



# The Peterborough School

## Missing Children Policy

<b>Policy Reference:</b>	14b Missing Children Policy (incorporating Children Missing from Education Policy)
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<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Headmaster
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## Introduction

1. The welfare of all of our children at The Peterborough School is our paramount responsibility. A child going missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including child sexual and/or criminal exploitation and county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage.
2. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that he or she has 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. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Where staff have concerns that a child is missing from school, this policy should be followed.
3. Every member of our staff who works with children has read Part 1 of the latest version of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE). Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care.

## Regulatory framework

4. This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:
  - a. Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
  - b. *Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage* (DfE, September 2021);
5. This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:
  - a. [Children Missing Education](#) (DfE, updated in September 2016);
  - b. [Keeping children safe in education 2023](#) (DfE, updated September 2023) (KCSIE);
  - c. [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#) (DfE, updated in 2023);
  - d. [Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners](#) (HM Government, July 2018);

## Publication and availability

- This policy is published on the School website.
- This policy is available in hard copy on request.
- A copy of the policy is available for inspection from the School during the School day.
- This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.



## Information for parents

6. Our pupil supervision policy describes:
  - The arrangements for children arriving at school and leaving the premises at the end of the day
  - The qualifications of our staff and the arrangements for supervising the children whilst they are in school
  - The arrangements for registering the children in both morning and afternoon. For day pupils we take a register of pupils 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 physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to or exit from the building
  - The supervision of the playground and the physical barriers that separate it from the rest of the School
7. The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our pupils are set out in the Educational Visits Policy, which can be provided to parents on request. We review these policies regularly (at least once a year) in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of very young children and read at least Part 1 of KCSIE 2023, or at least Annex A of KCSIE, if their role does not require them to work directly with children.

## Action to be followed by staff if a child fails to attend first day of school

8. 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 Headmaster or Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Headmaster or Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.
9. The School admission register, also known as the School roll, contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School along with the date of admission or re-admission to the School, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The School also has an attendance register which records pupil attendance.
10. 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.
11. Registers are legal records. The School will preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry.



### Duty to Report

12. The School monitors attendance of its pupils closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance.
13. The School will 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 school days or more without permission.
14. 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.
15. 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.
16. The School also recognises that children who are absent from education particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. The School's response to persistently absent pupils supports identifying such abuse, and helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

### Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing from the school

17. 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, we would carry out the following actions without delay (the order of the action taken may be adjusted depending on the specific circumstances at the time):
  - Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children were present
  - Check the medical centre (Prep and Senior School only)
  - Check with Reception who will check the signing out/in book
  - The Headmaster should be informed immediately, on 07887 857968 or via the School Office. In the event of the Headmaster being unobtainable, the Deputy Headmaster should be informed, on 722 in School, or mobile 07879665424. If neither of the above can be contacted, the lead member of staff should refer to the School's Crisis Management Policy and contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team using the SLT Emergency Telephone number 01733 355749 or using the contact details of the next available member of staff. All staff are provided with emergency crisis cards detailing contact details of key staff.
  - Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child



- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) with a relevant activity
  - At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the Nursery and/or School, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms etc. where a small child might hide
  - Check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit
18. 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.
19. If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken without delay (the order of the action taken may be adjusted depending on the specific circumstances at the time):
- The Headmaster will ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the School at once
  - The Headmaster or DSL would immediately notify the Police
  - The Headmaster would 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. They would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with the child
  - The DSL would inform the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board (LSCP), who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate.
  - The School would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
  - The Headmaster would inform the Chair of Governors
  - The School's insurers would be informed
  - If the child is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)
20. During the course of the investigation into the missing child, the School will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how external enquiries, including press, are to be dealt with.
21. A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.
22. The School will always consider the wider circumstances around a child going missing from School and whether there are wider safeguarding concerns that may need to be addressed in line with the School's Safeguard and Child Protection policy.



#### Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing on an outing

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present
  - An adult would search the immediate vicinity
  - Contact the venue manager and arrange a search (where relevant)
  - The Headmaster should be informed immediately thereafter, on 07887 857968 or via the School Office. In the event of the Headmaster being unobtainable, the Deputy Headmaster should be informed, on 722 in School, or mobile 07879665424. If neither of the above can be contacted, the lead member of staff should refer to the School's Crisis Management Policy and contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team using the SLT Emergency Telephone number 01733 355749 or using the contact details of the next available member of staff. All staff are provided with emergency crisis cards detailing contact details of key staff.
  - The Headmaster will advise whether the remaining children should be taken back to School as soon as reasonably practicable
  - The Headmaster will ring the child's parents as soon as reasonably practicable to explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the School at once.
  - Either the member of staff in charge of the outing, the Headmaster or DSL would immediately notify the Police
  - The DSL would inform the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Partnership Board (LSCP)
  - The School would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
  - The Headmaster will inform the Chair of Governors
  - The School's insurers would 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.
23. 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 by staff 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 Headmaster will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident (having discussed this beforehand with the LADO if necessary)

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- The Headmaster will oversee a full investigation (if appropriate involving the LSCB)
- Media queries should be referred to the Headmaster
- 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 purpose of the outing, the length of time that the child was missing and how s/he appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future.
- The School will consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.

### Collection of Children

24. Please also refer to the **Nursery Procedures for Collection of Children** in the section below. To ensure the safety of all children and staff the following procedures must be adhered to.
25. Pupils in the Preparatory School should be collected by a responsible adult as detailed in the policy below, unless specific permission has been granted by the Head of the Preparatory School for Year 6 pupils to make their own way to and from School. Pupils in the Senior School may make their own way to and from School and need not be collected.
26. When pupils join the school, parents of Preparatory School pupils are asked to complete and return a collection slip, nominating the adults who will be collecting their children on a regular basis. Each child must have at least two authorised collectors.
27. Parents are also requested to inform the School, in writing if possible, if their child is to be collected by someone other than the adults nominated on the collection slip. Notes in Pupil Planners are acceptable or via email or ParentMail. In exceptional circumstances, verbal arrangements may be made between the parents and a member of staff in School.
28. All staff should be aware that some children are not allowed to come into contact with members of their own family. In such circumstances a register is kept of each child and the names of those family members with whom that child is forbidden contact. If one of these family members should call at the School, they must not be granted access and an authorized person must deal with the situation, ensuring that no contact is permitted. The child's primary carer must be informed of the incident immediately thereafter.
29. A child must not be released to an unauthorised person, even if the collection is late, unless an authorised person telephones to state that, because of an emergency, a different person will be collecting. The authorised person should give the name and address and a physical description of the unauthorised person and the member of staff in charge should check this description before permitting the child to leave.
30. The Form Tutor will inform After-care of a change in routine on any particular day.

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### Uncollected Children

31. Any child in the School that is not collected at the designated time will be taken to After-care to await collection in the Preparatory School or Homework Supervision in the Senior School.
32. 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. Where reasonably possible the School will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. 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 by the School. The duty member of the Senior Leadership Team will be contacted via the SLT emergency phone (01733 355749).
33. If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a one hour period or by 6pm (whichever is soonest), a member of the Senior Leadership Teams will contact the Social Care Duty Officer. The MASH should be the first point of contact. The Headmaster, Designated Person, (or other senior member of staff should these be unavailable), should ring **01733 864180 (Peterborough)**<sup>1</sup> and request a discussion with the Duty Social Worker for Children's Services. 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. **It should be noted that Social Care offices close at 5.20 p.m. on Monday – Thursday, and at 4.25 p.m. on Friday. Schools should contact the Emergency Duty Team after these hours, on 01733 234724.**
34. 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 arrangements have been made with Social Care and/or the Police in order to prioritise the child's safety.
35. 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 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures.
36. Similar procedures will be followed for any child not collected in the Nursery. The designated Late practitioner will remain with the child and the Nursery Manger or Deputy Nursery Manager will try to contact the parents and/or named adults. Again if no one is available, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be contacted via the SLT emergency phone (01733 355749).

### Collecting Children who are ill

37. If a child falls ill during School or Nursery hours, parents may be contacted and will be asked to ensure that they arrive at the School or Nursery no later than an hour after they have been informed of the child's illness. The School or Nursery will administer prescribed medication if

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<sup>1</sup> Other departments' contact details are available in the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures.



parents complete a medication form and the parents will be asked to sign it when they collect their child.

### Nursery Arrival and Collection Procedures

38. Parents are welcome to park their cars in the Nursery car park. Cars should be parked with consideration to others, taking into account that there may be small children in the car park.
39. Parents should ensure that their child is taken to the Nursery entrance, where they will be greeted by a room practitioner and any details regarding the child can be discussed before the parent leaves.
40. To ensure the safety of all children and staff the following procedures must be adhered to:

#### Answering the door

- The person who answers the door must always check the identification of the caller, i.e. name, reason for call, name of the person whom the caller is here to see, employment card. Before granting a caller access practitioners should always check with an authorised person. Access should never be granted to anyone who is not known. Children are not allowed to answer the door.

#### Visitors

- All visitors must fill in the visitor's book on arrival and wear a visitors badge.

#### Authorised collectors

- Children should have at least two named adults authorised to collect them. Parents are required to provide the name and relationship of each named adult together with telephone numbers. Parents are also asked to provide a password. Named adults may be required to provide proof of identity to staff. Parents will also be reminded that they should keep the Nursery informed of any changes they wish to make regarding the collection of their child.
- Parents will be asked to update the nursery records when they move to the next room. If the parent informs Nursery that a named adult has changed the records will be updated immediately.

#### Persons prohibited from collecting children

41. If a different person calls to collect a child, and the parents have not informed the Nursery of this, then the password must be asked. If they are not aware of the password, then the parents' permission must be obtained before handing over the child.
42. All staff should be aware that some children are not allowed to come into contact with members of their own family. In such circumstances a register is kept of each child, with the names of those family members with whom that child is forbidden contact. If one of these family members should call at the Nursery, they must not be granted access and an authorised



person must deal with the situation and ensure that no contact is permitted. The child's primary carer must be informed of the incident immediately thereafter.

#### Uncollected children

43. If a child is not collected at the designated time, the Nursery will contact the parents and if necessary other named adults who have permission to collect the child. If no one is available the Nursery will then contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team for advice via the SLT emergency phone (01733 355749). *(For further information please see the School's policy on uncollected children.)*

#### Collection of ill children

44. If a child falls ill during the Nursery hours, parents will be contacted and asked to ensure that they arrive at the Nursery no later than an hour after they have been informed of the child's illness. For further information see the Administering Medication Policy.