

MISSING PUPIL POLICY

This policy is applicable to all pupils, including those in EYFS.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the **DfE's Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care** (January 2014) which is in the Procedures and Information area.

All staff should report any pupil absence to the missing pupil's Housemaster/ Housemistress or in their absence, the Deputy Head. An unexplained absence may arise when a pupil does not attend lessons, meals, games or activities, is unaccounted for at bedtime or when the pupil's friends or classmates are unable to locate the pupil. As soon as a Housemaster/Housemistress or the Deputy Head becomes aware of an unexplained absence the following procedure will be followed:

- Internal enquiries will be carried out. The Housemaster/Housemistress or the Deputy Head will speak to the pupil's friends and other members of staff to build a picture of the pupil's recent movements to help locate the pupil. Guidance on appropriate questions to ask is set out below. If appropriate, the Housemaster/Housemistress or Deputy Head will arrange a search of the premises;
- If the pupil cannot be located within 30 minutes, the Housemaster/Housemistress or Deputy Head will report the absence to the Head. He will decide whether or not the parents should be informed immediately;
- If the pupil cannot be located within a further 30 minutes, the Deputy Head will contact the Police to ascertain if they have any information on the pupil's location (for example, if the pupil has been involved in an accident). Local hospitals should be contacted to find out if the pupil has been admitted;
- If these enquiries do not yield additional information about the pupil, the Police should be officially informed that the pupil is missing;
- If the pupil's parents have not previously been contacted, they should be informed that the pupil is missing. The School should discuss any further steps taken with them. If the Police take over responsibility for the search for the pupil, all relevant information about the pupil will be passed to them.

If the Head is not on site, he should be advised that the pupil is missing and kept updated. Once the incident is resolved, a full written account of the incident must be produced by the Deputy Head and sent to the Head. Once the incident is resolved, the Head and the Senior Leadership Team will review relevant policies, procedures and risk assessments and implement any necessary changes.

JUNIOR SCHOOL: Staff should report all pupil absences direct to the Head of the Junior School or, in his/her absence, to the Deputy Head. The Head (or Deputy Head) will take responsibility for following the above procedures. Because of the nature of pupil supervision in the Junior School, it is expected that, during normal daytime hours, the Head will be informed within a maximum of 15 minutes, then inform the Head of the Senior School and that he/she will take the decision to contact the police shortly thereafter.

In all cases:

Questions to be asked:

- When was he/she last seen?
- Who was he/she with?
- Where might he/she have gone?
- Has he/she signed out?
- Has he/she gone to a Music/LAMDA lesson?
- Is there a School activity that he/she might be on?
- Has he/she been ill or injured and gone to the Medical Centre?
- What emotional state did he/she appear to be in?
- Has anything upset him/her recently?

- Did he/she speak to anyone about leaving?
- Who are his/her main friends at School?
- Does he/she have a mobile phone and what is the number?

- Does he/she have a special friend?
- Is there any reason to believe he/she might have been abducted? (e.g. family custody dispute; very wealthy/prominent parents.)

Other actions to consider taking:

- Check that he/she is not in the Medical Centre;
- Check that he/she is not in an individual music lesson;
- Check his/her room for indications of how he/she is dressed, where he/she might have gone;
- Check his/her desk and waste paper bins for scribbled notes;
- Ring his/her mobile (if he/she has one).

Police response:

The Police treat all missing person reports as serious. Each risk is assessed and the following are trigger factors to be considered:

- Boy/Girl in an emotional or depressed state of mind;
- Unusual behaviour prior to disappearance;
- Boy/Girl needs essential medicine or treatment;
- Suspicion of abduction;
- Suspicion of self-harm/suicide;
- Involvement in a violent confrontation prior to disappearance;
- Previously disappeared and suffered or was exposed to harm whilst missing.

Record keeping: The School will keep a full written record of any incident of a missing boarder including:

- the pupil's name;
- relevant dates and times (e.g. when it was first noticed that the boarder was missing);
- the action taken to find the pupil;
- whether the Police or Social Services were involved;
- outcome or resolution of the incident;
- any reasons given by the pupil for being missing;
- any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident;
- a record of the staff involved.

A full written record of the incident will be kept on the pupil's file.

JUNIOR SCHOOL:

In the event of a parent/guardian, or any other permitted person, failing to collect a child at the end of a school day, every effort will be made by staff to contact that person as soon as possible. If this cannot be achieved, staff will contact the person nominated as 'emergency contact'. In the unlikely event that this attempt is also unsuccessful, the Head of the Junior School (or his representative) will inform Kent Specialist Children's Services: Central Duty Team. It will then be the responsibility of the duty social worker to decide how to proceed.

Review: This policy shall be reviewed every year and updates will be made as necessary, taking into account any incidents that have occurred that indicate that there may be a problem with supervision, pupil support or security at the School and any issues raised by individual members of staff, parents and pupils.

This policy will be reviewed in accordance with the Policy Review Schedule

