



THE FEDERATION OF HACKBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL & SPENCER NURSERY SCHOOL

Missing Child Policy and Procedure

The Federation of Hackbridge Primary School and Spencer Nursery School takes the safety of children very seriously and every precaution necessary to ensure that the children in their care do not leave the school sites unaccompanied. The chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if a child's absence is soon discovered. In the unlikely event that a child is noted to be missing from the 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 put in place to contribute to the prevention of a child going missing and to ensure the safety and security of 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:

Procedure if a child leaves the school/s unaccompanied:

STAGE ONE – Search systematically

- All available staff to immediately check toilets, shared areas, rooms and playgrounds/outdoor areas to ensure child is not hiding or locked in anywhere.
- One member of staff to immediately inform the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.
- The office staff to check whether the child has been signed out for an external appointment, or has an internal appointment with a visiting professional and then collect register.
- One member of staff to gather the whole class and call the register to confirm that one named child is missing.
- Staff will ensure that all other pupils are kept safe and closely supervised throughout.

STAGE TWO

- If stage one is completed without resolution (no more than 10 minutes) a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or office staff will contact the police and parents/carers with parental responsibility. At this point the school will support the police who will lead the response to the incident. The Headteacher / SLT staff member will liaise with the emergency services and the parents/carers.
- Staff will call registers in all classes throughout the school/s to confirm presence of other pupils.

STAGE THREE

- The Headteacher / SLT staff member should communicate the incident to the Local Authority, Local Children's Safeguarding Board and the Chair of Governors.
- A written record of the incident and any actions taken should be made as soon after the incident as practicable and put in the pupil's personal confidential record.

- The SLT should conduct an internal investigation to establish how the situation occurred, how effective the response was 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 easily accessible.
- If the police are called, then the Local Children’s Safeguarding Board will be informed. The school/s will co-operate fully in any investigation.
- The following information will be provided:
 - What systems are in place for preventing such occurrences?
 - What we did, at what time and in what order
 - Who we informed and when
- If the Headteacher of Chair of Governors is not on the premise/s, they will be informed as soon as possible.
- We will record:
 - A record will be built as soon as possible in the incident log, to include:
 - The last definite sighting of the child
 - Any unusual behaviour of the missing child or other children
 - How many children were on the premises
 - How many adults were on the premises and who
 - What steps have been taken and when, by whom

Dealing with people’s reactions:

We accept that the child’s parents/carers will be frightened, distressed and angry.

We accept that in such circumstances powerful emotions are involved and people’s behaviour can be unpredictable. Those who may seem calm about the incident at the time can later become angry, threaten legal action or approach local press.

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 the following:

- A full investigation is in hand.
- The Local Children’s Safeguarding Board has been informed and is investigating.

Dealing with the media

Distressed parents/carers may contact the local press, or reporters may hear about the incident if police are involved. The Headteacher will contact the Local Authority Press Department and take advice. All adults will be asked to refer all enquiries to the agreed spokesperson.

The spokesperson for the Federation is: Mrs Emma Walford, Headteacher.

When the child is found

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

- The child also might have been afraid and distressed and might now be in need of comfort
- To remain calm, reassure the child and acknowledge it is not the child’s fault
- To ensure the child is not hurt

- That the incident provides a good opportunity to talk to all children to ensure that they understand they must not leave the premises and why

After the incident

- We will review current procedures
- We will evaluate processes and make necessary adjustments to ensure future effectiveness

Contacts

Police (emergency)	999 or 112
Police (non-emergency)	101
Safer Neighbourhood Team	020 8721 2773
Education Safeguarding & Wellbeing Lead	020 8288 5630 / 07736 338 180

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Security Policy and Guidelines

Policy adopted: March 2017

Reviewed: Autumn 2019