Safeguarding appendix 3a – Missing Child Policy

Low Ash Primary School

Approved by:	**The Governing Body**	Date 21.10.20
Last reviewed on:	**16.10.19**	
Next review due by:	**Autumn Term 2022**	

Rationale

Low Ash Primary School takes seriously its responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in its care. This includes taking steps to ensure that the school environment is safe and secure, having systems in place to avoid pupils going missing and having clear procedures identifying what will happen if a child does go missing.

In implementing this policy due consideration to equal opportunities, with regard to race, gender, religion and ability, should be ensured with reference to the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 (as amended) and all other relevant legislation.

Procedures to avoid a child going missing

- Registers are taken at start of each session, morning and afternoon. Any absence that has not been notified to school is followed up by the learning mentor or office staff (the Attendance Policy gives detail on this)
- Staffing and supervision levels meet requirements for children of different ages.
- Children who have left school early, because of an appointment or through illness, are signed out at the office.
- School security is designed to minimise the risk of a child going missing. External gates are locked at 9.05am and unlocked at 3pm.
- The Nursery is accessed via a secure entrance that can only be opened by a member of staff with their access card or from inside the nursery building.
- Staff are made aware if there are circumstances for a particular child which might increase the potential for them going missing.
- Children are taught about keeping safe as part of the curriculum and through assemblies.

Routines for dismissal at the end of school sessions are relevant to age and maturity of pupils.

- In Nursery, Reception and Year 1 a member of staff directly hands children over on sight of a known adult collecting from classroom doors.
- In Years 2, 3 and 4 children are dismissed from the cloakroom or classroom external door with a member of staff at door. Children are expected to come back in to school if there is no adult there for them.
- Children in Years 5 and 6 are allowed to make their own way home. If they are normally collected by an adult, they are expected to come back into school if their adult is not there.
- No child is allowed to leave with another adult unless this is by prior arrangement or unless permission has been given by a parent/carer after telephone contact has been made.
- Children who are collected by external after school clubs are collected from their classroom external door. Class teachers have lists of children who are collected by these providers and on which days so they are aware of which children to send to the office.
- Dismissal after an extra-curricular activity is from the year 6 entrance. Children are collected by known adults, unless they have permission to make their own way home (Years 5 and 6).

Procedures to be taken in the event of a child going missing – see child absconding / missing from school protocols

In following all procedures outlined in the protocols, staff should consider the age and understanding of the child and the potential risk of accident, injury or harm.

After the event of a child going missing

- A review of security arrangements, policies and procedures should be undertaken to minimise the risk of a future occurrence. Any necessary adjustments should be made as a matter of urgency.
- If the child has been missing but found before parents/carers and/or the police have been informed, the parent/carer should be notified of the occurrence and review of procedures should also take place.
- A report on the incident should be documented and made available to Ofsted at the time of inspection.
- Children should be reminded of how to keep themselves safe and what to do if they are lost.

Educational visits (See also Education Visits Policy)

- Planning and risk assessments undertaken before the trip should ensure that consideration is given to all aspects of safety and well-being, including the potential for a child going missing. A decision should be made regarding whether school uniform should be worn for the visit.
- Adult/pupil ratios must fulfil minimum requirements for different types of visits and different ages of pupils.
- Before the visit, pupils are briefed on safety issues and advised that if they find themselves apart from the group they should report to a responsible person, for example, a uniformed member of staff, giving their name and the name of the school.
- Regular headcounts are made to check that all children are present.
- Children are organised into groups and group leaders are expected to make sure that their children are accounted for. Any child missing from a group should be reported to the visit leader without delay.
- Toilet breaks should be escorted by an adult, ideally taking the group at the same time.
- In the event of a child going missing, staff will follow the 'Child missing / abducted from an educational visit' or 'child absconding from an educational visit' protocol.

Children who are not collected at the end of a session

There may be circumstances which result in a parent/carer not arriving on time to collect a child at the end of a session. This does not necessarily present a concern unless it is happening on a regular basis. The following procedures describe the steps taken when a child is not collected at the end of a session.

- Any child who is not collected within ten minutes of the session ending will be taken to the office. The child is reassured that they will be looked after and not to worry.
- Parents/carers are contacted in order of priority for contacts in school records.
- On arrival, the parent/carer is expected to give their reason for late collection and, if necessary, reminded of the time that the session ends.
- If no contact has been made by half an hour after the end of a session, Children's Services will be contacted.
- Records will be kept, logging the child's name, date, time of collection and reason for late collection.
- Persistent late collection will be raised as a potential child protection issue with parent/carer. Where appropriate, the school may seek involvement of other agencies, such as Education Social Work Service, to support issues associated with late collection.

Policy review

The policy will be reviewed by the Full Governing Body - Resources Committee every two years, or earlier if deemed necessary.

Signed: …….

Chair of Governors

Date reviewed: November 2026

Review date: November 2028