

Missing Child Policy and Procedure including EYFS

Part One: Missing Child Policy

This policy applies to all sections of the School community, including boarders and those in the EYFS setting.

Introduction

The welfare of all our pupils at St Margaret's School is our paramount responsibility. A child going missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including 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 is aware that they have a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the pupils 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 future. It is therefore the responsibility of all staff to search actively for pupils who are missing, including working with the police where appropriate. Staffing ratios are generous and designed to ensure that all pupils are supervised when in care.

Every member of our staff who works with children has read Part 1 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 he or she is in our care.

St Margaret's School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in this document. The procedures should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection (Safeguarding) Policy. This policy was drawn up having had regard to the Independent School Regulatory Requirements (paragraph 7 and 15), Early Years Statutory Framework (paragraph 3.73) and Department for Education guidance Children Missing Education (September 2016).

We review all our policies regularly (at least once a year) in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of pupils and read at least Part 1 of KCSIE, [or at least Annex A of KCSIE, if their role does not require them to work directly with children].

Daily procedures

All pupils are registered electronically by their Form Tutors before school starts each morning. Subject teachers register pupils throughout the School day. Form Tutors or Activity Leaders in the Senior School also register electronically their pupils at the end of the School day. A list of absentees is displayed on the Staff Room board.

In the Junior School, pupils are electronically registered at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Therefore, for the purpose of this policy, the term 'missing' refers to a pupil being not present without authorisation or explanation.

Staff taking registers in class are aware that they should mark any missing pupil as absent. They should not rely on the information of the pupils as to the whereabouts of other pupils. The School Office will check whether the pupil is in the Medical Centre or at an extra lesson etc.

On occasions when a member of staff identifies a pupil missing from their expected location immediate action is required. The Head, Vice Principal and the Head of the Junior/Senior School will be informed and may assist with the investigations.

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our pupils are set out in a detailed policy document: 'Educational Visits for Pupils'. This document is on our website and can be provided to parents on request. There is also a separate 'Educational Visits for EYFS Children' for our youngest children which is also available on our website and on request.

Action to be followed by staff if a child fails to attend first day of the 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 without delay. The Head will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

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.

Duty to Report

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

The School will inform the relevant 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.

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.

The School also 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.

A. JUNIOR SCHOOL PROCEDURES (including EYFS)

Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing from the Junior School

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 • Search all classrooms, playground, toilets, and all areas of the building. • Check the Medical Centre
- Ascertain if and how the child may have left the building, including checking with reception who will check the signing out/in book, checking the doors, gates [and CCTV records] for signs of entry/exit
- Inform the Head of the Junior School 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
- At the same time, continue to search in the surrounding areas of the School.
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) with a relevant activity

A record is kept by the School of any instances in which a pupil is missing from school without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the pupil's explanation.

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

- Inform the Head of the Junior School and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) • Ask the Head of Junior School 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 the Junior School would immediately notify the Police • The Head of the Junior School 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 may be asked to check to see if the child has gone home. They would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with the child
- The DSL would inform the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership 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 Chair 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.

When the pupil is found, staff will ascertain why and how the pupil left the site and ensure that they are well and not injured in any way. The parents/guardian will be informed immediately. 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, and the School will investigate to improve and review security to ensure that no other pupil can leave the premises again in the same way.

The School will always consider the wider circumstances around a child going missing from School and whether there are wider safeguarding concerns that may need to be addressed in line with the School's Child Protection policy.

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
- Ascertain if and how the child may have left the area
- Immediately inform the Head of the Junior School and the DSL by mobile phone
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search (where relevant)
- The remaining children would be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- Ask the Head of Junior School 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
- Immediately contact the Police
- Continue to search in the surrounding areas of the visit venue.
- The DSL would inform the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership 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 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.

After the child is found, staff should:

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child
- Ascertain why and how the pupil left the site and ensure that they are not injured or ill in any way
- 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 the Junior 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 the Junior School will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership) to improve and review visit security to ensure that no other pupil can leave the designated adult again in the same way
- 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.
- Consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Child Protection policy where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.

B. SENIOR SCHOOL PROCEDURES

A pupil may be identified as missing:

- After an absence at morning registration is not confirmed by the office staff's contact with home.
- By comparing pupils in a class with the day's absence sheet.
- By a report of a missing pupil by a fellow pupil.

Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing from the Senior School

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:

- Check with the pupil's friends to see if they know their whereabouts
- Check the Medical Centre
- Check with reception who will check the signing out/in book and outings list
- Inform the Head/Vice Principal
- Call the pupil's mobile telephone, if number available on iSAMS
- Ask all of the adults and pupils calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the pupil
- Occupy all of the other pupils in their classroom(s)
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search the School grounds

- Check the doors, gates [and CCTV records] for signs of entry/exit

A record is kept by the School of any instances in which a pupil is missing from school without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the pupil's explanation.

If the pupil is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Inform the Head/Vice Principal and the DSL
- Ask the Head/Vice Principal to ring the pupil'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 would notify the Police
- The Vice Principal and Bursar would arrange for staff to search the rest of the School premises and grounds
- If the pupil's home is within walking distance, a member of staff may be asked to check if the pupil has gone home and would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with them. A search of local roads will also be undertaken as appropriate.
- The DSL would inform the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and the School's LADO
- The School would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- The School's insurers would be informed
- If the pupil 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.

When the pupil is found, staff will ascertain why and how the pupil left the site and ensure that they are well and not injured in any way. The parents/guardian will be informed immediately. 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, and the School will investigate to improve and review security to ensure that no other pupil can leave the premises again in the same way.

The School will always consider the wider circumstances around a child going missing from School and whether there are wider safeguarding concerns that may need to be addressed in line with the School's Child Protection policy.

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 pupils were present
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity
- Ascertain if and how the child may have left the venue
- Inform the Head of the Junior/Senior School and the DSL by mobile phone

- The remaining pupils would be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- Ask the Head of Junior/Senior School 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 venue/ the School] at once
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search (where relevant) • Contact the Police immediately
- The DSL would inform the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and the School's LADO
- 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 child is injured, A report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE). 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.

After the child is found, staff should:

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child
- Speak to the other pupils to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
- The Head 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 will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership)
- 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.
- Consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Child Protection policy where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.

C. BOARDING HOUSE PROCEDURE

Boarding Contact Sheet

On the first day of each academic year, all parents/guardians of boarding pupils are asked to complete a form which indicates their current phone numbers including the following; home, mother/father's work number, mother/father's mobile number, guardian's contact numbers and nominated emergency person and number(s).

Registration of Boarders

An electronic register is taken of boarders at breakfast, lunch (at weekends) supper and at bedtime.

Actions to be followed by staff if a boarder goes missing from the School during the School day

During the School day, the missing child procedure is the same as that for a missing day pupil in the School, as set out above, but includes contacting the Boarding House Staff to try and ascertain the pupil's whereabouts.

The procedure to be followed when the child is found is also the same as set out above.

Actions to be followed by staff if a boarder goes missing from the School during 'boarding time'.

During 'boarding time' a boarder may be identified as missing if their whereabouts cannot be confirmed visually, from information provided by the pupil or other trustworthy pupils with regard to their movements, the Signing Out Book or telephone contact with them or their parent/guardian.

If a pupil is missing after school hours, at bedtime or in the early hours, or they fail to return from 'leave out' at the appointed time, we would carry out the following actions:

- Check with the pupil's friends to see if they know their whereabouts
- Check with other boarders (if awake) to see if they know their whereabouts
- Carry out a thorough search of the boarding area and immediate surroundings
- Ring the Medical Centre or contact the Nurse to see if the pupil has been reported sick
- Call the pupil's mobile telephone, if available on iSAMS
- Consult the senior member of boarding staff on duty in School (see duty rota)
- Check exeat forms or any other information before contacting the senior member of staff on duty who will then deal with the matter if there is not a suitable explanation.

A record is kept by the School of any instances in which a pupil is missing from school without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the pupil's explanation.

If the pupil is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Inform the Head/Vice Principal and the DSL
- Ask the Head/Vice Principal to ring the pupil's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion so far to locate them. If parents are abroad, this step may need to be delayed. All decisions on contact with parents at night should be made by the Head, as appropriate.
- The DSL/Head would notify the Police
- The Vice Principal and Bursar would arrange for staff to search the rest of the

School's premises and grounds

- If the pupil'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 Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and the School's LADO
- The School would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- The School's insurers would be informed
- If the pupil is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

During the course of the investigation into the missing pupil, 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 pupil was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

The School will always consider the wider circumstances around a child going missing from School and whether there are wider safeguarding concerns that may need to be addressed in line with the School's Child Protection policy.

Actions to be followed by staff if a boarder goes missing on an outing

If a boarder goes missing on an outing, the missing child procedure is the same as that for a missing day pupil in the respective school, as set out above, but also includes the additional step of contacting the Boarding House Staff to try and ascertain the pupil's whereabouts.

The procedure to be followed when the child is found is also the same as set out above.

Part Two: Procedures to be followed by staff when a child is not collected on time

If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed collection time, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. Where reasonably possible the School will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. If there is no answer, the teachers will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after. If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a one-hour period or when the premises are closing, the Head will contact the Children's Social Care on 0300 123 4043. Social Care will make emergency arrangements for the child and will arrange for a visit to be made to the child's house and will check with the Police. The School will make a full written report of the incident.

The School will look after the child safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care, until such a time as s/he has been collected by a parent, guardian or carer, or until appropriate, alternative care arrangements have been made with Social Care and/or the Police in order to prioritise the child's safety. The School's DSL will keep a record on My Concern of incidents where parents/carers do not collect a child from school or are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents. If any concerns about the child's safety and welfare as a result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Child Protection Policy.