

John Blandy Primary School



Missing Child Policy

**Belong. Believe. Brilliant.
Together We Thrive**

Approved by: Suzanne Elliott **Date:** 6th September 2025

Last reviewed on: 6th September 2025

Next review due by: 6th September 2028

Policy Statement

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 followed.

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing the staff alert the teacher and nearby staff.
- The teacher / Teaching Assistants will carry out a thorough search of the immediate building and grounds.
- The register is checked to make sure no other child is missing.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could have exited the grounds.
- The teacher/teaching assistants will speak to staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- The Head / senior leaders are informed and they will carry out a thorough search of the whole school grounds /area with all other available staff.
- If the child is not found, the parent/carer is contacted. The parent/carer would be asked to walk to School using the normal route that the child would take to come to school.
- The missing child is reported to the police.
- An investigation is carried out.

Child going missing on an outing

This describes what to do when staff have taken a small group on an outing, leaving other staff / children back in the school.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. The lead teacher on the trip searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The Head is contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- The teacher/Headteacher contacts the police and reports the child as missing.
- In an indoor venue, the staff contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The teacher/Headteacher contacts the parent/carer, who will make their way to the school or outing venue as agreed with the Lead teacher. The school is advised of the meeting point, as by the time the parent/carer arrives, the child may have been returned.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the school.
- The lead teacher, or designated staff member may be advised by the police to stay at the venue until they arrive.
- An investigation is carried out by the Headteacher.

The investigation (in conjunction with our Critical Incidence & Business Continuity Plan)

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Headteacher speaks with the parent(s)/carer(s).
- The Headteacher carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff or those who were on the outing.
- The key staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - ✓ The date and time of the report.
 - ✓ Which staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated 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 that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- The Cambrian Learning Trust is informed.
- If the 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 (see the Reporting of Accidents and Incidents policy); the local authority Health and Safety Officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- Disciplinary action may be taken.

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 key person responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- ✚ Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Senior leaders need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- ✚ The parents/carers will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the Headteacher. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent/carer, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Headteacher. No matter how understandable the parent's/carer's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the 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 answer children's questions honestly but also reassure them.
- ✚ In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The Headteacher will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- ✚ Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press, in line with the Critical Incidence & Business Continuity Plan for the school, without taking advice and should respect the confidential nature of such incidents as detailed in the school's Code of Conduct.

