

Member of staff responsible	: Headmaster
Date of policy review	: January 2018
Date of next review	: January 2020
Approved by Governors	: March 2018

KING'S HOUSE SCHOOL MISSING CHILD POLICY

Introduction

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

The safety and welfare of its pupils is the prime responsibility of the school and all at King's House School should do their utmost to ensure this. Making sure that all pupils are present, accounted for and safe is therefore a vital role of the staff at the school.

NB – A child going missing from school or from home is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow this procedure for dealing with children who go missing and refer to the Safeguarding Policy if appropriate.

Procedures to ensure all pupils are present

Parents are responsible for making sure their children come to and are delivered to the school safely. On arrival at school, all pupils are registered and records are kept on the school's database system. If a pupil is not present, the office staff will attempt to contact the parents or guardians of the pupil to find out the reason for the absence.

As the boys get older, some will travel to school unaccompanied. Parents are asked to make sure the school is aware if this is the case and the school will follow up on any non-appearance in the same way.

Pupils are also registered before the start of the afternoon session to check that they are still in school.

As well as these formal measures, staff are also expected to know their classes well enough to check if pupils are missing or unaccounted for. They should do informal checks on the class during the day, particularly if they are moving around, leaving the building or going on transport. If they are concerned, they should contact the appropriate school office.

Procedures in the case of a child missing during the school day

If a member of staff is concerned that a pupil is missing, they should firstly check with the appropriate school office to see if there is any explanation for the absence. The staff in the school offices should then take measures to check whether the pupil is elsewhere in the school, either physically or by telephone. Staff in different parts of the buildings should be rung and asked to

check specific rooms and toilet facilities. This should take a matter of minutes (up to five minutes) and if there are still concerns, then a member of SMT should be contacted and the parents phoned for further checks. It is at this point, if the child is still missing, that the police should be contacted (by calling 101) to report a missing child. It should be noted that, in most cases, there is an explanation for a missing child, but it is still better to contact the police earlier rather than later.

Procedures for handing over children at the end of the school day

In the Nursery Department (EYFS), the children are handed over one-to-one at the end of the school day. Once the child is handed over, they are the responsibility of the parent/carer. Staff will not hand a child over or let them go unless a known adult is collecting. Children are always fully supervised until they are collected.

The same applies in the Junior Department (Rec (EYFS) up to Year 3) where the children are dismissed in school to the parent/carer and a member of staff is on the main door to ensure no child goes astray.

In the Senior Department (Year 4 upwards), boys are dismissed in the playground and will find their own parent/carer or make their own way home. A member of staff is on duty during dismissal.

Procedures for an Uncollected Child

If a child is not collected at the end of the session, the school will look after the child and make efforts to contact one of the parents or carers. No child may be left unsupervised.

If an EYFS child is not collected, staff will call the 'emergency contact' (usually a friend, neighbour or relative) that has been nominated by the parents, and arrange for the child to be collected. If contact cannot be made with the child's parents/carer or the emergency contact, the school will contact Richmond Child Welfare Services. The child will remain, fully supervised, in the care of staff until collected.

Procedures in the case of a child missing at the games fields

If a child goes missing during a session at the school playing fields, the staff should follow the same procedures as above. Staff should check the various facilities for the child and the school office should be rung to check that the pupil is not back at school. If there is any doubt, the police should be contacted. As a guide, if a child has not been found after five minutes of them being noticed as missing, then the police should be contacted.

Procedures in the case of a child missing during a trip

It is on school outings when children are probably at the greatest risk of going missing. These normally involve movement on various forms of transport and mixing with large groups of other pupils or members of the public. Staff leading trips should assess the risk of children going missing and set appropriate staffing and control measures in place. This may include limiting the activities available, supervising visits to the toilets and regular head-counts of the groups. The Risk Assessment drawn up by the member of staff leading the outing or trip must contain details of the

control measures to prevent children going missing and the procedures to be followed in the case of a child going missing.

If a child does go missing on a school outing or trip, the staff must act quickly and sensibly. Taking account of the number of staff on the outing, a member of staff must go and start looking, visiting the most recent places and checking toilets and facilities. If this proves unsuccessful, then the help of the police (if available) or staff at the site being visited or, for example, London Transport should be sought. After an initial search, the group leader must contact the police for assistance and then ask one of the staff to call the school and brief the DSL (or Deputy DSL) of the situation. If needed, extra staff from school may be asked to go to the group. Once the police and school have been informed, the parents should be called. As a guide, if a child has not been found after five minutes of them being noticed as missing, then the police should be contacted.

Follow-up

Where a child has gone missing at school or on an outing, a review of procedures must take place to reduce the chance of a similar situation happening again. The issue should also be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or one of the Deputies to ensure that any concern is recorded.

Children missing from education on repeat occasions

Pupil absences are monitored by the office and pastoral staff. If a child is missing school regularly then further investigations would take place. The parents would be contacted and the issue discussed. If appropriate the issue would be discussed with the pupil too.

Children missing from education (leaving the school roll)

In accordance with the law, King's House has an admission register and an attendance register and all pupils are placed on both registers.

The school will inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school ;
- have been certified by a medical professional as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the Head does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- have been permanently excluded.

The local authority will be notified when the school is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances. It is essential that schools comply with this duty, so that local authorities can,

as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

All schools must 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, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

Summary

It is obviously going to be very stressful and distressing if a child goes missing. It is important for the staff to stay calm and act in a rational and logical way. It is also important to act promptly. In the vast majority of cases there will be nothing sinister involved, but as school staff, we have to be prepared for the worst.

Annex A
King's House School
Missing Child Report Form

Date of incident: Time of incident:

Pupil Name: Form:

Pupil DOB:

Members of staff involved:

Outline of events leading to the child going missing:

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Outline of actions taken:

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Outcomes:

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Description of any injury(ies) sustained:

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Date parent/carer informed of incident: Time:

By whom informed:

Outline of parent/carer response:

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Signature of staff completing report: Date:

Signature of Head/Deputy Head: Date:

Description of any follow-up

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This report must be sent to the Head and Bursar.