



MISSING CHILD POLICY

Responsible members of staff: **S. Sanderson, R. McGrath, S. Harvey**

Review date: **November 2021**

Next review: **November 2022**

Safeguarding - children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times, both inside and within the grounds of Alton School.

Child missing from school

Registers are taken every morning and every afternoon by a Form Tutor and recorded on ISAMs. This system allows the school to track and monitor attendance. Parents give notice in advance of appointments which cannot be avoided, such as orthodontist. Within Early Years registers are taken by hand, logging arrival time and parents inform collection times and who is collecting each day. Children are signed out on collection with time being logged by staff.

If no letter or contact from home arrives then the School Office phone home to check where the child is. All absence has to be accounted for by the parent. Within Early Years, staff will phone home to check whereabouts of the child.

Regular absence is flagged for concern and the pastoral team investigates and parents are involved in discussion.

All children are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

A child missing from education, be that compulsory or Nursery education, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

The school recognises that children missing, particularly on repeat occasions and without any supported reason from the parents, or medical evidence, will be reported to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board as cause for concern. The school will be alert to the fact that missing children may be at risk of abuse, neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and the school has a role in helping to prevent the risks of any child going missing in the future.

All staff need to be alert to potential safeguarding concerns such as children travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

By law all schools inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be removed from the admission register – whether home schooling, moved away, medically certified as unfit for school, in custody for a period of more than 4 months, or permanently excluded.

All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

Procedures

For any missing child, the school will contact the police within 30 minutes unless within Early Years, when the police will be contacted within 15 minutes.

Child going missing on the premises

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing and after an initial search to ensure the child is not 'hiding', the key person/staff alerts a senior member of staff via the school office.

- The register is checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray.
- Senior staff will carry out a thorough search of the building and grounds.
- The Headmaster will be informed
- Within Early Years, doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out from the secure area
- Within Early Years, if the child is not found within 15 minutes, or after searching the immediate vicinity, whichever comes first, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police. This should be by the Headmaster/ Director of Early Years or in his/ her absence, a senior member of staff.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- Senior staff may search the locality, such as the railway station, Anstey Park, Alton town
- Within the main school, if the child is not found, the parent is contacted and the missing child is reported to the police within 30 minutes
- Staff are questioned to find out when and where the child was last seen and details are recorded
- The Headmaster is given a full report of the incident
- The Governing body, in conjunction with the Headmaster will carry out an investigation if this is deemed necessary
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
- For children within Early Years, Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up to date with the investigation. This will be within 24 hours of the incident happening.

Child going missing within the grounds of Alton School – Early Years

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff will ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount/check registers to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- One staff member will search the immediate vicinity and retrace the walk.
- The DSL/Deputy Head/Director of Lower School/Director of Nursery contacted immediately and the incident is reported.
- The DSL/Deputy Head/Director of Lower School/Director of Nursery immediately notifies site staff to assist in checking the school grounds & notifies the Bursar who will deploy all available staff to assist in the search.
- The police will be contacted to report the child missing after a search of the immediate vicinity has proven unsuccessful. Parents will be notified. This will normally be carried out by the Director of Nursery/Director of Lower School/Headmaster or a senior member of staff.
- A recent photo and a description of what the child is wearing is given to the police.
- Staff take the remaining children back to the Early Years Department, leaving a known member behind to assist in the search.
- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The DSL/Deputy Head/Director of Lower School/Director of Nursery contacts the Headmaster, if he is not on site, to give a full report of the incident. The Headmaster, in conjunction with the Governing Body and the Bursar, carries out a full investigation.

Child going missing on an outing

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone

astray. A member of staff will immediately notify the venue of a missing child. The venue will instigate their own procedures for a missing child which will include notifying the police.

Other staff members will have immediately commenced searches of the vicinity

- The Headmaster will be informed by the trip leader and will carry out an investigation.
- All staff remain with the children until advised by the police to leave.
- A known member of staff, or senior staff member will stay behind to assist in the search.
- A description of what the child is wearing is given to the police along with any photographs which may have been taken prior to the incident.
- The Headmaster, Director of School or Director of Nursery or Bursar contacts the parents.
- For children within Early Years, Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up to date with the investigation. This will be within 24 hours of the incident happening.
- A full report of the incident will be given to the Headmaster (Alton School) by the trip/group leader. The Headmaster, in conjunction with the Governing Body and the Bursar, carries out a full investigation.

The investigation

Within Early Years Ofsted are informed as soon as possible and kept up to date with the investigation. This will be within 24 hours of the incident happening.

- The DSL/Deputy Head/Director of Lower School/Director of Nursery together with the Headmaster and/or the Bursar, speak with the parent(s).
- The Headmaster, and the Governing Body carry out a full investigation, taking written statements from all the staff in the room, group or who accompanied the walk/outing.
- The key person/teacher and all staff present at the time write an incident report detailing:
- The date and time of the report.
- Which staff/children were in the room/group/on the walk/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
- When the child was last seen in the room/group/on the walk/outing.
- What has taken place in the room/group/on the walk/outing since the child went missing.
- The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- The report is counter signed by a senior member of staff and the time and date added.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff.
- 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 informed.
- The insurance provider is informed.

Managing people

- Missing child incidents are worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible
- The staff will feel worried about the child, especially member of staff responsible for the safety of that child. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases
- Staff may be the understandable target of parental anger and they may be afraid. Staff under investigation need to feel fairly treated and receive support while feeling vulnerable

- The parents will feel angry, and fraught. They may want to blame staff and may single out one staff member over others; they may direct their anger at staff. When dealing with a distraught and angry parent, there should always be two members of staff, one of whom should be the Headmaster, Bursar or representative from the management team. No matter how understandable the parent's anger may be, aggression or threats against staff are not tolerated, and the police should be called
- The other children are also sensitive to what is going on around them. They too may be worried. The 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 honestly and reassuringly
- The Headmaster will use discretion to decide what action to take.
- Staff must not discuss any missing child incident with the press without taking advice

Other relevant policies include: Supervision of children on outings and visits and Supervision of students.

Signed on behalf of Alton School

Scott Sanderson
DSL

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Director of Lower School

Sarah Harvey
Director of Nursery