



Bryony School

Missing Child Policy and Procedure

1. Bryony School takes the safety of children very seriously and will take every precaution necessary, to ensure that the children in our care are unable to leave school unaccompanied.

The chances of finding a missing child safe are greater if the child's absence is soon discovered and the school's procedure is followed as set out below.

Procedure if a child leaves the setting unaccompanied

2. If, in the unlikely event of a member of staff not being able to account for a child's whereabouts, the following action will be taken:

- We will gather the remaining children into one large group, with a few adults, leaving the remaining adults to search.
- Ask the children, without alarming them, if they have seen the child that is missing.
- Ensure all adults in the building are aware of the situation.
- Establish who last saw the missing child, where and when.
- Check all rooms in the building.
- Check the immediate outside area.

Informing people

- If after a thorough search of the premises, the child is still missing, the school will inform the **police**.
- The **child's parent/carer** will be informed and if they are unavailable, Bryony School will use the alternative contacts in the child's registration details.
- If the **Headteacher** is not on the premises, he will be informed as soon as possible.
- If the police are called, then the Kent and **Medway Safeguarding Children's Partnership**, the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** and **Ofsted** will be informed.

3. Whilst waiting for the police and the parent/carer to arrive, **searches for the child will continue**. If the child lives within walking distance of the setting, at least one adult will make the journey on foot in order to catch up with or intercept the child if possible.

Nominated lead coordinator

4. The Headteacher or a staff member in their absence, will be responsible for coordinating efforts to find the missing child. They will meet the police and the missing child's parent/carer. That person will coordinate any actions instructed by the police, and do all they can to reassure the parents/carers.

5. The nominated person will start to build an incident record, as soon as possible in the incident log, this will include witness reports:

- 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 names?
- What steps have been taken, when and by whom.

Comforting parents/carers

6. We accept that in such circumstances powerful emotions are involved and people's behaviour can be unpredictable. 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:

- How sorry you are that the incident has happened.
- That a full investigation is in hand.
- That the Medway Safeguarding Children's Partnership and Ofsted have been informed and will be investigating.

Informing other parents

7. We recognise that other parents will need to be given brief, accurate information, as rapidly as possible. We will ensure that this happens by either:

- Calling a short meeting when parents or carers collect children.
- Talking to parents/carers when they arrive at the next session.
- Sending a note home with each child.

When the child is found

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

- That the child also might have been afraid and distressed and might now be in need of comfort.
- Remain calm, reassure the child and acknowledge it is not the child's fault.
- Ensure the child is not hurt.
- That the incident provides a good opportunity to talk to all the children to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises, and why.

Dealing with the media

9. Distressed parents may contact the local press, or reporters may hear about the incident if the police are involved. All adults will be asked to refer all enquiries to the agreed spokesperson, **Mrs Gee, Headteacher**

Post-incident

10. We will review our current procedure in light of the guidance of the police, Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures and Ofsted to ensure that this incident will never happen again.

Useful Numbers

Medway Police: 999 / 01634 891055

OFSTED 0300 123 1231

Bryony School's Insurance policy: Employers' Liability Insurance, Ecclesiastical. Policy *(renewed 1st July annually)*

Last Reviewed by Head teacher	August 2022
Date of Next Review	August 2024

Related Policies and Procedures

- Safeguarding Policy.
- Child Collection Policy.
- Registration Procedure (requiring at least two emergency contact details).
- Outings Policy and Procedure.