

# **MISSING CHILD POLICY**

THIS POLICY APPLIES TO ALL CHILDREN AT THE SCHOOL INCLUDING THOSE IN THE EYFS.

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# MISSING CHILD & NON-COLLECTION POLICY

## 1. Policy Statement

The welfare of children in our care is paramount. Every member of staff has equal responsibility in ensuring the safety of the children and knowing where they are. Pupils missing school may indicate abuse or neglect and this policy is part of Gayhurst's plans to keep all children safe. As part of this, all staff have read KCSIE.

The school is responsible for minimizing the risk of missing children and acting appropriately in the event that a child is identified as missing. This policy sets out our procedures for dealing with the unlikely event of a child going missing.

We also use this procedure in the event of a parent failing to collect their child at the appointed time.

This policy is available for parents and covers all pupils including those within the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## 2. Risk Mitigating Procedures

1. Registers are marked promptly and accurately, mornings and afternoons. Registrations are followed up to check details of absent pupils. Details of registrations are available at the school office and on iSAMs.
2. Appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the premises and surrounding site are secure. Gates and doors are kept closed and, where appropriate, secured with coded access controls.
3. Staff rotas are drawn up at the start of each term to ensure that appropriate levels of supervision are in place at all times.
4. It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of how many pupils are present at any time and a check is completed at the start of every lesson.
5. Staff should know the names of the pupils who are present so that they are aware of whom to expect and can therefore highlight any possible unexplained absence.
6. Pupils who arrive late must sign in at the school office and are recorded in the register; those who leave early should be marked out accordingly via the school office. Senior School pupils leaving school should be collected from the school office. Pupils in Y5 and Y6 may have written permission from parents to walk home. These pupils must go to the school office before leaving school and are signed out on the 'walking check-out register'.
7. The whereabouts of new pupils should be noted with care.
8. Steps are taken to ensure that pupils know the boundaries of where they can and cannot go at all times of the day (for example, via form teachers and in assemblies).
9. Parents must be made aware of the need for supervision of children at all times especially at arrival and departure times.

10. At the end of morning and lunch time breaks a member of staff should remain outside until all pupils have gone inside to ensure that no pupil has been left outside unsupervised.
11. Once inside, staff taking lessons after a break should ascertain that the correct number of pupils is present.
12. All visitors to the school enter via the office or the visitor entrance and sign in. Visitor badges are worn at all times whilst on site.

### **3. Procedures in the Event of a Pupil Going Missing**

In the unlikely event that it is noticed that a pupil has gone missing the following procedures will be followed:

1. The missing pupil should be identified and the last known sighting recorded.
2. A register will be taken to ensure all other children are present.
3. The member of staff present in the classroom where the missing pupil should be will ask the pupils calmly if they have seen the missing pupil and then continue as normal to keep them calm and occupied.
4. A message will be sent to the school office staff who will check registers, check for messages, individual music, LAMDA and learning support lesson timetables and inform the Deputy Head or Assistant Head (Junior School).
5. Information with regards to the pupil's last sighting and potential whereabouts to be gathered.
6. A systematic search of the school building will be coordinated by the Deputy Head or Assistant Head (Junior School). This will include anywhere a pupil might hide: toilets, cupboards, dining room, classrooms, the Gibbs Hall, changing areas, pavilion, boot sheds, Library, all play areas, all outside areas, including the car parks. Doors, gates and any other possible exit/entry areas will be checked.
7. If the child is still missing, the Deputy Head (DSL) or Assistant Head (Junior School) or any of the Senior Leadership Team will then inform the Head who will:
  - a. Send a staff member to check the pupil's route home, if it is within walking distance. Staff undertaking the search should use a mobile phone, reporting back progress.
  - b. After 20 minutes, inform the parents, explaining what steps have been taken. This occurs when the Head is satisfied that a thorough search has been undertaken. If the parents can be contacted, they should be asked for any information of anywhere else their child may make their way to e.g. to relatives, grandparents, and friends. They should be advised that the school will be contacting the emergency services and that a member of staff is searching the route that the child may have taken home.
  - c. Inform the police.
  - d. Inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board
  - e. Inform the Chair of Governors.
  - f. If required, report to the insurers. If the child is injured, report to the HSE under

RIDDOR.

- g. Ensure a full record of activities taken up to this stage where the child has been found is made for the incident report.
- h. Ensure a review of these procedures takes place annually in September, as needed, and at the end of each incident.

## 4. Trips

When off the school premises, on school trips staff should implement strategies to maximize the safety and security of the pupils in accordance with the school's trips procedure. Full risk assessments are carried out. A list of pupils' names is carried by the Trip Leader.

The number of pupils is checked regularly. Permission from parents/guardians is obtained each year by parents signing a form of consent. A mobile phone is taken on every visit and mobile contact numbers are left at school on the trip information form.

In the event of a pupil going missing while off the school premises the following procedures will be followed:

1. The missing pupil should be identified and the last known sighting recorded. A head count will be undertaken to make sure no other pupils are missing.
2. The pre-arranged rendezvous point must be checked.
3. The Lead member of staff will arrange for the other pupils to be supervised (and they may be returned to school). The pupils should be asked, calmly, if they have seen the missing pupil. The last head count location will be verified.
4. Representatives of the venue will be informed and asked to assist in a systematic search to see if the pupil can be located in the surrounding area.
5. The school office will be contacted, checked for messages and the Head, the Deputy Head or Assistant Head (Junior School) informed.
6. A systematic search of the wider environs will be coordinated by the Lead staff member utilizing all resources available. The Head, Deputy Head or Assistant Head (Junior School) will decide if additional staffing resources can/should be provided to assist.
7. The Deputy Head or Assistant Head (Junior School) will inform the Head who will inform:
  - a. The parents- when they are satisfied that a thorough search has been undertaken. A time of approximately 20 minutes should have elapsed before this step is taken.
  - b. If the parents can be contacted they should be asked for any information of anywhere else their child may make its way to e.g. relatives, grandparents, and friends. They should be advised that the school will be contacting the emergency services and that a member of staff is searching any route that the child may have taken. Parents will be asked to come to the venue/school.
  - c. The police, the Local Children Safeguarding Board and Chairman of Governors.
  - d. The insurers and, if the child is injured, the HSE under RIDDOR.

- e. Ensure a full record of activities taken up to this stage where the child has been found is made for the incident report.
- f. Ensure a review of these procedures occurs at the end of the incident.

Once the child has been found:

1. Talk to and comfort the child.
2. Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing.
3. The Head will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
4. The Head will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving Social Services/ Local Children Safeguarding Board).
5. Media queries should be referred to the Head.
6. The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements.

Record of Events:

A record of the events must be kept by the Head. This must include:

1. Date, time and location of disappearance, including numbers of staff and children and purpose of the outing.
2. Who was responsible for the care of the pupil at the time.
3. What the pupil was wearing and any distinguishing features.
4. Circumstances surrounding disappearance, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened.
5. An accurate record of the time scale of events and when parents and emergency services were contacted.
6. Subsequently, details of what happened and any changes to procedures required as a result.

## **5. Procedures for Dealing with a Non-Collected Pupil**

If a child is not collected within fifteen minutes of the agreed collection time, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, the teacher/office staff 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 half hour period/ when the premises are closing, the most senior member of staff will contact the Headmaster who will contact the Social Care Duty Officer on 01494 675802. 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 DSL will also keep a record of incidents where parents/carers do not collect a child from school or are late for no reason or where there are repeated incidents, or if safeguarding concerns arise, they will be dealt with as per the Safeguarding Policy.

## **6. Procedures to be followed by Staff when a New Pupil Does Not Attend School:**

If a child who is new to the school fails to arrive on the first day of school, staff must inform the Head. The school will attempt to locate any such missing child and they Head will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

## **7. Procedures to be followed by Staff when a Pupil Fails to Attend School:**

Where a pupil fails to attend school for 10 days in a continuous period without the school's permission or fails to attend regularly, the Head has a duty to report this and will inform the local authority.

Where a pupil has been continuously absent without authorization for more than 20 days (without reason or unavoidable cause) and where Gayhurst and the local authority have been unable to ascertain where the pupils is, we may delete the pupils from our admission register and advise the local authority of this action.

The School will take all possible steps to help identify children who are missing education and/or who are otherwise at risk of harm.

## **8. Training**

New staff will be expected to familiarise themselves with this policy and information. It is available on the school website and policy viewer. Information will also be provided to staff on any changes to the arrangements via staff meetings and email.