



Dixons Allerton Academy

Policy Documentation

Policy: Missing Child

Responsibility for Review: Primary Head
Date of Next Review: July 2014

Missing Child Policy

Statement of Policy:

Dixons Allerton Academy is committed to safeguarding pupils. Children's safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made, through carrying out the educational visits procedure and the exit/entrance procedure, to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff member alerts the class teacher and the Primary Head.
- The Primary Head will inform the adjoining secondary school to search their building and outdoor spaces. The Primary Head will carry out a thorough search of the primary building and outdoor play spaces. The Primary Head calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Administrator to check doors and gates to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The Primary Head talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The Primary Head contacts the Chair of Governors and Principal and reports the incident. An investigation will be carried out immediately.
- If the Primary Head is not on site, the Deputy Principal or Principal in the Secondary Phase should carry be contacted.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a group on an outing, leaving the Primary Head and/or other staff back in the setting. If the setting leader has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated staff member and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity, but does not search beyond that.
- The Primary Head is contacted immediately (if not on the outing) and the incident is recorded.
- The Primary Head contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- The Primary Head contacts the parent, who makes their way to the setting.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting. (If possible one member of staff to stay at the venue until the Head of School arrives.)
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The Primary Head contacts the Chair of Governors and Executive Principal and reports the incident. The Primary Head comes to the setting immediately to carry out an investigation, with the Executive Principal (if appropriate).
- The Primary Head or member of staff may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.

The investigation

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Primary Head speaks with the parent(s).
- The Primary Head and Principal carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- The trip leader writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
 - What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
 - The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - The Risk Assessment must be provided
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.

- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted is informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the class teacher and group leader 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.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. The Primary Head needs to ensure that 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 staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the setting leader. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Primary Head and the other should be a senior member of staff or member of the Governing Body. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against 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. The 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, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The Governing Body will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.