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Target group	All employees, consultants and volunteers
Next review due	September 2019

## Missing Pupils Policy

### Scope and publication

This policy applies to staff (including volunteers), pupils and parents. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Looked After Children (LAC)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Attendance and Punctuality
- Registration of Pupils
- Staff Handbook
- CST Incident Matrix, reporting form and incident form

The Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher have a wide discretion in relation to the procedures in this policy. This policy is a mandatory requirement of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education (DfE), Sept 2018 and Working together to Safeguard Children (2018).

This policy is provided to all staff in the Staff Handbook. Parents may request a hard copy from the school or view the policy on the school's website. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

### Aims

Through the operation of this policy we aim to:

- protect the health and safety of pupils at the school
- ensure that school staff know how to respond if a pupil goes missing.

### Responsibilities

The Trustees delegate appropriate responsibilities for the day-to-day management of the school to the Headteacher.

In practice, all members of staff, including agency staff, sports coaches and volunteers, contribute to the safety of pupils at the school by providing appropriate supervision in accordance with the directions of the Headteacher and Senior Management Team. Schools are under a general duty to supervise pupils to the standard of a prudent or careful parent. Any member of staff who notices a pupil is missing or sees a pupil in a place where the pupil should not be has a duty to inform the relevant class teacher or senior member of staff without delay.

### Procedure for pupil missing during the day

#### Responsible adult

The responsible adult who spots the child is missing must communicate this immediately to the office/reception/attendance and to the DSL/member of the SLT.

(Where the adult reporting also has a group/class of children for which they are responsible, they must ensure they are in the safe care of another adult before continuing.)

(Where the reporting adult is a volunteer or an agency worker etc, the DSL/member of SLT will assign a responsible school-based adult to conduct the search.)

The responsible adult will perform an immediate search of the area (whether inside, outside or both).

If the child/student **is found** the adult needs to:

- inform all other staff involved
- support the student in situ if they refuse to return to school
- ensure that the student/pupil is given all possible support, including contacting parents where the student/pupil refuses to go back to lessons or pastoral support
- follow up with an incident report

If the child/student **is not found** the adult will:

- inform the DSL/member of SLT that the child/student is still missing
- continue the search, widening the parameters to include outside of school (See **Appendix 1: Search protocol**)
- maintain contact with school at all times via mobile phone

#### **Office/reception/attendance staff**

The office/reception/attendance staff will:

- check registers, attendance logs, signing in/out books to ensure the child/student is not absent for a medical appointment/music exam/external activity
- find an up-to-date photo of the student
- find the home address and parental contact details
- manage any communications that come their way

#### **DSL/member of SLT**

The DSL/member of SLT will:

- contact the police within five minutes of the conclusion of the initial search (must be within 10 minutes of noting the child/student was absent) (See **Appendix 2: Information to be provided to the police**) ensuring they have all the necessary information
- contact the parents immediately after contacting the police, encourage to be at home should the child/student head there
- maintain contact with the searching staff and oversee the search from a central place (**Appendix 1: Search protocol**)
- contact the police immediately when child/student is found
- contact the parents immediately the child/student is found
- be available to the parents should they make subsequent contact

#### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher/their deputy will:

- be aware of proceedings at all times
- make contact with the Education Director should the situation escalate to requiring police assistance

- follow the CST Incident Matrix (Category 1) in terms of action and reporting, including conducting a risk assessment post incident to avoid repeats where possible

### **Trust**

The CST Team will manage the incident should the child/student not be found and/or there is reputational risk/or damage for the school and the Trust.

### **Procedure for pupils missing during or following a journey**

If a pupil is missing from a journey or has not arrived at the school following a journey, the member of staff in charge will:

- if possible attempt to contact the pupil
- contact the parent/carer for further information
- check whether there were any delays or changes to the journey
- check with other pupils, and then home to ask them if they have any knowledge of the missing pupil's whereabouts
- contact the venue or the people that the pupil had visited, if applicable
- contact the police

### **Procedure for pupils missing during a school visit**

The member of staff in charge will:

- check with all other staff that the student/pupil is not in their group
- alert venue staff/travel staff of a missing student/child and ascertain if they have knowledge of child/student's whereabouts i.e. First Aid, Missing person's station
- search the immediate vicinity
- contact the police
- contact the school
- contact the parents

### **Missing pupil incident record**

The school must keep a full written record of any incident of a missing pupil including:

- the pupil's name
- relevant dates and times (e.g. when it was first noticed that the pupil was missing)
- the action taken to find the pupil
- whether the police or children's social care were involved
- outcome or resolution of the incident
- any reasons given by the pupil for being missing
- an outline of any support to be offered to the pupil if applicable
- 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.

A Risk Assessment will be undertaken of the premises and also of the risk of a further incident for the pupil/student.

## School attendance

The attendance of pupils is closely monitored so that persistent, unusual or unexplained patterns of absence are investigated. The school strongly advocates that parents or guardians ring the Reception before 9am to provide an explanation for pupil absence.

The school operates a first response system, that enables office staff to ring parents or guardians of pupils when they have not arrived at school after the closing of registers, and no reason has been provided by carers.

## School vigilance

Pupils who are planning to or have travelled abroad, particularly to countries prone to extremism or radicalisation, female genital mutilation and forced marriage may be particularly vulnerable. The school monitors these absences and checks the wellbeing of these pupils.

The school is vigilant to any changes of behaviour and in the case of radicalisation and forced marriage should report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead to escalate to the local social care team. Any staff members who are suspicious that FGM may have or be about to be undertaken must report this to the police, and then the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (See Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy)

Students, particularly teenagers and LAC pupils who are regularly absent or go missing from schools and care homes, are vulnerable to child sexual exploitation (CSE), therefore the school will monitor and report any concerns to social care.

## Review

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Trust and updated as necessary.

In undertaking the review of procedures, the Headteacher will take into account any incidents in the Missing Pupil Incident Record that indicate that there may be a problem with supervision, pupil support or security at the school and any issues raised by individual members of staff, parents and pupils.

## Monitoring

The Education Director will monitor all incidents and provide support, guidance and accountability for the Headteacher to ensure that the risk of incidents is minimised.

## Appendix 1: Search protocol

- Carry your mobile phones with you during the search to maximise communication.
- Liaise directly with the DSL/Member of SLT in charge when you have any information.
- When following a child/student **don't** chase them – any incident resulting from the apparent 'chase' can result in you being liable for any injury or death.
- Follow/watch at a discrete distance – it doesn't matter if they know you are following.
- Don't antagonise the situation by what you say, at this point safety is the priority.
- Ensure that any unrelated phone calls are ignored so that you may be contactable by DSL/Member of SLT.
- Where possible search in pairs for safety and safeguarding.
- Track the child/student's route home if applicable.
- Search local parks or shops on route if applicable.
- If the parents are abroad, there may need to be a delay in contacting them.
- All decisions on contacting parents should be made by the Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- A decision will be taken in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures as to whether the school should also contact children's social care in line with local procedures.

## Appendix 2: Information to be provided to the police

When the school contacts the police, the following information should be provided:

- the pupil's name
- the pupil's age
- an up to date photograph if possible
- the pupil's height, physical description and any physical peculiarities
- any disability, learning difficulty or special educational needs that the pupil may have
- the pupil's home address and telephone number
- parents' names (where relevant)
- a description of the clothing the pupil is thought to be wearing
- pupil's state of mind
- pupil's medical needs, if relevant, particularly any medication they might need to take
- pupil's SEND needs, if relevant
- any relevant comments made by the pupil such as 'I'm going to run away to Brighton'.
- whether this is a repeat incident and where they were discovered beforehand

The information will then be passed to relevant officers through police channels, negating the need to report the incident multiple times.

**If the student is located the school must inform the police without delay, so that the search can be called off.**