



# **Townley Primary School and Pre-School**

## **Responding to a Missing Child or a child who has run away from school**

## **OVERVIEW**

Children should never be allowed to leave the premises during school time without prior permission. This policy is put into place to ensure that every action possible is taken to ensure the swift, safe return of that child to school.

This procedure is not for 'Children Missing in Education' (CME) – children in this situation will be followed up using the Cambridgeshire protocol for CME.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To locate any missing child quickly.
- To ensure that all children are kept safely on the school premises during school hours unless they have prior permission to leave.
- To ensure that children who leave school during the school day do so with the headteacher's or other designated member of staff's permission and that they are accompanied by an authorised adult.
- To ensure that teachers and staff keep children under proper supervision at all times.
- To ensure that if a child goes missing during the school day, s/he is located quickly and returned safely to the school.

## **STRATEGIES**

- If a child cannot be found by his/her teacher, the head teacher must be notified immediately and told when and where the child was last seen. Time is of the essence and prompt action must be taken by all.
- The remaining children will be left safe in the care of suitable staff. All other available staff will conduct a thorough search of the child's classroom, play areas, storage areas, toilets and the whole of the school building and school grounds.
- If the child is not found within a short period of time, the police must be called by the head teacher or designated staff member.
- Members of staff, who are not supervising children, will be sent to search the area in the immediate vicinity of the school/pre-school.
- If the child has gone missing at the end of the school day, members of staff may take the most appropriate route home to look for the child. They would also enquire whether the child is likely to have gone to a relative or friend's house and explore these routes as well.
- If a child goes missing during an outing or school visit, the teacher in charge must ensure that the remaining children are safely cared for by the other staff and adults on the trip. An urgent and thorough search should be made of the immediate vicinity if not found quickly the police must be called and the head teacher notified.
- As soon as possible, the parents will be notified that their child is missing.
- The LA will be notified by the head teacher that a child is missing.

- If a member of staff finds the child, the head teacher must be told at once. Parents, police and other authorities will be updated where applicable.
- The head teacher will investigate how the incident occurred and will take appropriate action to ensure that a similar event does not happen again.

## **CHILDREN WHO RUN**

If a child runs away from school and is in the eye-line of adults, the adult should call after the child or try to talk to the child to persuade them to come back. Under NO circumstances should a member of staff physically restrain or handle the child, unless the child is in imminent danger of hurting themselves or others e.g. running into the road. Adults **MUST NOT** run after the child as this could encourage the child to run further or into the road. Please see guidance on restrictive physical intervention guidelines.

A member of staff should **NEVER** put themselves at risk in the process and should not attempt to intervene without assistance, unless it is an obvious emergency. The member of staff should ring the police, inform the head teacher and ring parents.

## **OUTCOMES**

The safety of all children will be given our highest priority. A missing child should be an extremely rare occurrence. This policy is designed to put into place swift and effective actions to locate any missing child and to notify and involve parents and the authorities at every appropriate point.