

HEATHCOTE PREPARATORY SCHOOL & NURSERY



Child missing from Education & Procedures when a child is not collected on time

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To be reviewed by: CF/NS/SLT



Part One: Missing Child Policy

Introduction

The welfare of all of our children at Heathcote school is our paramount responsibility. A child going missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including sexual exploitation and so called 'honour based' violence. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that he or she has 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 children are safe and receiving suitable education. Where staff have concerns that a child is missing from school, this policy should be followed.

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

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).

Information for parents

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are set out in a detailed policy document: 'Educational Visits for EYFS Children'. Both documents are on our website and can be provided to parents on request. We review these 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 very young children and read Part 1 of the DfE's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance.

Action to be followed by staff if a child fails to attend first day of 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 Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Head Teacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance.

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 without permission.[1]

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.

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

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible

A pupil may be identified as missing:

- After an absence at morning or afternoon registration is not confirmed by the office staff's call home.
- By comparing pupils in a class with the day's 'Fire List'/register
- By a report of a missing child by a fellow pupil.

Any member of staff discovering a discrepancy must immediately notify the school office who will:

- Contact the form/class teacher to assess whether the absence is expected.
- Check for any known medical emergency.
- Contact the teacher of any timetabled class at which the missing pupil should be present (or should have been present earlier in the day: staff who might previously have taught or the pupil that day)
- Check all lists of trips out of School.
- Check the signing in/out book
- Check with the pupil's friends to see if they know their whereabouts
- Ask all of the adults and pupils calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the pupil

If the pupil is still found to be missing:

- The Head Teacher will be informed, who will initiate and oversee a search of the site with SLT members.
- Open a written record of the incident which will log all specific actions taken.
- Doors, gates and CCTV will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a pupil could wander out and a search of the perimeter of the school and local roads will be made on foot, by available staff as appropriate.
- Classrooms will be searched methodically

If the pupil is still found to be missing:

- Staff will complete a second search of the site.
- If considered appropriate, a school fire alarm practice will be used as a useful tool in locating missing pupils.

If the site search fails:

- The parents of the missing pupil will be informed, and invited to come to the school.
- The Head Teacher will arrange for the police to be called after two site searches have been completed; we anticipate this would be within 40 minutes.
- The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) 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.
- 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.

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.

If the pupil is found, or the incident is otherwise resolved:

- The Head Teacher and parents of the missing pupil will be directly informed.
- The Police will be informed if they have been involved.
- The written log kept by the school office will be signed off.
- The Head Teacher will initiate a full inquiry, and provide a written report for the Board of Directors. This report and the incident log will be kept on the pupil's file.

After the Incident

- The Head Teacher will discuss with the child's parents the events surrounding the disappearance of the child.
- The Head Teacher will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time.
- The incident report will detail:
 1. The date and time of the report
 2. What staff/children were in the group/class
 3. When the child was last seen in the group/class
 4. What has taken place in the group/class house since then and the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened and, if appropriate, procedures (including risk assessments and training) may be updated.
- ISI is informed in the case of an incident of a missing EYFS pupil within 14 days.

This document is reviewed annually by the Head Teacher and SLT or as events or legislation change requires.

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
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search
- Immediately inform the Head Teacher and the DSL by mobile phone
- Immediately contact the Police
- The remaining children would be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- The Head Teacher will 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 or the school at once
- The DSL would inform the LSCB 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 a member of the Board of Directors 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.

Actions to be followed by staff once the child is found

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child
- 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 Teacher 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 Teacher will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the LSCB)
- Media queries should be referred to the Head Teacher (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.

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

If a child is not collected within 15 minutes of the agreed collection time, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. 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 staff should contact the DSL. If she is unable to contact the parents/carers within half an hour of the premises closing the we will contact the Social Care Duty Officer on **0345 606 1212**. 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. We will make a full written report of the incident.

We undertake to 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 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 result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the school's child protection policy and procedures detailed in its staff behaviour and child protection policy.