Missing Child policy

Burley Oaks Primary School

Statement of intent:

At Burley Oaks Primary School, we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Burley Oaks Primary School. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

The main priority is to prevent an emergency from occurring in the setting; however, this is sometimes, unfortunately, out of the hands of the school. In an emergency, staff members at Burley Oaks Primary School will endeavour to take all reasonable actions in order to ensure the safety of pupils.

The procedures outlined in this policy aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils, staff members and visitors.

This policy was agreed in December 2024 and will be reviewed in December 2028

Chair of Governors **Date 10 December 2024**

Headteacher **Date 10 December 2024**

Burley Oaks Primary School
Missing Child Policy

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all staff and parents/carers are aware of the procedures to take in the event of a child going missing.

Background

Burley Oaks Primary School takes the safety of children very seriously and is proud of its record in safeguarding children and understands that the welfare of the children in our care is paramount. **Every member of staff has equal responsibility in ensuring that children are adequately supervised and protected.**

A child going missing is very rare in a primary school or early years setting, but it is an event that all service providers must be prepared for if the children in their care are to be appropriately safeguarded. 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. 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.

Policy

- Appropriate steps will be taken at all times to ensure that the premises are secure.
- Parents are required to register their child's arrival and ensure that their child's departure is noted by a member of staff – an attendance register will be kept by staff including a sign-out sheet should they need to leave a lesson.
- It is the responsibility of every member of staff to be aware of how many children are present at any time.
- Head-count checks will take place at intervals during each session to ensure that all the children are present.
- Key workers of new children should always take extra care to be aware of their whereabouts and ensure they know the boundaries of where they can and cannot go.
- Children should always be 'counted out' as they go out to play and again when they are lining up to come back indoors – a member of staff should always be at the cloakroom doors to close them to ensure no children are left outside. This responsibility falls to those members on break duty for that day.
- In the event that it is suspected that a child has gone missing the following procedure will be followed:

Stage 1

i. The most senior member of staff at the time will take an immediate roll call of all children. The Headteacher must then be informed if the roll call shows a missing child.

ii. If it is discovered that a child is unaccounted for then a full and thorough search of the premises and its immediate surroundings will take place. This includes checking toilets, shared areas, rooms and playground to ensure the child is not hiding or locked in anywhere.

iii. The office will be notified to ensure the child hasn't been signed out for an external appointment of any kind.

iv. Staff will ensure that all other pupils are kept safe and closely supervised throughout the incident; on no account will any other children be left unsupervised so that staff can search.

Stage 2

i. If the thorough search is unsuccessful in establishing the whereabouts of the child (no more than 10 minutes), the emergency services and the parent/guardian will be contacted.

ii. Staff to confirm presence of other pupils in all classes.

iii. On the arrival of the emergency services and the child's parent/guardian the manager or senior member of staff present will be responsible for appraising them of all information in respect to the missing child and what action has been taken.

Stage 3

i. The Headteacher will communicate the incident to the appropriate Local Authority Office and the Chair of Governors.

ii. A written record of the incident and any action taken should be made as soon after the incident as possible and placed in the pupil's confidential record. The system the school uses is CPOMS (Child protection online monitoring service) and all staff should input any relevant information; including conversations with parents, carers, child minders, police, the Local Authority and any other person they feel has contributed to the collection of evidence.

iii. Once the situation has been resolved an internal investigation will take place to examine how it occurred and put immediate measures in place to ensure it does not happen again.

iv. Parents will be advised of all safeguarding, security and supervision procedures – including this one – when they initially register their child, and will be given the opportunity to discuss any concerns.

Dealing with reactions

We accept that the child's parents/carers will be frightened, distressed and angry. Through the sharing of policies, the situation will be easier for all as 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, threaten legal action or approach the local press.

Responses

- How sorry you are that the incident has happened.
- That a full investigation is in hand.

Child Absconding from School Protocol

In the event that a child is seen to try and run out of the school premises the following procedure will be applied:

STEP 1 Alert the Head Teacher / SLT and office staff by sending another member of staff to seek assistance.

STEP 2 Group any remaining pupils together. If outside school return remaining children into the school building. If on a school visit keep the remaining children grouped. If they are aware of the circumstances reassure. (See Child Absconding from an Educational Visit Protocol)

STEP 3 *At the same time* one member of staff should follow the child at a distance. Staff members should carry school walkie talkie/mobile phone with them at all times. The child must never be left on their own. The staff member should telephone and remain in live contact with school at all times whilst following. As soon as possible one further member of staff should be directed to locate and accompany the original staff member who is following.

STEP 4 If child has absconded and will not return, HEAD TEACHER / Senior Management to inform the Police immediately or delegate SLT member to dial 999 and provide relevant information.

STEP 5 The Head Teacher / SLT to inform parents/ guardians by telephone of current status.

STEP 6 On arrival of Police ensure all known facts are given to officers. A request can be made for the Police to assist with further parent liaison. The police may advise school to inform the Child Rescue Alert service.

STEP 7 The Head Teacher / Senior Leadership Team to commence an incident log and accurately document all actions/ relevant factual information (Ensure date and times of actions are recorded).

STEP 8 If deemed necessary reassure remaining pupils.

STEP 9 The Head Teacher / Senior Manager to alert the Chair of Governors - in their absence Vice Chair of Governors or named safeguarding governor should be notified.

STEP 10 Police instructions should be implicitly followed. No press briefing should be made unless directed by the Police with the input of the local authority.

STEP 11 The Head Teacher / Senior Leadership Team to hold a staff briefing when possible to advise of current situation. Ensure staff are aware of information sharing protocols.

STEP 12 Once resolved, school to conduct a case review and arrange a follow up meeting with parents/ guardians. Ideally this should be conducted prior to the child's return to school.

CHILD MISSING/ABDUCTED FROM AN EDUCATIONAL VISIT PROTOCOL

In the event of an emergency:

STEP 1 Alert all adults supporting the visit. If groups are in different locations, recall all groups to an agreed central meeting point. Mobile telephone numbers MUST be exchanged prior to the commencement of the visit- see Educational Visit Policy.

STEP 2 If the pupil is missing the Visit Leader should instigate a controlled search of the last known location/ building.

STEP 3 If the pupil is located the Visit Leader should immediately inform the Head Teacher / SLT who may direct the party to return to school or give permission to complete the Educational Visit.

If directed to return, refer to school's Child Missing/ Abducted Protocol and complete steps 6, 8 &11 and notify the Chair of Governors (in their absence the Vice Chair should be notified).

If the pupil is not located or is known to have been abducted the Visit Leader should immediately telephone 999 to alert the police and then school to advise the Head Teacher / SLT of the situation.

STEP 4 Head Teacher / SLT to inform the Police immediately or delegate someone to dial 999 and provide relevant information. **Police instruction should be implicitly followed. The police may advise school to inform the Child Rescue Alert service.**

STEP 5 Unless otherwise directed by the Police the Head Teacher / SLT should inform parents/ guardians (by telephone) of current status. This conversation should be carefully managed and pertinent details shared with the Police.

STEP 6 On arrival of the Police the Visit Leader should ensure all known facts are given to officers. A request can be made for the Police to assist with further school and parent / guardian liaison.

STEP 7 Head Teacher / SLT to commence incident log and accurately document all actions / relevant factual information. Ensure times and dates are recorded.

STEP 8 If the child is not located or known to have been abducted the Head Teacher / SLT should alert the Local Authority Director of Education and school's Chair of Governors (in their absence the Vice Chair should be notified)

STEP 9 No press briefing should be made unless directed by the Police with the input from the Local Authority Media Relations Office.

STEP 10 Head Teacher / SLT to hold a staff briefing when possible to advise of the current situation. Ensure staff are aware of information sharing protocols.

STEP 11 Under the direction of the Head Teacher / SLT, all staff should work with multi-agency partners to ensure parents, guardians and family members are supported.

STEP 12 Head Teacher / SLT to discuss arrangements for post trauma counselling with the Local Authority.

STEP 13 Head Teacher / SLT to arrange an emergency Governing Body meeting to advise of the situation and review safeguarding policy, protocols and arrangements.

All who work in the school have a duty to:

- protect the health and safety of staff and children at all times
- comply with agreed policies and procedures at all times
- always be aware of the dangers of children going missing.

Training

All staff will be made aware of this policy during induction and provided with necessary training relevant to their role.

Applicability and scope

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working for the organisation without exception. All staff have responsibility for ensuring that they work within the remit of this policy and in the manner in which they have been trained.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of this policy lies with the management of the organisation.

The designated person with responsibility for implementing the policy is Claire Lee.

Child Recue Alert

Burley Oaks supports a national initiative called Child Rescue Alert and have signed up to the campaign. Child Rescue Alert is a nationwide system, managed by CEOP (part of the National Crime Agency), the charity Missing People and technology company Groupcall which has the potential to save a child's life in the event that a child is missing and believed to be at imminent risk of serious harm or death.
The scheme is a rapid communication tool which can be used by the police and school. The system relies on members of the public registering to receive the alerts via text or email. Once the alerts are received, people can then look out for the missing child.

For more information and to register individually please use the links below:
https://www.gov.uk/government/news/sign-up-to-child-rescue-alert-text-scheme-home-secretary-urges
https://www.missingpersons.police.uk/en-gb/resources/reporting-someone-missing

Links to other policies

This policy links to other safeguarding policies including: Moorlands Learning Trust Educational Visits Policy, Moorlands Learning Trust Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

Contacts

Police 999/ 101

Ilkley Police Station 01274 475306

Bradford Safeguarding Children Board 01274 434361