



Missing Child Policy

Newcastle Preparatory School (NPS) takes its role of 'In Loco Parentis' very seriously and as such will always make every possible and foreseeable effort to ensure the safeguarding of every child in our care. It is also our responsibility to plan for when things go wrong, and this policy covers the actions that will be taken should any pupil go missing during the school day.

The Head Teacher will take charge of any such events in the first instance. If the Head Teacher is absent the Deputy Head Teacher will deputise.

OVERVIEW

Children are never allowed to leave the premises alone during school time. Due to the split-site nature of NPS, children are required to walk to the sports hall for PE and some other activities. The procedure for this movement is as follows:

1. Children will be lined up in their usual classroom in pairs and counted.
2. One teacher will lead the column, with one following behind as they move to the exit door.
3. Children will pause on the path outside before moving into the street and will be counted again.
4. The column of pairs (holding hands), with one teacher in front and one at the rear, will make its way to the sports hall.
5. At the crossing point opposite the end of Lambton Street's northernmost footpath, the lead teacher or helper will check the road is clear, and will then stand in the middle of the road as the column crosses the road.
6. Children will wait at the gate of the sports hall for the gate to be opened, and will move inside the grounds before one final count is taken.
7. At the end of activities, break times or PE, children will be counted and then the safe movement in point (5) will be adhered to.
8. Buses for transport to a trip / swimming will, wherever possible, park immediately outside the school. Points 1-4 (above) will be followed, with children moving into the bus before being counted.

SECURITY MEASURES IN PLACE

- Staff will maintain the correct adult to child ratios.
- Staff maintain the appropriate level of supervision throughout the day and are aware of the location of the children in their care at all times.
- A register is taken each morning and afternoon
- All final exits are monitored by CCTV to monitor people coming and going, and where 'mag-locks' have been fitted, buttons to gain exit are beyond the reach of the younger children to promote security.
- There is a push-bar fire exit out from the main hall which, it is possible may be unobserved. CCTV is present to record any usage of this door and children would not usually be in there unsupervised, and certainly not the younger children.

- The gate from the yard has a key-pad system to allow entrance to- as well as exit from the yard, to ensure security. The code is changed regularly

Nevertheless it is possible, however unlikely, that a child may leave the premises without the knowledge or permission of the form teacher or Headteacher. This policy is put in place to ensure that every action possible is taken to ensure the quick and safe return of that child to school.

OBJECTIVES

1. To locate any missing child quickly.
2. To ensure that children who leave school during the school day only do so with the form teacher's permission and that they are accompanied by supervising adults.
3. To ensure that the building, grounds and play areas are secure during school hours.
4. To ensure that teachers and staff keep children under proper supervision at all times, and especially when off-site.
5. To ensure that if a child goes missing during the school day, that he / she is located quickly and returned safely to the school.

STRATEGIES

1. If a child cannot be found by their supervising adult, the Headteacher must be notified immediately and told when and where the child was last seen. Time is of the essence and prompt actions must be taken by all.
2. The remaining children will stay in the care of suitable staff. All other available staff will conduct a thorough search of the school, including classrooms, playground, storage areas and toilets.
3. If the child is not found within a short period of time, the police will be called by the Head Teacher.
4. Members of staff not supervising children will be sent to search the immediate vicinity of the school, with particular attention given to the area towards the sports hall.
5. 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. An urgent but thorough search should be made of the immediate vicinity and if the child is not found quickly the police must be called and the Headteacher notified. If in an enclosed space the appropriate staff in that environment may be informed before calling the police, for instance to give a message over a public-address system.
6. As soon as possible, the parents or guardians will be notified that their child is missing.
7. If a member of staff finds the child the Head Teacher must be told at once. Parents, police and any other authorities involved will be notified.

8. The Head Teacher will investigate how the incident occurred and will take appropriate action to ensure that similar events do not happen again, including amending appropriate policies and risk assessments as required.

OUTCOMES

The safety of all children is our highest priority. A missing child should be an extremely rare occurrence. Together with the measures already employed at exit points and when children are guided off-site, this policy is intended to plan for the rarest of circumstances with the most pragmatic approach to a good outcome.

Reviewed September 2021