



## **Donhead Preparatory School** **Missing Child Policy (including EYFS)**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The welfare of all our children at Donhead Preparatory School is our paramount responsibility. 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 the children safe always. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he is in our care.

### **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

Our Family Handbook contains:

- The arrangements for handing over children to the care of their parents at the end of the day.
- The arrangements for supervising the children whilst they are in school.
- The arrangements for registering the children in both morning and afternoon.
- The physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to or exit from the building.
- The supervision of the playground and the physical barriers that separate it from the rest of the school.

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our children are set out in two detailed policy documents: 'Educational Visits' and 'Educational Visits for EYFS Children.' Both documents are on our website. We review these policies regularly (every two years) 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 children, including the very young children in Reception.

### **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. If a child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

- Take a register to ensure that all the other children were present.
- Inform the Headmaster.
- Ask all the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child.
- Occupy all the other children in their classroom(s), by reading to them for example.
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the school, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms where a small child might hide.
- Check the doors, gates (and CCTV records) for signs of entry/exit.

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

- Inform the Headmaster and the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSL).
- Ask the Headmaster 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 Headmaster will notify the Police and 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 would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him.
- The DSL would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care.
- Inform the Chairman of Governors.
- Ofsted would be informed if the missing child is in the Reception year.
- The Insurers would be informed.

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.

#### **ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING ON AN OUTING**

- An immediate head count would be carried out to ensure that all the other children were present.
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity and inform the venue manager.
- The remaining children would be taken back to school.
- Inform the Headmaster by mobile phone.
- The Headmaster will inform the DSL.
- Ask the Headmaster 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 at once.
- The teacher in charge of the outing would contact the Police.
- The DSL would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board.
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care.
- Inform the Chairman of Governors.
- Ofsted would be informed if the missing child is in the Reception year.
- The Insurers would be informed.

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.

#### **ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM AN AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITY**

- Inform the Headmaster.
- Ask all the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child.
- Arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the school, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms where a small child might hide.
- Check the doors, gates (and CCTV records) for signs of entry/exit.

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

- Inform the Headmaster and the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSL).
- Ask the Headmaster 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 Headmaster will notify the Police and 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 would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him.
- The DSL would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care.
- Inform the Chairman of Governors.
- Ofsted would be informed if the missing child is in the Reception year.
- The Insurers would be informed.

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.

#### **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 Headmaster will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
- Media queries should be referred to the Headmaster.
- 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 if applicable, the length of time that the child was missing and how he appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.

#### **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. If there is no answer, the Headmaster 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 3-hour period, the Headmaster will contact the Social Care Duty Officer on 0208 545 4227. 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 remains under our care.**

#### **CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

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. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area. Effective information sharing between parents, schools, colleges and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children are safe and receiving suitable education. A child going missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse, neglect or at risk of radicalisation. Unauthorised absences from school will be managed in accordance with this policy.

The school has an up-to-date admissions register and a daily attendance register is taken. All pupils are placed on both registers. The school will place pupils on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which the

school has agreed that the pupil will attend the school. If the pupils fail to attend on the agreed date, the school will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity to prevent the child from going missing from education.

The admissions register is accurate and kept up to date. The school regularly encourages parents to inform them of any changes whenever they occur.

The School will monitor all pupil absences from school and promptly address concerns about irregular attendance with the parent/carer. A pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent from school without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, will be reported to the local authority. The school follows the guidance contained in Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2018) and Merton's Missing Child strategies, the details of which can be found at:

<http://www.merton.gov.uk/learning/schools/changingschool/children-missing-from-education.htm>

Where a parent notifies the school that a pupil will live at another address, the school will record in the admissions register:

- The full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- The new address; and
- The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, the school will record in the admissions register:

- The name of the new school; and
- The date on which the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

The school will notify Merton within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register. The school will provide Merton with all the information held within the admissions register about the pupil.

The school will also notify Merton when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for deletion is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil has completed the school's final year (Year 6).

A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraph (f)(iii) or (h)(iii) if the school and Merton have failed to establish the pupil's whereabouts after jointly making reasonable enquiries.

When the school notifies Merton that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide Merton with:

- The full name of the pupil;
- The full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- At least one telephone number of the parent with whom the pupil lives;
- The full name and address of the parent with whom the pupil is going to live, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- The name of the pupil's destination school and the pupil's expected start date there, if applicable; and
- The ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

The school uses Merton's secure file transfer system (USO-FX) for making returns securely and in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. When making returns, the school will highlight to Merton where we have been unable to obtain the necessary information from the parent, for example in cases where the child's destination school or address is unknown. The school will also consider whether it is appropriate to highlight any contextual information of a vulnerable child who is missing from education, such as any safeguarding concerns.

The School recognises that children who are victims of child sexual exploitation may go missing from education. School staff will be alert to possible indicators of child sexual exploitation and any concerns will be managed in accordance with this policy. The School is guided by the Merton Safeguarding Children Board and their protocol can be found at:

[http://www.merton.gov.uk/health-social-care/children-family-health-social-care/safeguardingchildren/lscb/lscbprof/child\\_sexual\\_exploitation\\_-\\_cse.htm](http://www.merton.gov.uk/health-social-care/children-family-health-social-care/safeguardingchildren/lscb/lscbprof/child_sexual_exploitation_-_cse.htm)