



MISSING CHILD POLICY

AND PROCEDURE

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| Written by: | Deputy Head (Pastoral), St Mary's Hall Headmaster |
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| Person responsible for review: | Deputy Head (Pastoral), St Mary's Hall Headmaster |

AMDG

Missing Child Policy (Child Protection)

Children Missing from Education

Where possible, pupils who are missing from school will have a home visit from a member of the Pastoral team. After being absent for 10 days, contact will be made with the Lancashire Missing Education Officer and parents will be informed by a letter of referral.

Pamela Kornecki, Children Missing Education Officer, Lancashire County Council
01254 220690/07900405948

As part of their safeguarding training, staff are alerted to the scope of triggers which cause children to go missing from school, including travel to conflict zones, female genital mutilation forced marriage, radicalisation and child sexual exploitation.

The School shall inform the local authority (within which the student resides when not at the School) of any student who is going to be deleted from the admission register where he /she:

- has been taken out of school by his /her parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
- has ceased to attend the School and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the School
- has been missing from education on repeat occasions, resulting in safeguarding or child protection concerns has been certified by the School medical officer 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
- is in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the School does not reasonably believe he/she will be returning at the end of that period or has been permanently excluded

The applicable local authority must be notified as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than the deletion of the student's name from the register. This will assist the local authority to:

- fulfil its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing from education and
- 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

Missing Pupil Policy

There are two parts to this document: the first explains the policy, and the second is intended to be used as a 'quick guide' which will lead the user step by step through the correct procedure.

For the purposes of this policy a 'missing pupil' is broadly defined as a pupil who is not where (s)he should be at a particular time. There could be any number of reasons for this, ranging from the potentially extremely serious, to the mundane.

It is for the Head of Playroom or Pastoral Head, based on his or her knowledge of the individual concerned, the time and day, and other relevant factors, to decide which of the following categories the absence falls into:

Category 1 - Urgent

The pupil is not where he or she is supposed to be; the whereabouts are unknown and there is cause for serious concern about the person's welfare.

Example: there is a real or implied threat of suicide or self-harm, or factors are known which suggest that the pupil might be in significant danger.

Example: a pupil is missing from the health centre having been feeling extremely unwell.

Category 2 - Less urgent

The pupil is not where (s)he is supposed to be; the whereabouts are unknown, but there is no particular cause for concern about the person's welfare.

Example: a pupil is late back from an exeat.

Example: a pupil who was registered present at 8.20 does not turn up to Period 1.

The category chosen will determine subsequent procedure.

Procedure to be followed for Category 1 - Urgent

The Pastoral Head (or another responsible adult) should attempt to make verbal contact with the pupil by mobile phone. Mobile phone numbers are kept by Pastoral Heads, and are checked each term.

Other pupils may be able to provide a satisfactory account of the missing person's whereabouts, enabling the absence to move to Category 2. A search of the most likely areas of the premises should be conducted. If these avenues fail to resolve the problem the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and / or Deputy Head (Higher Line) should be contacted immediately, and, after consultation, a decision taken as to whether the police should be called. At this stage, and subsequently at frequent and regular intervals throughout the incident, parents or guardians should be kept abreast of all developments.

The decision as to when a Category 1 'Urgent' absence becomes a Critical Incident rests with the Headmaster.

At SMH, other pupils may be able to provide a satisfactory account of the missing person's whereabouts, enabling the absence to move to category 2.

The Deputy Head/Assistant Head (Pastoral) will check the individual tuition time tables and the signing out register. If at this stage the pupil is still not found a search of the most likely areas of the premises should be conducted. If these avenues fail to resolve the problem Assistant Head (Pastoral) and / or Deputy Head should be contacted immediately, and, after consultation, a decision taken as to whether the police should be called.

At this stage, and subsequently at frequent and regular intervals throughout the incident, parents or guardians should be kept abreast of all developments.

The decision as to when a Category 1 'Urgent' absence becomes a Critical Incident rests with the Headmaster.

Procedure to be followed for Category 2 – Less Urgent

Other pupils may be able to provide a satisfactory account of the missing person's whereabouts. The Head of Playroom, Pastoral Head (or another responsible adult) should attempt to make verbal contact with the pupil by mobile phone, either by voice or text. Mobile phone numbers are kept by Pastoral Heads, and are checked each term.

If these avenues fail to resolve the problem it is appropriate, during the daytime, to wait until the next official roll call or registration, or for three hours (whichever is sooner).

If at this stage the pupil is still unaccounted for, the absence should be re-categorised as 'Urgent' and the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and / or Deputy Head (Higher Line) should be informed.

At SMH other pupils may be able to provide a satisfactory account of the missing person's whereabouts. The Deputy Head/Assistant Head (Pastoral) will check the individual tuition time tables and the signing out register.

If at this stage the pupil is still unaccounted for, the absence should be re-categorised as urgent and the Deputy Head/Assistant Head (Pastoral) should be informed.

Missing Pupil Policy

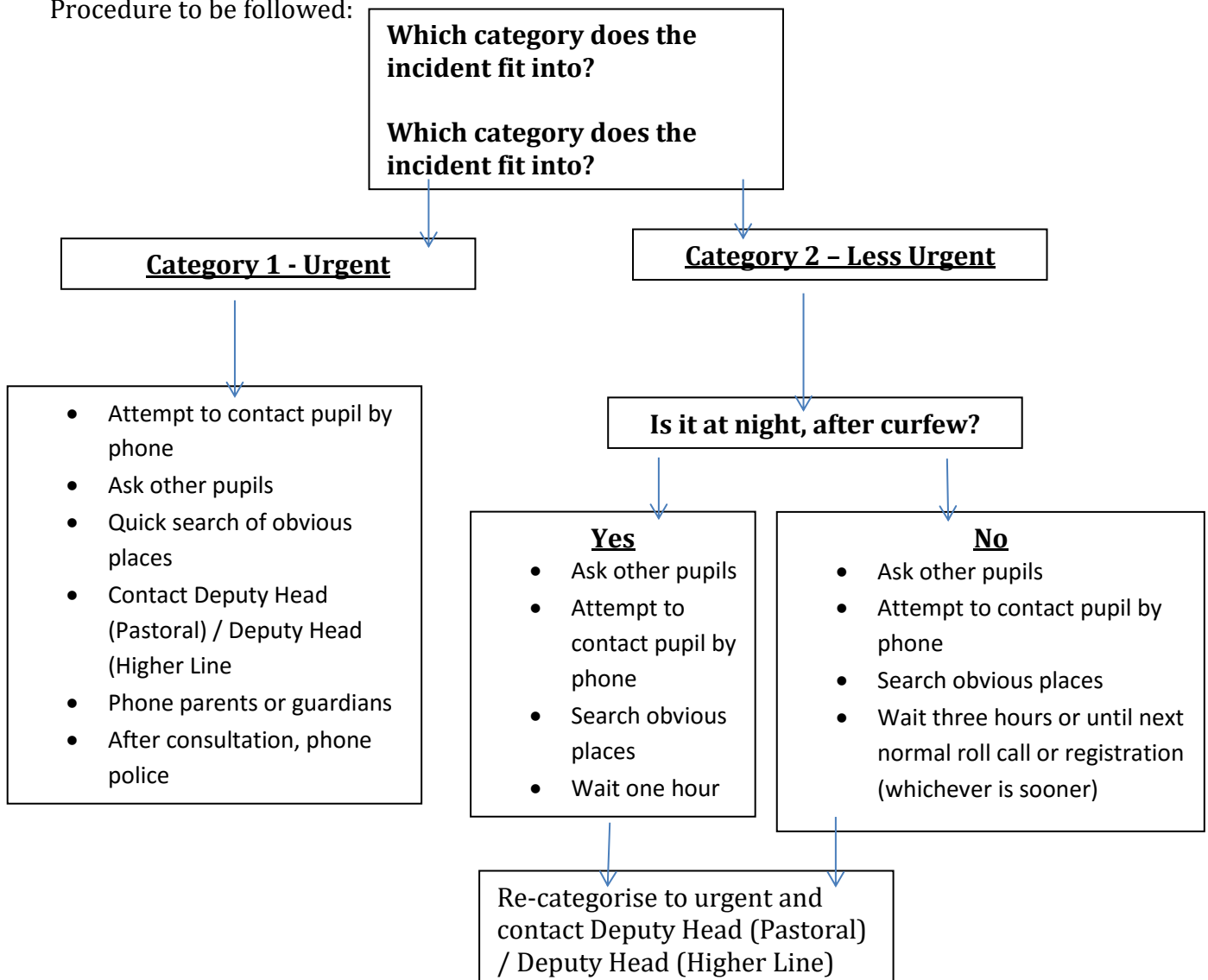
Procedure to be followed:

SEE APPENDIX 1 (College), APPENDICES 2A and 2B (SMH)

APPENDIX 1- COLLEGE

Missing Pupil Policy

Procedure to be followed:



APPENDIX 2A – SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Missing Pupil Policy

EYFS and Pre-Prep

Procedure to be followed:



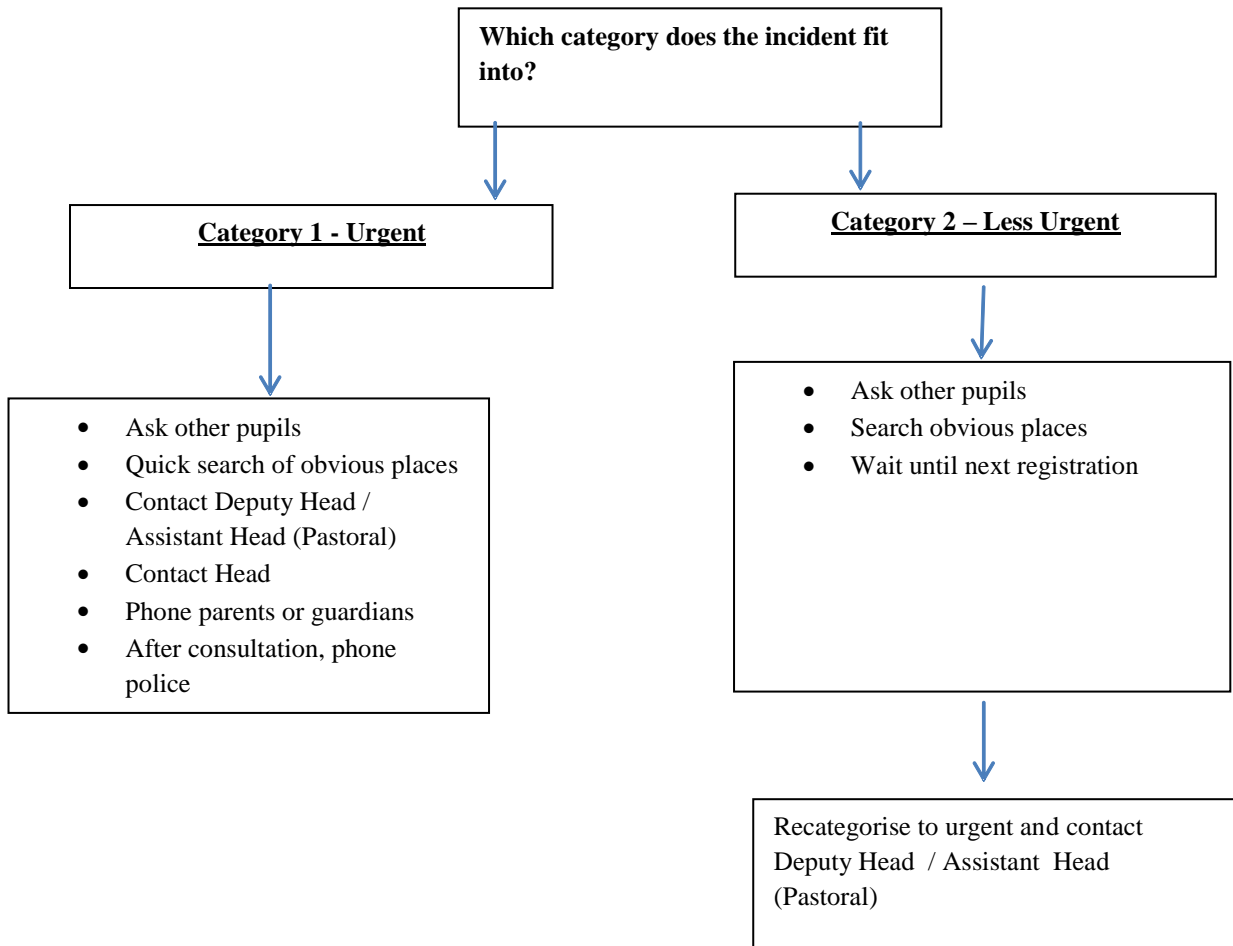
Category 1 - Urgent



- Ask other pupils
- Quick search of obvious places
- Doors and gates checked
- Contact head of Pre-Prep/Foundation Stage Co-Ordinator
- Phone parents or guardians
- After consultation, phone police

APPENDIX 2 b

Missing Pupil Policy Lower Prep-Rudiments Procedure to be followed:



APPENDIX – Missing Child Policy (EYFS and KS1)

St Mary’s Hall, Pre-Prep

Policy statement

Children’s safety is our highest priority, both on and off the premises. Every attempt is made to ensure the security of children is maintained at all times. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

Procedures

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff alert the Head of Pre-Prep or Foundation Stage Coordinator, in the first instance.
- A full headcount is taken against the register to ensure no other child is missing.
- Staff will carry out a thorough search of the building and surrounding area.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security.
- If the child is not found, the Assistant Head (lower school) and the Headmaster are informed and a more thorough search of the whole school grounds is conducted.
- If that action fails to locate the child, parents/guardians, or other suitable person, will be contacted to notify them of the situation.
- If child is still “missing”, the police will be contacted. NB. This serves as a maximum set of parameters. Timings for notification will be shortened in accordance with the circumstances and time of day that the child is reported as “missing”.

Child going missing on an outing

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the staff members on the outing ask children to stand with their designated carer and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone missing.
- One staff member searches the immediate vicinity, but does not search beyond that.
- Our senior staff member on the outing contacts the police and reports that a child is missing.
- The Headmaster is contacted immediately and the incident is recorded.
- Parents are contacted.
- Our staff take the remaining children back to the setting as soon as possible.
- According to the advice of the police, a senior member of staff should remain at the site where the child went missing and wait for the police to arrive.
- Our staff keep calm to avoid other children become anxious or worried.

The investigation

- Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up-to-date with the investigation.
- We will explain the process of the investigation to the parent(s) who may also raise a complaint with us or Ofsted.

- A full investigation is carried out, taking written statements from all our staff and volunteers who were present.

Each member of staff present writes an incident report detailing:

- The date and time of the incident.
 - Where the child went missing from e.g. the setting or an outing venue.
 - Which staff/children were in the premises/on the outing and the name of the staff member who was designated as responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the premises/on the outing, including the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - What has taken place in the premises/on the outing since the child went missing.
 - The report is counter-signed by the senior member of staff and the date and time added.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
 - If the incident warrants a police investigation, all our staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation including interviewing staff and parents. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
 - In the event of disciplinary action needing to be taken, Ofsted are advised.
 - The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people

- Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
- Our staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.
- They may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. We ensure that any staff under investigation are not only fairly treated but receive support while feeling vulnerable.
- The parents may feel angry and fraught. They may want to blame our staff and may single out one staff member over others. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent there should always be two members of staff, one of whom is a senior manager. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against our staff are not tolerated and the police should be called if this is the case.
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them; they too may be worried. Our remaining staff caring for them need to be focused on their needs and must not discuss the incident in front of them. They should answer children's questions sensitively and honestly in a reassuring manner.
- In accordance with the severity of the final outcome, our staff may need counselling and support.

- Our staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice.

LDS