

Missing Child Policy

Children's safety is always maintained as the highest priority both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made through carrying out the procedures set out in our Supervision and Attendance Policies to ensure the security of the children is always maintained. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedures

Child going missing on the Junior School premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing eg after a break or because they have not turned up to a lesson, the teacher or LSA alerts the Headteacher. This is an emergency situation.
- An immediate search of the grounds, toilets etc is carried out by the management and relevant staff. These searchers will be allocated by the management team member on duty.
- An announcement is made over the tannoy to alert all staff and to try and locate the child.
- The register is checked by the receptionist and class teacher to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The Senior Manager on duty talks to the staff to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- If the child is not located within 10 minutes the Head teacher informs the Principal and a decision is taken to inform the police and parents
- The Headteacher calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent.
- The Principal contacts the chair of the board and reports the incident.

Child going missing on the Senior School premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing eg after a break or because they have not turned up to a lesson, the class teacher or form tutor alerts the Headteacher. This is an emergency situation.
- An immediate search of the grounds, toilets, common rooms etc is carried out by the Senior manager on duty and relevant staff who will be nominated by this manager
- An announcement is made over the tannoy to alert all staff and to try and locate the child.
- The signing out book is checked by the receptionist to ensure the child has not left for a medical appointment or other reason

- The register is checked by the class teacher and the receptionist to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.
- The Senior manager on duty talks to the staff and other students to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
- If the child is not located within 10 minutes the Head teacher informs the Principal and a decision is taken to inform the police and parents
- The Headteacher calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent.
- The Principal contacts the chair of the board and reports the incident.

A child is identified as missing after an SMS is sent to parents at Junior

Within 20 minutes of registration finishing, absences should be sent out to parents as text messages by the receptionist.

If an SMS is sent to a parent to report a child absent and the parent informs the school to say that the child was dropped off at school, this is an emergency situation and should be treated as such.

The following procedure should take place:

- The receptionist continues to answer phone calls. The member of the management team on duty is contacted immediately and goes to the classroom, toilets or outside area to locate the child. If a member of management is not available, the administration officer or another member of the administrative team must immediately go to look for the student.
- If the student is not located in 5 minutes, an announcement is to be made over the tannoy.
- As soon as the child is located a member of the management will call and inform the parents.

A child is identified as missing after an SMS is sent to parents at Senior

Within 20 minutes of registration finishing, absences should be sent out to parents as text messages by the receptionist.

If an SMS is sent to a parent to report a child absent and the parent informs the school to say that the child was dropped off at school this is an emergency situation and should be treated as such.

The following procedure should take place:

- The receptionist continues to answer phone calls. At any time, a member of the management team can be contacted to help as well, preferably the Senior Leader duty person.
- The nurse checks SIMs for which lesson the child should be in and goes straight to the classroom/outside area etc. to check. When the nurse goes to look for the missing student, the administrative officer must come immediately to front desk to help manage the reception area.
- If the classroom is far way, as soon as the nurse has verified that the student is or isn't there, she telephones or uses the walky talky to contact the front desk to update staff. (If the nurse is already involved in an emergency situation, the receptionist goes to look for the missing student and the administrative officer comes to the front desk to answer/make phone calls). If any of the above personnel is not there, the PA to the Management is asked to step in.
- If the student is not located in 5 minutes, an announcement is to be made over the tannoy.
- If the child is not in his allocated classroom a search of the grounds and toilets should take place
- As soon as the child is located a member of the management will call and inform the parents.

All staff are to remember that this is a stressful situation. They are to remain calm and to keep parents calm and informed.

If the child is still not located within 10 minutes of the phone call from parents then;

- The Head teacher is informed and she then informs the Principal and a decision is taken to inform the police and parents
- The Headteacher calls the police and reports the child as missing and then calls the parent.
- The Principal contacts the chair of the board and reports the incident.

Child going missing on a school visit

This describes what to do when staff have taken a group on a trip.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the trip ask children to stand with their designated teacher and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not

search beyond that. Other children are asked the last place they saw the child. If the child cannot be located within 15 minutes, then the following procedures take place;

- The Headteacher is contacted immediately; the incident is reported to the designated senior manager. This person will contact the headteacher and give instructions to the staff on the ground in accordance with our Major Incidents and Emergencies procedures in the school's Health and Safety Policy.
- The Headteacher contacts the police and reports the child as missing if the group is in Cyprus. If the group is overseas the group leader contacts the local police.
- The Headteacher contacts the parent.
- Staff takes the remaining children back to the school or to the accommodation if they are overseas.
- The Principal contacts the chairman of the board and reports the incident.
- At this point the investigation would be taken over by the police.

General Points

- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The Principal or Headteacher together with the chairperson only speaks with the parent(s) – not the group leader (on an overseas trip) or the teacher (if the child has gone missing in school)
- The Principal will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff who were on the trip or involved in a school incident and these will be stored in the school accident report.
- The group leader or member of staff who was supervising the child writes an incident report detailing:
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in the group and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child
 - When the child was last seen?
 - What had taken place on the trip / in the class since the child went missing
 - The time that 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 co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. The Welfare department may also be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.

The insurance provider is informed.

Staff need to be particularly vigilant for any pupils who are at risk of self-harm or suicide and a risk assessment will be in place for them and all relevant staff informed.

Managing people

- Missing children incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated teacher responsible for the safety of that child for the trip. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- Staff may be the understandable target of parent anger and they may be afraid. The Headteacher and Principal need to ensure that staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support whilst feeling vulnerable. However, staff must also be very vigilant in their daily life at school and on school trips as they are responsible for the lives of young people and this is a great responsibility.
- The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at the group leader, The Headteacher or the Principal. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is the Principal. Any staff dealing with worried parents should demonstrate empathy and be clear in their communications and polite.
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer the children's questions honestly but also reassure them.
- In accordance with the severity of the outcome, staff may need counselling and support. If a child is not found, or is injured, or worse, this will be a very difficult time. The Principal and the Board will use their discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press.
- If older children are on the trip, they should be discouraged from communicating with their parents on their mobile phones Y? so that panic is created?
- If there is a serious/unfortunate outcome to the incident a statement should be issued by the principal . If the child is found, then all parents should be reassured with a communication via email or SMS.
- If a child cannot be located then the school will follow the section of the Health and Safety Policy related to Major Incidents and Emergencies.

DOCUMENT CONTROL:

This policy was approved in October 2019.

It should be read in conjunction with the Supervising of Pupils, Trips and Health and Safety Policies.