

<b>14b- Missing Child Policy</b>		<b>Revision</b>	1	
		<b>Implementation Date</b>	October 2019	
<b>Author</b>	Deputy Head	<b>Reviewer</b>	Head	

## INTRODUCTION

The welfare of all of our children at Thetford Grammar School ('the 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 they have 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.

This policy was drawn up having had regard to the Independent School Regulatory Requirements, Early Years Statutory Framework and Department for Education guidance *Children Missing Education (September 2016)*.

All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of very young children and are required to read Part 1 and Annex A of the Department for Education's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (*KSCIE*) guidance. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that they are in our care.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding Policy which refers to arrangements for boarders missing outside of school hours.

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

This policy describes:

- The arrangements for children arriving at school and leaving the premises at the end of the day
- The arrangements for supervising pupils whilst they are in school including boarding pupils.
- The arrangements for registering the children in both morning and afternoon. For all pupils we take a register at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Parents are responsible for notifying the School if their child is absent for any reason. The School will always contact the parent if the child fails to arrive at school without an explanation.
- The procedures to be followed when a pupil goes missing, including on a residential trip.

## ACTION TO BE FOLLOWED 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 or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay. The Head, in conjunction with the DSL, will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

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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 e.g. for more than 25 school days in the academic year, or has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school sessions or more without permission.

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 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, the member of staff responsible will without delay:

- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children are present
- Check with School Office (by telephone or by sending a sensible runner where necessary) who will:
- Check the signing out/in system, if appropriate.
- Check medical room, form room, library, etc.
- Inform the Head or Head of Prep (as appropriate) or the senior member of staff on duty
- Meanwhile, the member of staff reporting the absence will calmly ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can recall when they last remember seeing the pupil

A senior member of staff will ensure that the other children are suitably occupied and arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the early years setting or senior school (depending on where the child is pupil of the School), both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms etc. and check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit

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A record is kept by the School of any instances in which a pupil is missing from school without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the pupil's explanation.

If the child is still missing, the following steps will be taken without delay:

- The Head or Head of Prep (as appropriate) and the DSL will be informed
- The Head or Head of Prep (as appropriate) will ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion and will ask them to come to the School immediately
- The DSL/ Head or Head of Prep (as appropriate) will immediately notify the Police
- The Head or Head of Prep (as appropriate) will 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 may be asked to check to see if the child has gone home
- The DSL will inform Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership/CADS and the School's Local Authority 'designated officer' for safeguarding. The School will co-operate fully with any subsequent police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- The Head or Head of Prep will inform the CEO
- The School's insurers will be informed
- 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

During the course of the investigation into the missing pupil, the School, in consultation with the Local Authority 'designated officer', 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 pupil was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

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

- An immediate head count will be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children are present
- An adult will search the immediate vicinity
- The Police will be contacted
- The Head or Head of Prep and the DSL will be informed immediately by mobile phone
- The remaining children will be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- The Head or Head of Prep will ring the child's parents as soon as reasonably practicable to explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. They will be asked to come to the venue or the School at once
- The venue manager may be contacted and a search arranged (where relevant)

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- The DSL will inform Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership/CADS and the designated officer at the local authority without delay
- The School will cooperate fully with any police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- The Head or Head of Prep will inform the CEO without delay
- The School's insurers will 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 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 or Head of Prep will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident (having discussed this beforehand with the designated officer at the local authority if necessary)
- The Head or Head of Prep will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership/CADS)
- Media queries should be referred to the Head and CEO (after discussion with the designated officer 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 length of time that the child was missing and how they appeared to have gone missing, as well as 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, the School will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, the School Office 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 when the premises are closing, the Head or Head of Prep (as appropriate) will contact CADS on 0344 800 8020. 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 School will look after the child safely throughout the time that they remain under the School's care, until such a time as they have been collected by a parent, guardian or carer, or until appropriate, alternative care

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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 Safeguarding Policy.

Date	Revision No.	Summary of Changes	Author	Reviewer
Oct 2019	1.0	New Template	Amanda Faye	Michael Brewer