

MISSING PUPILS POLICY **September 2022 onwards**

This policy applies to all areas of the School including the EYFS.

This policy is reviewed, authorised and approved biennially by the Head and Senior Deputy Head on behalf of Board of Governors and updated as needed on an interim basis.

Policy updated on:	1 September 2022
Policy approved by:	Jo Leighton; Senior Deputy Head + DSI
Date of next review:	1 September 2024

Introduction

The welfare of the children in our care is paramount; however in the unlikely event of a child of a child being unaccounted for the following policy will be implemented immediately.

This policy describes the procedures to be taken by staff in the event of a pupil or pupils going missing, or suspected of being missing, during the school day once they have been registered – see the Safeguarding Policy for explanation of procedures where a child may be missing education completely and thus not attend school at all and who will therefore not be registered as present.

Whilst the policy applies to the whole School, including EYFS; please note that variations to procedures may be applicable to different ages & circumstances. These are detailed within the policy.

Related Policies

Key related policies include:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Critical Incident Plan
- Incident/Accident Policy
- Supervision of Pupils Policy

A child may be unaccounted for under a wide range of circumstances and locations, both on and off site and suspicions raised of a “Missing Pupil” when a normal contact point is missed. This may be at registration, classes, or optional activities’ roll call. Regardless of circumstance, the principles behind this policy are to:

- Make every effort to locate a child through questioning and searching
- Maintain supervision of other children
- Communicate with parents and external authorities in the event that the child is not quickly located
- Ensure that appropriate safeguarding responses are put in place for children who go missing from Edge Grove.

Staff Actions

Missing Pupil(s) on or around the School Site

The principles apply to all ages – there will be some procedural variations for pupils in Pre-Prep and these are noted below.

If a pupil cannot be accounted for on or around the school site, is not present at a registration (not initial registration at the start of the day where absence is handled by a separate procedure) or a report of a suspected missing person is received at any other time of the day, the staff member who suspects a child is missing should:

- If taking a class (or other activity) without a colleague being present, contact the Front Office by phone or send one of the children to the Front Office or Pre-Prep Office/Staff Room or, depending on circumstances, to find a colleague to request urgent assistance.
- If two or more staff members are present, then one should immediately raise the alarm as above whilst the other remains with the children.
- A key principle is to ensure that the remaining pupils are properly supervised and that an alarm is raised regarding the missing pupil.
- The Front Office will double check the registration records on SchoolBase; the absentee and school trip notice boards in the Staff Room and also the signing out book to see if a parent/guardian has been in to collect the pupil. The school nurse will also be contacted.
- For a Pre-Prep pupil, the Head of Pre-Prep will make enquiries with the First Aider and other staff regarding the pupil's whereabouts and instigate an immediate search of the building.
- At this stage, the case should be escalated to a senior member of staff – HM or Bursar are most likely to be available in the vicinity - who will take charge of the next stage of the incident if not already formally involved.
- The person in charge (PiC) should ensure that:
 1. Staff teaching/supervising that pupil prior to the disappearance are asked whether they have seen the person in question.
 2. Fellow pupils are asked whether they have seen the missing person.
 3. Checks are made with the School Nurse.
 4. Levels of supervision and security for all other children are maintained (see 'Need for Calm during an Incident' below).
- Dependent upon the time of day, the PiC has authority to sound the fire alarm to ensure that a "whole school" roll call is taken.
- If the pupil is still missing after all of these checks have been carried out, the PiC will ensure that a decision is made to notify parents/guardians and the police. At the same time, staff will be mobilised to conduct a search of the entire site including such areas as the changing rooms, lavatories, outbuildings etc. Mobile phones will be used wherever possible to keep in touch whilst continuing the search.
- Once the police are informed, all staff will be asked to remain on site and await further instructions.
- When the search is stood down or the child returns, it is important that everybody who was originally put on alert should be informed of the conclusion of the incident.
- Once the child has been located, the child will be given reassurance and caring support and returned to his/her classroom.
- Once the situation has been resolved an internal investigation will take place to examine how the incident occurred and to put immediate measures into place to ensure that it does not happen again.
- The incident must be recorded in writing on an incident report form.

Missing Pupil(s) on a School Trip

If a child is discovered to be missing on a school trip:

- The teacher in charge of the trip will make all members of staff/adults on the trip aware of the missing child. Remaining children told to stay with their group and further head counts carried out.
- The teacher in charge will ensure, in the meantime, that levels of supervision and security for all other children are maintained (see 'Need for Calm during an Incident' below).
- If applicable, the teacher in charge will alert the local management at the trip's venue to the loss and encourage their staff to take part in the search.
- All available staff and helpers will make a thorough search of the location and its immediate surrounds.
- If the pupil is still missing after all of these checks have been carried out, the Head, Senior Deputy Head or next most senior member of staff at the school will be informed. The Educational Visitors Coordinator will also be informed by the staff at school.
- The teacher in charge of the trip or the venue management should then contact the Police for help and advice. The remaining members of the trip party should remain at the venue until such time as permission to leave is received from the police.
- The Head (or another member of the SLT) will call the pupil's parents to inform them of the situation and the action taken.
- Once the child has been located the child will be given reassurance and caring support and returned to join their fellow pupils.
- When the child returns, it is also important that everybody who was originally put on alert should be informed of the conclusion of the incident.

Need For Calm during an Incident

In carrying out all of the above checks, it is very important that pupils are kept calm and that any sense of desperation or excitement is kept to an absolute minimum by playing down the incident.

Follow-Up Action

Appropriate safeguarding responses will be put in place for any child who goes missing from School. These will be determined on a case by case basis but may include referral to social services under the School's safeguarding policy and procedures. In particular, 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.

Consideration will be given to inviting the parents/guardians to help counsel the child and give any relevant background information. The child may also need counselling by an appropriate member of staff.

Members of staff responsible for dealing with an incident under the terms of this policy will complete an Incident Report at the earliest opportunity, in accordance with the school's Incident/Accident Policy.

If disciplinary action is considered appropriate, that process will be managed in accordance with the school's Behaviour Management Policy.

**Jo Leighton
Senior Deputy Head
September 2022**