

MISSING CHILD POLICY & UNCOLLECTED CHILD

Reviewed and Updated 20th September 2024

The welfare of all of our pupils is our paramount responsibility. 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 pupils are safe and receive suitable education.

Every member of our staff who works with children has read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. 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. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of pupils and read Part 1 of the DfE's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance.

1- Procedures for Staff in the Event of a Missing Child:

Our protocols are crafted to swiftly locate and return a missing child to effective supervision. If a child is discovered missing from the school, the following steps are promptly executed:

- Conduct a register check to ensure the presence of all other children.
- Inquire with the pupil's friends to ascertain their whereabouts.
- Inspect the facilities, including toilets and corridors.
- Consult administrative staff who will verify the signing in/out book.
- Review CCTV footage.
- Notify both the Head and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

If the pupil remains missing, the subsequent actions are taken:

- Inform the Head and DSL.
- Request the Head or relevant Deputy to Head to contact the pupil's parents, explaining the situation and the steps initiated. Request their immediate presence at the school.
- The Head or Deputies to Head promptly inform the Police.
- Arrange for staff to conduct a thorough search of the entire school premises.
- If the pupil's residence is within walking distance, assign a staff member to attempt to locate them.
- The DSL or Deputy DSL notifies the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).
- Inform the school insurers.

Upon finding the child:

- Engage with, attend to, and, if necessary, comfort the child.
- Communicate with other students and staff members involved to inform them that the missing child has been located.
- The Head engages with the parents to discuss events and provide an account of the incident.
- Compile a detailed report covering the time, place, number of staff and children, when the child was last seen, the circumstances of their disappearance, and the duration of their absence.

- Conduct a discussion with students and the rest of the class, imparting lessons learned if practicable.

2- Actions for Staff in the Event of a Missing Child on an Outing:

- Perform an immediate head count to ensure the presence of all other pupils.
- Conduct a search in the immediate vicinity.
- The Trip Leader promptly informs the Head/Deputies to Head (and DSLs)/ and the Deputy DSLs by phone.
- The Trip Leader stays at the venue and arranges for other staff members present on the outing to return all other pupils to school as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Instruct the Head/Deputies to Head to contact the child's parents promptly and explain the situation and the actions taken. Request their immediate presence at the outing venue/the school.
- If applicable, coordinate with the venue manager and arrange a search.
- Contact the Police immediately.
- The DSL or Deputy DSL notifies the LSCB (and the School's LADO if needed) without delay.
- Cooperate fully with any Police and safeguarding investigations by the local authority.
- Inform the school insurers as soon as reasonably practicable.
- If the child is injured, and if necessary, report under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 15 days after the accident.
- Document all activities leading up to finding the child for the incident report. Review procedures and adjust if deemed appropriate.

3- Procedures When a Child is not Collected on Time:

If a child, not authorized to leave school alone, is not collected at the agreed time, the following steps are taken:

- The child is taken care of by the School's wraparound care service (garderie) until 5 pm.
- Garderie contacts parents or carers and, if there is no response, informs the Head, who then calls emergency numbers provided by parents.
- If the child is not collected by 5:00 pm, garderie continues to care for them, applying sanctions as described in its terms and conditions. At 5:15 pm, the Head decides on a case-by-case basis and instructs garderie as necessary.
- If there is no response from parents' or carers' contact numbers or emergency numbers by 7 pm, the Head contacts the Westminster Social Care Duty Officer on 020 7641 2388.
- Social Care makes emergency arrangements for the child, conducts a house visit, and checks with the Police.
- The School generates a comprehensive written report of the incident.

4- Actions to be followed if a child who travels independently does not arrive Home.

- Headteacher to be informed.
- SLT staff and reception staff to liaise carefully with the parent (or emergency contact if parent not available) regarding details of movements – check if he was marked on/off school bus if applicable.
- Identify the last time the child was seen – location and time and by whom.
- Speak to the child's friends – did he mention going anywhere other than home? Has there been a miscommunication? Did he go to a friend's house?
- If he has a mobile phone, call his number.
- If he walked home, an available member of staff should trace that route by foot/by vehicle asap.
- If the child has not made it home within a reasonable period of time beyond the time they were expected to arrive, the police should be informed.