



## 14B - MISSING CHILD POLICY

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| <b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>   | <b>DEPUTY HEAD PASTORAL</b> |
| <b>DATE REVIEWED</b>    | <b>AUGUST 2024</b>          |
| <b>NEXT REVIEW DATE</b> | <b>AUGUST 2025</b>          |

If a pupil goes missing from school either during the day, overnight or when returning to school at the start of term, the pupil's Housemaster / Housemistress or another responsible adult from the Senior Leadership Team should be immediately informed and should follow the procedures given below. At the start of any investigation into a pupil who is missing from school, the Principal and/or the Senior Deputy should be made aware of the concern.

### 1) During the Day:

- i. Upon discovering the pupil's absence, every effort must be made to:
  - discover his/her exact whereabouts
  - make contact with the pupil
  - discover his/her reasons for absence
  - discover his/her intentions
- ii. In order to help with the above, use should be made of the pupil's teachers, friends and associates:
  - to help contact the pupil via his/her mobile telephone.
  - to ascertain where and when the pupil was last seen in school.
  - to ascertain what emotional condition the pupil was in when last seen.
  - to help in a search of the buildings and the immediate environment.
- iii. If contact is made with the pupil, every assistance should be offered to ensure that the pupil is safe and able to return to school by the safest and quickest means. Actions taken by the HM under these circumstances will depend upon the response of the pupil to being contacted, the reasons for the pupil's absence and the pupil's location. The HM should offer advice to the pupil as to the safest course of action to follow and provide financial assistance if this is necessary to enable the pupil to stay safe. If the reasons for absence are personal and emotional in nature and the pupil is considered to be in a vulnerable condition the HM should try to ascertain as much detail as possible about the pupil's whereabouts and offer whatever support and reassurance that is necessary. The HM should try to

maintain constant or at least regular contact with the pupil and seek assistance in making contact with the pupil's parents and/or the police.

- iv. If the pupil cannot be contacted or located within a reasonable amount of time (dependent upon the HM's knowledge of the pupil's attitude, circumstances, age and maturity) after the last known contact at school, and **after a maximum period of one hour**, the HM should make contact with the pupil's parents. Where reasonably possible, the school holds two emergency contact numbers for each pupil.
- v. The results of telephoning the parent could be:
  - a) No answer received.
  - b) The person answering the call was not the parent and the HM is not reassured that the pupil is safe.
  - c) The parent answered the call and the pupil is not safe and at home and the parent is concerned.
  - d) The parent answered the call and the pupil is safe at home.

In the case of **a)** and **b)** above the HM should consider, with the help of the school's DSL, the degree of vulnerability of the pupil. If there is reason to suspect that the pupil may be at risk, then the HM should **immediately** contact the Police.

Referrals, if necessary, can subsequently be made to Customer First through their web site on:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/keeping-children-safe/reporting-a-child-at-risk-of-harm-abuse-or-neglect-safeguarding/>

In the case of **c)** above the HM should advise the parent to:

- Contact all people and places the pupil is known to visit and to tell them that the pupil is missing and ask for their help in locating the pupil either by offering information or in helping to search for the pupil.
- Contact the family GP and local Accident and Emergency Centres in case the pupil has sustained an injury.
- Contact the local police station to inform them that the pupil is missing.

In the case of **d)** above, no further action is necessary.

## **2) Overnight:**

Discovery of a pupil who has gone missing overnight will most likely be made at morning roll call. It may also come to light in the event of a fire alarm or information being passed on from another pupil. As the time of the pupil's departure from school is likely to be less certain, the adult who discovers that the pupil is missing should inform the pupil's HM immediately and the procedures at i), ii), iii), and iv) above should be put into action simultaneously without delay.

## **3) Returning to School:**

If a pupil is missing from school at the beginning of term or after a half term break, it is most likely that this will be on account of a delay or cancellation of his/her method of transport. When such absence is detected, the adult discovering the missing pupil should inform the pupil's HM immediately. The HM should then put

into action i) and iii) above. If the pupil cannot be contacted or located within a reasonable amount of time (dependent upon the HM's knowledge of the pupil's attitude, circumstances, age and maturity) and after a maximum period of one hour, the HM should make contact with the pupil's parents to inform them of the pupil's failure to arrive at school. If there is no explanation for the pupil's failure to arrive at school and the pupil's parents are unable to assist with any explanation, then the HM should follow procedures given at point v) c above.

### **Children Missing from Education**

See Children Missing from Education Policy.