



## Missing Pupil Policy and Procedures

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## **Introduction**

This policy is applicable to all pupils in both Junior House and Senior House. It has been drafted in compliance with *Keeping Children Safe In Education (September 2024)* and should be read in conjunction with the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*, which is available on the School's website.

The School expects to be notified by parents or legal guardians of all pupil absences either in advance of the day or at the start of the day they are absent. The School will follow up any unexplained absences as soon as is practicable using the procedures detailed below. Where reasonably possible the School will hold more than one emergency contact for each pupil so that the School has additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

It is important to distinguish between a pupil's absence from school for an unknown reason (Children Missing in Education) and a pupil's disappearance from a lesson or activity after arrival at school. Please also see the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* for details of the procedures to follow for Children Missing in Education.

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines.

Children going missing, particularly persistently (including during the school day), can also act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation. The School's *Safeguarding Policy, appendix G*, sets out the School's approach, both to support early help assessments when problems are first emerging and also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as those on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where going missing from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. School attendance registers are carefully monitored to identify any trends. Action should be taken in accordance with the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*, if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

## **Responsibility**

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for matters which are the subject of this policy. All staff have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

All members of staff contribute to the safety of pupils at the School by providing appropriate supervision under the guidance of the Headmaster and the Deputy Head.

It is the duty of staff in charge of any pupil supervision to check why a pupil is absent, although during the school day this may be delegated if that member of staff is busy.

## **Procedures for Monitoring the Whereabouts of Pupils**

To establish whether a pupil is missing it is a requirement to monitor the whereabouts of pupils. This includes use of the following procedures:

- Statutory registration: Form Tutors will register classes in both the morning (8:30-8:50 am) and afternoon (3.30-3.35 pm) via SIMS. Sixth Form pupils have their afternoon registration at the end of lunch.
- In all school activities on site, staff should be aware of the pupils they should have in their care. This includes taking registers for extra-curricular clubs before and after school.

- In school activities off site, the list of pupils in attendance should be presented to Reception. This includes taking registers for extra-curricular clubs off site.

### **Absence Recording and Registration**

- Form Tutors, when notified, must record planned absences onto SIMS or ask the Headmaster's PA to do so as soon as the School is notified and permission is granted by the Headmaster/Deputy Head.
- Parents are expected to contact the School every day their child is absent unless previous permission has been granted. Such absences must be recorded on SIMS when notified to the School.
- Form Tutors will register classes in both the morning and afternoon via SIMS.
- If a pupil is present, mark with: /. If a pupil is absent, mark with: N. The Form Tutor or Headmaster's PA will follow up all absences marked "Unknown reason: N" before 9:30 in the morning.
- Late pupils who miss registration must sign in at Reception.
- Off site, staff must make meeting times and locations clear to all pupils. Regular head counts must be undertaken, especially when moving from one location to another.
- On site after school, pupils are registered in after-school clubs. At the end of the session, Junior House pupils must be signed out by the person collecting them. Registers are also kept by those operating After School Care in Senior House and those attending must sign out when leaving the premises.

### **When would a pupil be identified as missing?**

A pupil may be identified as missing:

- If an absence from school is not confirmed by contacting the home contact.
- Off site, if there is a no show at a regular head count.
- On site, if a pupil does not show at a school activity. The member of staff should contact the Headmaster's PA.
- By a report of a missing child by a fellow pupil.

**Any member of staff discovering a discrepancy must immediately notify the School Reception in person, or on extension 2001 (external line 0191 255 3980).**

### **Missing Pupil Procedures**

#### **1. Pupils absent from School for an unknown reason:**

- At 9.15am the Receptionist will produce a list of pupils unaccounted for – i.e. those pupils who are not marked as present but for whom the School has not received a message from home regarding absence through sickness etc. The Headmaster's PA will then go to the relevant classes to check on these pupils' attendance during P1.
- If a pupil is found to be absent from school and no notification has been received from parents/guardians, the Headmaster's PA will then ring home for confirmation of absence.
- Where the home contact is not immediately available, the Headmaster's PA will continue to try all contact numbers. If no contact can be made having tried regularly (at least every 15 minutes), Reception will inform the Deputy Head by no later than break time (10.10 am/10.35 am on Wednesdays) for follow up;
- Where the home contact has been spoken to and the pupil's absence is not confirmed with them, Headmaster's PA will immediately contact either the Deputy Head or Headmaster.

#### **2. Pupils identified as missing during the school day:**

On receiving notification of a discrepancy, Reception will:

- Check the sign out book to see if the pupil has signed in/out.

- Check the trips/visits lists (check: SharePoint/Staff/Educational Visits), fixtures and calendar to see if the pupil can be located.
- Phone home if the pupil has not been registered at an after-school club so that the School can ascertain if the parents have collected that pupil early for any reason.
- Contact the Form Tutor who will make the necessary checks such as with the form teacher to assess whether the absence is expected and ask pupils in the class where appropriate if they know the pupil's whereabouts
- If the pupil is identified as missing on a trip off site, then the trip leader will contact the member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) who is on call. The procedures in step 3 below will then be followed.

### **3. Member of the SLT managing the incident:**

The member of SLT will manage the incident, immediately inform the Deputy Head (in their role as Designated Safeguarding Lead) and, where appropriate, initiate and oversee a search of the site. That member of SLT will advise all teachers (via email or phone call) that they must immediately inform The School Office if the pupil appears. If the site search fails, not later than 1 hour after commencing searching, the member of SLT managing the incident will:

- Inform the Headmaster, the Deputy Head (in their role as DSL) and parents (parents will be kept informed of all progress).
- If appropriate, initiate a search of the local area.
- At their discretion, and in consultation with the parents where possible (and usually not later than 45 minutes of a search commencing), the DSL will arrange for the police and Children's Social Care to be informed and will decide at what point it is appropriate to inform the Chair of Governors. The Headmaster will then plan for dealing with media enquiries.

Any decision to contact Children's Social Care will be taken in accordance with the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* and procedures.

### **4. Resolution of the incident:**

If the pupil is found on site or in the vicinity, the School staff will make a concerted effort to persuade the pupil to return to the School or to re-join the main group if on an educational visit. If the pupil refuses to do so, staff members at the scene will attempt to continue to monitor the pupil's whereabouts. Staff must contact the parents in such circumstances.

When the pupil is found, or the incident is otherwise resolved, the member of SLT managing the incident will inform the Head, the DSL and parents, directly.

The DSL will inform the police and Children's Social Care if they have been involved.

### **5. Investigation:**

Following resolution of the incident, the Headmaster will initiate a full investigation, and require a written report from the member of SLT managing the incident. This report and the incident log will be kept on the pupil's file and in a central record of all such incidents. The Headmaster will advise the Chair of Governors as appropriate.

### **Risk Assessment**

Where a concern about a pupil's welfare is identified, the risks to that pupil's welfare will be assessed and appropriate action will be taken to reduce the risks identified.

The format of risk assessment may vary and may be included as part of the School's overall response to a welfare issue, including the use of individual pupil welfare plans (such as behaviour, healthcare and education plans, as appropriate). Regardless of the form used, the School's approach to promoting pupil welfare will be systematic and pupil focused.

The Headmaster has overall responsibility for ensuring that matters which affect pupil welfare are adequately risk assessed and for ensuring that the relevant findings are implemented, monitored and evaluated.

Day to day responsibility to carry out risk assessments under this policy will be delegated to the DSL who has been properly trained in, and tasked with, carrying out the assessment.

### **Policy Review**

The Governors will undertake an annual review of this policy, its procedures and its operation as part of the School's annual review of safeguarding and update it as necessary.

### **Missing Pupil Procedure**

#### **Appendix 1**

#### **Questions that could be asked when interviewing during a missing pupil investigation**

- When was the pupil last seen?
- Who was the pupil with?
- What were they wearing?
- What emotional state did the pupil appear to be in?
- Has anything upset the pupil recently?
- Did the pupil speak to anyone about leaving?
- Who are the pupil's main friends at School?
- Is there any reason to believe the pupil might have been abducted (e.g. custody dispute) or otherwise at risk?
- Does the pupil have family or family friends in the vicinity?

#### **Information to be provided to the Police/Children's Social Care**

- the pupil's name;
- the pupil's age/date of birth;
- an up-to-date photograph if possible;
- the pupil's height and any other physical description that is not shown by the photograph;
- a description of the clothing the pupil is thought to be wearing;
- any physical disability, learning difficulty or special educational needs that the pupil may have;
- the pupil's home address and telephone number and details of their parents/guardians;
- the pupil's mobile phone number if known;
- any relevant background information on the pupil's school record or home situation;
- any relevant comments made by the pupil or other pupils.

#### **Record keeping**

The School will keep a full written record of any incident of a missing pupil. This written record will be kept on the pupil file and on CPOMS. The written record will include:

- the pupil's name;
- relevant dates and times (e.g. when it was first noticed that the pupil was missing)
- the action taken to find the pupil;
- whether the Police or Children's Social Care were involved;
- outcome or resolution of the incident;
- any reasons given by the pupil for being missing;
- any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident;
- a record of the staff involved;
- any recommendations concerning future incidents.

**Further information and support, includes:**

- Guidance on school attendance 'Working together to improve school attendance' including information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.
- Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: Children Missing Education.