



## Missing Pupils Policy (including EYFS and School Visits) - Whole School

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## **I. Policy Statement**

The welfare of all of our children is our paramount responsibility. A child being absent from education, particularly for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including abuse or neglect, child sexual and/or criminal exploitation and county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Every adult who works at the School has been trained to appreciate that they have a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. This includes the importance of effective information sharing to ensure our children are safe and receiving suitable education. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in the future. Where staff have concerns that a child is absent from school for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, or missing from school, this policy should be followed.

Every member of our staff who works with children has read at least Part I of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that they are in our care.

***For a pupil missing from education, see the Safeguarding Policy.***

### **Failure to attend first day of school**

All new pupils are placed on the School's admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the School has agreed that the pupil will attend the School. If a child fails to attend on the agreed date, staff must inform the Head / Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Head / Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

The School admission register, also known as the school roll, contains specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the School, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The School also has an attendance register which records pupil attendance.

Where there are changes affecting the child (including a change of address or school), these will be reflected in the admission register. This will assist the School and external agencies when making enquiries to locate any missing children.

Registers are legal records. The School will preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry.

### **Duty to report**

The School monitors attendance closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance.

The School will inform the 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 school days or more without permission<sup>1</sup>.

Where a pupil has been continuously absent without authorisation for a period of not less than 20 school days (and there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil is unwell or unable to attend because of any unavoidable cause), and the School and local authority have failed, following reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is, the School may delete the pupil's name from the admission register. The School will inform the local authority of such deletion no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register.

In addition, the School recognises its wider reporting duties following deletions from the admission register, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, to help identify children who are missing education and/or otherwise at risk of harm.

The School also recognises that children who are absent from education particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. The School's response to persistently absent pupils supports identifying such abuse, and helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

## **2. Procedure**

### **Procedure for a Day pupil found to be missing from School**

A pupil may be identified as missing:

- After an absence at morning registration is not confirmed by the office staff's call home.
- By observation in class after comparison with the day's absence sheet.
- On reconciliation with the afternoon registration.

## **3. Woodbridge School Prep:**

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions without delay:

- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- Check with Matron
- Check with Sports Dept/ Staff

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<sup>1</sup> Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals in which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission

- Check the Music Rooms
- Check with WSP Office who will check the signing out/in book / trips register
- Inform the Head / Deputy or the senior member of staff on duty
- Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) with a relevant activity
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the Prep School, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms etc. where a small child might hide
- Check the doors, gates for signs of entry/exit
- If considered appropriate, a School fire alarm practice would be a useful tool in locating missing pupils.
- This process should take no more than 20 minutes.

If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken without delay:

- Inform the Head of WSP and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- WSP Office would open a written record of the incident which will log all specific actions taken.
- Head of WSP to ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the school at once
- The DSL/Head of WSP would immediately notify the Police no more than 30mins after initial discovery.
- The Head of WSP would arrange for staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds
- If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her
- The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the school's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- The school would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
- Inform the Chairman of Governors
- The school's insurers would be informed
- [If the child is injured] A report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

During the course of the investigation into the missing child, the school, in consultation with the LADO, will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

### **3.1 Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing on an outing**

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity
- Immediately inform the Head of WSP and the DSL by mobile phone
- The remaining children would be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- Ask the Head of WSP to ring the child's parents as soon as reasonably practicable to explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to [the venue/ the school] at once
- [Contact the venue manager and arrange a search]
- Immediately contact the Police
- The DSL would inform the LSCB and the school's LADO without delay
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- Inform the Chairman of Governors without delay
- The school's insurers would be informed as soon as reasonably practicable
- If the child is injured and is taken directly from the scene of the accident to hospital for treatment a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 15 days of the accident.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. The school will review its procedures and, if appropriate, these would be adjusted.

### **3.2 Actions to be followed by staff once the child is found**

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
- The Head of WSP will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident (having discussed this beforehand with the LADO if necessary)
- The Head of WSP will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the LSCB)
- Media queries should be referred to the Head (after discussion with the LADO if appropriate)
- The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements
- The report should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened, [the purpose of the outing], the length of time that the child was missing and how s/he appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future.

## **4. Senior School:**

Any member of staff discovering a discrepancy must immediately notify the School Office which will:

- Check the signing out books at Reception and in the Sixth Form Centre.
- Check all lists of trips out of School.
- Contact the Medical Centre.
- Contact the Music School.
- Contact the Sports Dept/Sports Staff.
- Contact the CoRE.
- Contact the Sixth Form centre in the case of a Sixth Former. Check with pupil's friends to see if they know their whereabouts and call the pupil's mobile telephone number if known, consider use of social media (eg snap maps) Contact Head of Woodbridge School Prep for a pupil in Year 9-13 for Seckford Scheme activities on these sites.
- Contact staff who might previously have taught or tutored the pupil that day.
- Arrange for 1 or more adults to search the school grounds.
- Check the doors/gates (and CCTV records) for signs of entry/exit where applicable.

If the pupil is still found to be missing, the School Office will immediately:

- Contact the Deputy Head Pastoral and the Head.
- Open a written record of the incident which will log all specific actions taken.
- Contact the parents/guardians and ask for information.

If the pupil is still found to be missing, the School Office will:

- Inform the Bursar and Head who will instigate a search of the site with the Deputy Head Pastoral.
- e-mail all staff with the name of the pupil, date and time of first noted absence.
- Advise all teachers due to teach or tutor the pupil later that day that they must immediately inform the office if the pupil appears.

If the site search fails, parents will be informed, and a search of local roads will be made on foot, or by car, by available staff and parents as appropriate.

On completion of this and any subsequent searches made over the day parents will continue to be informed of progress.

The School and parents will seek to make a joint decision as to whether it is appropriate to notify the police, and who is best placed to do so. It will not be the sole responsibility of the School to alert the police unless the parents cannot be contacted and there is reason to believe that the pupil is in danger.

The DSL would inform the Safeguarding Partnership (SSP) and the School's Local Authority Designated Authority (LADO) as well as notify the Chairman of the Governors.

The School's insurers would be informed as soon as reasonably practicable.

If the pupil is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

#### **4.1 Protocol for a Boarder found to be missing from School during the day**

During the School day, the protocol is as per the protocol for a missing day pupil, but includes:

- Contact the Boarding House.

Boarders have a breakfast 8am and evening 6pm register with house staff. They are then registered in the School day and are checked in the evenings while the duty staff complete their rounds for homework time and when locking up at bedtime.

A Boarder may be identified as missing if his/her whereabouts is not able to be confirmed by visual sighting, from information provided by the pupil or other trustworthy pupils with regard to their movements, the sign-in book or telephonic contact with him/her or their parent/guardian.

Staff discovering a discrepancy must:

- Notify the Head of Boarding and School House Matron.
- Attempt to ascertain whereabouts from friends.
- Attempt to contact the pupil on his/her mobile phone.
- Check the Music School, Sports Dept/staff, Art and Design block, Dome and gym.
- Check the School fields, play areas, and other buildings.
- Check the Sixth Form Centre if appropriate.
- Contact staff who might previously have taught the pupil that day (if a weekday).
- Check the list of trips out of School.

If a pupil is still missing, the duty member of staff and Head of Boarding should:

- Inform the Head (or on their absence the Deputy Head (Pastoral)).
- Open a written record of the incident in the communications book and log all specific actions taken.
- Contact their parents/guardians.
- Contact back-up duty staff, and request assistance as appropriate.

A search of local roads, shops, potential haunts etc. should be made on foot or by car where appropriate.

On completion of this and any subsequent searches made, parents/guardians will continue to be informed of progress.

The School and parents will seek to make a joint decision as to whether it is appropriate to notify the police, and who is best placed to do so. It will not be the sole responsibility of the School to alert the police unless the parents cannot be contacted and there is reason to believe that the pupil is in danger.

The DSL would inform the Safeguarding Partnership (SSP) and the School's Local Authority Designated Authority (LADO) as well as notify the Chairman of the Governors.

The School's insurers would be informed as soon as reasonably practicable.

If the pupil is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

#### **4.2 Protocol for a Boarder found to be missing from School in the evening**

In the evening students are not permitted to leave the boarding house without permission from duty staff. Staff on duty in the house visit studies in the evening as a visual check and to assist with academic issues.

- If a student is not in his/her room or the boarding house communal spaces on any particular occasion, the staff must make a second visit soon thereafter to confirm that the pupil is missing.
- If they cannot find the pupil the duty staff should ask their friends and then seek to call the student on their mobile. If the pupil is still unaccounted for, the duty staff should check the duty diary and thereafter consult with any other staff in the house in case they are aware of any reasons for them being unaccounted for.
- Staff having alerted the Head of Boarding must then continue the protocol above in 4.1

#### **4.3 Protocol for a Boarder found to be missing from School at night**

At night staff have a final sweep of the ground floor and secure the property before locking and alarming the boys and girls floors behind them. The male and female staff then visit all students and have sight of them to ensure that they are all accounted for and preparing for bed.

- If a student is missing the duty staff should go back and check the bedroom for a second time once the bathrooms have been checked. If the pupil is still not found the duty staff must check **all** rooms afresh.
- If a student still cannot be found then protocols from 4.1 must be followed bar the daytime specific ones.

#### **4.4 Actions to be followed by staff if a student goes missing on an outing**

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other students are present
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity
- Immediately inform the Head of Woodbridge School and the DSL by mobile phone
- The remaining students would be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- Ask the Head of Woodbridge School to ring the students' parents as soon as reasonably practicable to explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to [the venue/ the school] at once
- If relevant, contact the venue manager and arrange a search



- Immediately contact the Police
- The DSL would inform the SSP and the school's LADO without delay
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- Inform the Chair of Governors without delay
- The school's insurers would be informed as soon as reasonably practicable
- If the student is injured and is taken directly from the scene of the accident to hospital for treatment a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 15 days of the accident.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the student was found would be made for the incident report. The school will review its procedures and, if appropriate, these would be adjusted.

#### **4.5 Actions to be followed by staff once the student is found**

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the student
- Speak to the other students to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
- The Head of Woodbridge School will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident (having discussed this beforehand with the LADO if necessary)
- The Head of Woodbridge School will conduct a full investigation (if appropriate involving the SSP)
- Media queries should be referred to the Head (after discussion with the LADO if appropriate)
- The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements
- The report should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and students, when the student was last seen, what appeared to have happened, [the purpose of the outing], the length of time that the student was missing and how s/he appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future.

### **5. Compliance and Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be subject to a thorough review process including consideration at the *Compliance and Risk Committee* on a 2 yearly basis. This will ensure that practice across the whole school is in line with *this* policy, the Complaints procedure and with current guidance and legislation.