



1 December 2016

Dear Parent/Carer

### **New Initiative to Locate Children who go missing from Home**

Sometimes children go missing. This is normally because they have wandered away from the area they were playing to go and play with a new friend. When this type of report is received, all avenues will be covered to locate the child. In the majority of cases the child is located in a very short time.

If the child is not found, all Police resources will be deployed. This will include: Air Support, Dog Section and dependant on the geographical area, Marine Unit and Mountain Rescue.

This is a very traumatic time for the family; with those searching knowing that a young child is vulnerable and time to find them is critical.

Schools and Durham County Council have agreed to work with police to help in the search for missing children.

As you will be aware because of the text messages you receive, schools hold contact telephone numbers for each parent and carer of children attending their school. This information is kept confidential and is held on the school's database and it can only be accessed by school staff.

It is proposed in the future if a child is reported missing by parents or carers and is not located quickly, that Police will be able to contact a staff member of school the child attends and they will dictate a message which will be sent to each parent and carer held on the school's information system, to ask for information to help locate the child, for example if the missing child is playing with your child. Police will also appeal to parents and carers not to telephone them if they do not hold relevant information, so that any calls with information can be taken and dealt with swiftly.

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Once the child is located a further message will be sent to make parents and carers aware of this.

At no time will telephone numbers of parents and carers be passed on to anyone else, they will remain protected by the school. It is hoped that by working together we can provide speedy positive results.

I am sure you will recognise that this new initiative will help to keep children safe. However, if you do not wish to be contacted should a child go missing out of school hours then please inform your child's school who will ensure this does not happen.

Yours sincerely



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