



## Heronswood Pre-School & Wraparound

### Missing Child Policy

Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the outings 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 as follows.

#### ***If a child goes missing on the premises:-***

The manager/deputy should be informed immediately. He/she should then arrange for all of the other children to be assembled in one place with an appropriate member of staff, while the manager/deputy and any other available staff carry out a thorough search of the building and outdoor areas.

The register is checked to make sure no other child has gone astray.

If the child cannot be found, the **Head of School** and the **DSL at Heronswood Primary School** must be informed and the registering parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police. The search should continue until the police arrive.

If possible a member of staff should go to the child's house in case they have gone home. They should take the school mobile phone with them and report to the manager/deputy manager as soon as they arrive there.

The manager/deputy manager/talks to the staff to find out when the child was last seen and details of this are recorded.

The manager/deputy manager reports the incident to the **DSL**, and an investigation is carried out, and a report recorded.

#### **If a child goes missing whilst on an outing:-**

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the manager/deputy manager asks all the children to stand with their designated person on the outing and carries out a headcount. One member of staff searches the immediate vicinity.

The manager/deputy manager contacts the police and reports the child as missing. The registering parent is informed. Staff take the remaining children back to the setting. A designated staff member may be advised by the police to remain at the venue until they arrive.

### **The Investigation**

The manager and Head of School speaks to the parent(s)

The governing body may carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all staff on the premises at the times or on the outing.

The manager/deputy manager writes an incident report detailing:-

- The date and time of the incident.
- What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the designated person 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 since the child went missing.

A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach happened.



If an 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. The local 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 designated carer responsible on trips and outings.

Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and be afraid. The head/manager/deputy manager needs to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated, but receive support while feeling vulnerable.

When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff present, one of whom is the manager and the other should be the Head of School or chair of governors. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and 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 always answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.

In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. The head/chair of governors will use their discretion to decide what action to be taken.

Staff **MUST NOT** discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

**Policy written – February 2017**

**By Pat Croom – Pre-School Manager**

**Ratified by Governors – May 2017**

**Policy to be reviewed – February 2019**