



Vanished Children's Alliance

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School Call Back Program

We Encourage Your School's Participation



What is the Purpose of the School Call-Back Program?

The purpose of this program is to notify parents immediately should their child become missing or abducted on his or her way to school ~ thereby saving seven critical hours in the search. In the case of first grader Etan Patz, his parents were not notified until the end of the day that he did not arrive at school. Etan Patz is still missing.

For this reason, when a student, primarily in elementary or middle school, does not arrive as scheduled and an hour passes without notification from the parents, the school should call the home or place of employment of the parent to verify that the absence is excused. If the parent is unaware of the absence, specific procedures should be followed at once. This notification system is critical if missing children are to be found expeditiously.

Suggested Steps for Setting Up a Call-Back Program

1. Talk to the principal, Home & School Club, and the P.T.A.
2. Recruit volunteers who have proper authorization (1-2 per day depending on the number of absence calls per day the school receives and the size of the school).
3. Have the principal meet with the teachers to explain the purpose of the school call-back program and the importance of getting the student attendance records to the office by the designated time.
4. Introduce the volunteers to the principal and the school staff they will be working with so they can discuss, develop, and implement the program.
5. Explain the call-back program in the school newspaper or bulletins and send home bulletins with the child. Announce the beginning date and explain that when all of the classroom attendance records have been received by the school office, a volunteer parent will begin calling the home of those students whose parents have not contacted the office regarding their child's absence.
6. Parents should also be told the time of day volunteers will begin calling them.
7. Request that parents do the following regarding their child's school attendance:
 - ◆ Call the school office EVERY day their child is absent by _____ time.
 - ◆ Maintain an up-to-date Emergency Card for their child.
 - ◆ Let the school know in advance if the parents are going out of town.
 - ◆ If a child arrives late to school, remind them to go to the office first to check in with the attendance person.

Call-Back Program Model

What You Need:

1. The previous day's absentee list.
2. The current day's morning call-in list.
3. Each teacher's absentee slip for the current day
4. Emergency file.

What To Do:

1. Take each teacher's absentee slip and for each child:
 - ◆ Check the previous day's absentee list for students who have already been excused for the current day.
 - ◆ Check the current day's morning call-in list for students who have already been excused for that day.
 - ◆ Any child who is not excused for the current day should be entered on the call-back list.
 - ◆ Check with the office to verify that none of the children on the call-back list have arrived to school late or have been excused.
2. For each child on the call-back list:
 - ◆ Locate the child's emergency card.
 - ◆ Call the child's home, the parents' places of employment, or listed neighbors, friends, or relatives until you find someone who knows the whereabouts of the child.
3. For each child whose location is verified:
 - ◆ Record the name of the person contacted on the call-back list.
 - ◆ Record the reason given for the child's absence.
 - ◆ If necessary, suggest that the child's emergency card be updated.
4. For those children whose location is not verified immediately:
 - ◆ Re-verify with the principal, the school secretary, and the child's teacher that the student is not at school.
 - ◆ If the child is not located and s/he rides the bus to school, speak with the school bus driver.
 - ◆ Speak to the child's friends and classmates.
 - ◆ Follow the school's emergency procedures for a missing child, which should include calling local law enforcement and the Vanished Children's Alliance for assistance.

