

MISSING CHILD POLICY

If a child goes missing from the school site:

- The missing child will be reported to a member of staff and the Head of Junior School/ Deputy Head/Head of Sixth Form and Head of Year will then be informed.
- The class register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone missing.
- The teacher in charge of the class will arrange for an initial search of the building and garden calmly and without panic. A search will be made of likely locations within the school and the School Nurse telephoned.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a pupil may have wandered out.
- The Head or Deputy talks to staff and pupils to establish what happened, where, when and with whom and in what frame of mind the child was last seen.
- The Headmistress or Deputy is then informed and consulted before any further action is taken.
- A thorough search of the site is then made. Staff and senior pupils are delegated to thoroughly search the school premises.
- If the child is not found the parent or guardians are contacted. Care and forethought will be needed so as not to alarm parents unduly. They do need to be informed as the child may contact them directly.
- Local police are contacted and the missing child is reported. It must be emphasised to the police that it is a child who is missing.

If a child goes missing from an outing:

- Where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the school ensures that there is a procedure that is followed.
- The Group Leader must always carry an accurate list of names so that a missing pupil is quickly identified.
- As soon as it is noticed that a pupil 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 missing.
- One member staff searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that. They should not search for more than 15-20 minutes before enlisting extra/professional help. It is important that the rest of the group is adequately supervised at all times.
- The Group Leader establishes when, where and with whom child was last seen, and in what frame of mind.
- In an indoor venue, the Group Leader should contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The Group Leader must report a missing pupil by telephone to the school as soon as possible.
- The Group Leader must decide whether the party should wait longer, go on or go back but never split the group. Only adults should go for help, remain behind to search, accompany casualties to hospital or (in exceptional cases) at least 2 very senior girls.
- The Group Leader should contact the Headmistress who may contact the child's parents.
- The Group Leader contacts the police, using the school mobile phone, and reports the child as missing.
- Do not under any circumstances allow any group member to make any statements to the media. Refer them to the school.

The investigation

The Headmistress carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time, or who were on the outing.

The Group Leader and key staff write an incident report detailing:

- The date and time of the report;
- What staff/ children were in the group/outing;
- When the child was last seen in the group/outing;
- What has taken place in the group/outing since then; and
- The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation all staff will co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing the staff. Social Services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR arrangements and is recorded in the incident book; the local authority health and safety officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- Governors are informed.
- The Insurance Department at the Pre-School Learning Alliance is informed.
- Ofsted may be informed, if appropriate.

Children Missing in Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. If a child goes missing from education, especially on repeat occasions, it is the responsibility of staff to report this to the Designated Senior Person. It is essential that staff are alert to potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage.

All schools must inform their Local Authority of any pupil who is deleted from the Admissions Register if:

- they are being educated outside of the school system
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable traveling distance
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- are in custody for a period of more than 4 months due to a final court order
- have been permanently excluded.

All schools must inform their Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 schools days or more.

The Deputy Head and Head of Junior School are responsible for this policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

(July 2018)