

## Missing Child Policy

At Teach Major, we prioritise the safety of children and take every precaution necessary to ensure that the children in our care do not leave a session unaccompanied. Action must take place immediately in the case of a missing child and the chances of finding a missing child safe are greatest if the child's absence is soon discovered. In the unlikely event that a child is noted to be missing from school premises, Teach Major's missing child procedures ensure the most effective resolution which is as follows:

Stage One – A systematic search will start promptly, ensuring all available staff check toilets, shared areas, rooms and playgrounds to ensure the child is not hiding or locked in anywhere. If the child is not found, one member of staff will inform Teach Major office/management staff and the school office or headteacher. Staff will ensure all other pupils are kept safe and closely supervised throughout. Staff should remain calm in the event of a child being reported missing.

Stage Two – In the event that stage one was completed without resolution (no more than 10 minutes), Teach Major Staff will contact the police and parents/carers. From here, the police will lead the response to the incident. Teach Major and School staff should liaise with the police and parents.

Stage Three - The Teach Major management and the school headteacher should communicate the incident to the appropriate Local Authority Office. A written record of the incident and any action taken should be made as soon after the incident as practicable and placed in the pupil's record which will be stored securely. The senior management team and Teach Major's management team 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.

Teach Major must record information such as, but not limited to:

- What happened
- What systems are in place for preventing such occurrences
- What we did, at what time and in what order
- Who we informed and when

We will cooperate fully in any investigation, recording any incidents in our incident log, which will 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?

We accept that the child's parents/carers will be frightened, distressed and angry. If the setting shares all policies with parents/carers, the situation will be easier for all because there will be an understanding of working within a framework of mutual trust and understanding. We accept that in such circumstances powerful emotions are involved and people's behaviour can be unpredictable.

Those who may seem quite calm about the incident at the time can later become angry, threaten legal action or approach the local press. We will be clear about the circumstances surrounding the incident and will respond sympathetically to questions without implications or admission of responsibility.

Distressed parents/carers may contact the local press, or reporters may hear about the incident if the police are involved. It is sensible for one person, usually someone from the senior management team that will act as the spokesperson for TeachMajor. All adults will be asked to refer all enquiries to the agreed spokesperson. We recognise that during the time a child is missing, however briefly, parents/carers 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 the following:

- 1. That the child also might have been afraid and distressed and might now be in need of comfort.
- 2. Remain calm, reassure the child and acknowledge it is not the child's fault.
- 3. Ensure the child is not hurt.
- 4. 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.

Following an incident, we will review our current procedures and evaluate processes and make necessary adjustments to ensure future effectiveness.