will need checking by office staff as soon as a missing child has been reported.
- One member of staff to gather class and call the register to confirm that one named child is missing.
- Staff will ensure that all other children are kept safe and closely supervised throughout incident should it be during the school day.
- Calm should be kept in the event of a child reported missing at the end of the school day.

Stage Two

- After stage one is completed without resolution (no more than 15 minutes), school office staff will contact the police and parents/carers with parental responsibility.
- From this point, the Headteacher will support the police who will now lead the response to this incident. The Headteacher will also liaise with the parents/carers.
- Staff will call registers in all classes to confirm presence of other children, if the event is during the school day.

Stage Three

- The Headteacher should communicate the incident to the SGC Chair, DCYP and BFSWS.

- A written record of the incident and any action taken should be made as soon after the incident as practicable and placed in My Concern.
- The Headteacher should conduct an internal investigation to establish how the situation occurred, how effective was the response and whether action could be taken to ensure it does not happen again.

We will ensure that:

- We make regular checks to ensure that if an incident of this sort does happen, we have all the necessary phone numbers at hand – correct, up to date and kept together.
- If the Headteacher is not on the premises, she will be informed as soon as possible via the school office team or Assistant Headteacher.
- We will gather the following evidence to share with the SGC Chair and DCYP
 - What happened?
 - What we did, at what time and in what order?
 - Who we informed and when?
 - What systems are in place for preventing such occurrences?

Dealing with people's reactions

We accept that the child's parents will be frightened, distressed and angry. If the School shares all policies with parents/carers, the situation will be easier for all because there will be an understanding of working within a framework of mutual trust and understanding. 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.

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

Responses could include:

- How sorry you are that the incident has happened.
- That a full investigation is in hand.
- That the SGC Chair and DCYP are aware and will investigate the incident

When the child is found

We recognise that during the time a child is missing, however briefly, all involved, parents and others suffer great fear, guilt and distress. It is not always easy to control all these emotions when the child is found.

We will accept that it is important to remember:

- That the child also might have been afraid and distressed and might now need comfort.
- Remain calm, reassure the child and acknowledge it is not the child's fault.
- Ensure the child is not hurt.
- That the incident provides a good opportunity to talk to all the children to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises, and why.

After the Incident

- We will review our current procedure.
- We will evaluate processes and make necessary adjustments to ensure future effectiveness.

Date of next review – September 2021