



2.12 MISSING CHILD POLICY (12b)

2.12.1 REPORTING

Registration is held every morning at 0830. If a child is absent and no valid reason has been provided, the School Office will contact the child's parent/guardian to check why the child is not at school.

Registers are taken at the start of each lesson. If a child is found to be absent/unaccounted for the teacher/person should:

During normal School hours 0830 to 1645 - inform the School Office immediately. The School Office will inform the Head / Deputy Head or, if they are off-site, a member of the Leadership Team (LT). Parents and the police are to be contacted immediately by the Deputy Head or a member of the Leadership Team as soon as it has been established that the pupil is missing.

- **Out of School hours 1645 to 0830** - inform the Head and Deputy Head direct. If the Head or Deputy Head are out of school inform a member of the LT

2.12.2 SEARCH

There should be, where possible, two members of the LT working together when dealing with an incident of a missing pupil.

The Deputy Head would normally be the Designated Lead (DL) person, supported by a member of the LT. If the Deputy Head is off-site then a member of the LT will become the DL.

The DL will be based in the School Office and coordinate the search and carry out the following:

- Record all key information, noting the time when the pupil was unaccounted for/missing
- Initiate a search of the School by the staff - School telephones/walkie talkies to be issued to staff to facilitate contact with the DL or be contactable via own personal phones. The DL will designate areas to be searched and all staff will be informed.
- Video footage to be checked
- Consider whether to phone/text the pupil's mobile, involve students in the search or question anyone in her group regarding the missing pupil

The following questions should be considered in all cases:

- Full description of the pupil who is missing
- When was he/she last seen?
- Who was he/she with?
- Where might he/she have gone?
- Has the pupil signed out?
- Is there a School activity that he/she might be on?
- Has the pupil been ill or injured and gone to Day Room?
- What emotional state did he/she appear to be in?
- Has anything upset the pupil recently?
- Did he/she speak to anyone about leaving?
- Who are the pupil's main friends at School?
- Does the pupil have a mobile phone and what is the number?
- Does the pupil have a special friend?
- Is there any reason to believe he/she might have been abducted (e.g. family custody dispute; very wealthy/ prominent parents.)

Other action to consider taking

Check the pupil's dormitory, bags and locker for indications of how the pupil is dressed, where he/she might have gone

- Check the pupil's desk and waste paper bins for scribbled notes

2.12.3 INFORMATION FOR POLICE

If police are involved and assume responsibility for the search, the School and DL will act in accordance with police advice and may issue a public statement.

The police treat all missing person reports as serious. Each risk is assessed and the following are trigger factors to be considered:

Pupil is in an emotional or depressed state of mind;

- Unusual behaviour prior to disappearance;
- Pupil needs essential medicine or treatment;
- Suspicion of abduction;
- Suspicion of self-harm/suicide;
- Involvement in a violent confrontation prior to disappearance;
- Previously disappeared and suffered or was exposed to harm whilst missing

The DL will provide the police with the following information:

- The name and address of our setting
- The next of kin of the missing child
- A detailed description of the pupil to include; age, gender, working down from head to toe including as much clothing description as possible
- Circumstances of the incident, including anything that may have triggered the disappearance, i.e. how long they have been missing? Where they were last seen?

- Who is looking for the pupil? Where are they? Contact mobile number

The search should continue, maintaining contact with the rest of the staff via mobile telephones/walkie talkies until otherwise advised by the police.

2.12.4 FOLLOW UP ACTION

The DL is required to produce a written report on the incident and a copy placed on the pupil's central file and tutor file. A copy of the incident should be circulated to relevant staff.

- The pupil's name
- Relevant dates and times (e.g. when was first noticed that the pupil was missing)
- The action taken to find the pupil
- Whether the Police or Social Services 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
- A full written record of the incident will be kept on the pupil's file.

Once the incident is resolved the LT will review relevant policies, risk assessments and implement necessary changes.

If the child is located injured then the School H&S policy should be followed. All information is to be reported to the DL based in the School Office.

PROCEDURE WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED

Parents/guardians will be telephoned, if they have not already contacted the School. If the School is unable to make contact with a parent/guardian, an alternative number will be rung consistent with the consent given on the Child Information Sheet. The child will be released into the care of the named person (as previously agreed by parents on the Child Information Sheet). If however, the nominated adult is unable to collect the child, the child will be looked after by the Boarding staff within the main school. The Head or Deputy Head will be kept informed.

If contact has been made with a parent/guardian, the child will be looked after in the Early Years Department until such time as the agreed person arrives. On the departure of the Early Years staff the child will be taken to the main school to be cared for by the Boarding staff. The parents will be informed.

2.12.5 POLICY REVIEW

The policy shall be reviewed annually by the Deputy Head of the School and updates will be made as necessary, taking into account any incidents that have occurred that indicate that there

may be a problem with supervision, pupil or security at the School and any issues raised by individual members of staff, parents and pupils. The reviewed draft will be considered by the LT and recommend/implement necessary changes.

Maria Smerdon

Director of Studies

September 2016

Review date: September 2017