

MISSING CHILD POLICY

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 Lead. It is essential that staff are alert to potential safeguarding concerns, such as travelling to conflict zones, Honour Based Violence (HBV) including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage.

All schools must inform their Local Authority or Borough 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/or no longer live within a reasonable traveling distance.
- have been certified by the School Nurse as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age and neither she nor her parent(s) have 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.
- they have been permanently excluded.

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

If a child goes missing from the school site:

- The missing child will be reported to a member of staff and the member of SMT/Deputy Head of the Junior School/Head of Junior School or Deputy Head of the Senior School/Head of Sixth Form and Head of Year in the Senior School 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 grounds/garden/playground calmly. A search will be made of likely and possible locations within the school and the School Nurse telephoned.
- Doors and gates will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a pupil/student may have wandered out.
- The member of the JS SMT or SS SLT will talk to staff and pupils/students to establish what happened, where, when and with whom and in what frame of mind the child was last seen.

- The Headmistress or Deputy in the SS/ Head of the Junior School or Deputy will then be informed and consulted before any further action is taken.
- A thorough search of the site will be made. Staff (and senior pupils) will be delegated to thoroughly search the school premises.
- If the child is not found the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. Care and forethought will be needed so as not to alarm them unduly. They do need to be informed as the child may contact them directly.
- Local police will be contacted and the missing child reported. It must be emphasised to the police that it is a child who is missing.

If a child goes missing from a trip/an outing:

- Where parents/guardians are not attending and responsible for their own child, the school will ensure 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 will ask the children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone missing.
- One member staff will search the immediate vicinity but will not search beyond that. They will not search for more than 15-20 minutes before enlisting extra and/or professional help. It is important that the rest of the group is adequately supervised at all times.
- The Group Leader will establish when, where and with whom the child was last seen, and in what frame of mind.
- In an indoor venue, the Group Leader will contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- The Group Leader will report a missing pupil by telephone to a member of the JS SMT/SS SLT at school as soon as possible.
- The Group Leader will 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 will contact the Head of the Junior School/ Headmistress who may contact the child's parents.
- The Group Leader will contact the police, using the school mobile phone, and report the child as missing.
- Under no circumstances is any group member allowed to make any statements to the media. They will be referred to the school.

The investigation

The Headmistress or Head of the Junior School as appropriate will carry 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 will write an incident report detailing:

- The date and time of the report;
- What staff/ children were in the group/on the outing;
- When the child was last seen in the group/on the outing;
- What had taken place in the group/on the outing since then; and
- The time estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion will be drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff will cooperate 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 or safeguarding issue to address.
- The incident will be reported under RIDDOR arrangements and will be 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 will be informed.
- The Insurance Department at the Pre-School Learning Alliance will be informed.
- Ofsted may be informed, if appropriate.

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

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