



ST PHILIP'S SCHOOL MISSING CHILD PROCEDURE

<i>Written by:</i>	Ben Walsh
<i>Reviewed by:</i>	Peter Way
<i>Date of last review:</i>	15.03.23
<i>Date of next review:</i>	March 2024

Missing Child Procedure

AIMS

St Philip's School is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils/students. Their safety and welfare is of the utmost importance. All staff should be aware of their responsibilities regarding pupil/student safety, including what to do if a pupil/student goes missing from school supervision or when a 'collected pupil/student' is not collected from school by their designated person. This procedure sets out how we will respond in the event of either occurrence.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Governors will:

- Review and approve this procedure not less than annually.
- Monitor the implementation of this procedure as part of effective safeguarding within the school.

Principals will:

- Ensure that this procedure is regularly reviewed and updated in line with government guidance and other best practice.
- Ensure all staff are aware of this procedure and understand what to do in the event of a missing pupil/student.
- Review any incidence of a missing pupil/student to ensure that the school takes forward any lessons learned and continues to operate best practice.

Staff will:

- Ensure they are familiar with this procedure and adhere to all related policies and procedures, especially, but not exclusively, those relating to Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding, Risk Assessment, Health & Safety and Educational Visits.
- Ensure that attendance registers are completed accurately and promptly according to guidelines, and return attendance registers to the school office promptly each day.

Parents/carers will:

- Ensure that the school holds up to date contact information for at least three responsible adults, including named emergency contacts in the event that parents/carers are not available.
- Know the procedure for handover and collection of pupils/students where relevant, particularly where there may be safeguarding issues or concerns, including parental responsibility.
- Sign pupils/students out at the school office when collecting them during the school day.

MISSING CHILD

Procedures aimed at reducing risk of a missing child

Pupils/students attending St Philip's School cover all age ranges from 9 to 19 and have a variety of additional learning needs, which may be complex and profound. Some pupils/students attend school using LA transport or are brought to and from school by parents/carers; a smaller number are independent travellers. Pupils/students also experience time in the community, attending a wide variety of work experience, enrichment and learning opportunities.

This procedure sets out the process to be followed whenever St Philip's School staff suspect a pupil/student may be considered missing. Such situations might include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to arrive for a scheduled school day or session, whether on school premises or in the community.
- Absconding from a scheduled school day or session, whether on school premises or in the community.
- Becoming lost while out in the community e.g. through separation from school staff and peers.

Everyday measures that St Philip's School takes to safeguard pupils/students include:

- If a pupil/student is absent and no notification of absence has been received by the school, staff will contact the named contact/s on the pupil's/student's file to ascertain their whereabouts as soon as possible.
- The school ensures parents/carers are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of the pupil/student passes from staff to them and vice versa.
- Clear procedures are in place for welcoming pupils/students into the school, including signing in and out.
- Teaching and support staff ensure that pupils/students go to the relevant classroom or appropriately allocated area.
- Staff mark registers promptly and accurately morning and afternoon.
- If pupils/students leave the classroom to work in other parts of the school, the class teacher ensures that a suitable level of supervision, as appropriate, is maintained at all times and that all pupils/students are accounted for on return to the classroom.
- Pupils/students who travel to and from school using LA transport are escorted by appropriate named staff onto their bus or taxi. A formalised system of checking pupils/students onto their transport is in place.
- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff-pupil/student ratios are provided when pupils/students leave school premises for educational visits or learning outside the classroom.
- Where pupils/students do not have capacity to consent, permission from parents/carers for educational trips should be obtained generically at the beginning of each academic year and specifically for each trip where that visit is not covered in global permissions.
- Staff mobile telephones are taken on every visit and mobile contact numbers left at the school.

Procedure to be followed in the event of a pupil/student going missing on or from the school premises

In the event of a member of staff discovering or suspecting that a pupil/student has gone missing while at school:

1. If a teacher, LSA or other key adult (for example, therapist or lunchtime supervisor) suspects that a pupil/student is missing from a lesson or activity, they must contact the nearest member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the Principal and office staff immediately. Following an assessment of the circumstances, a senior staff member will coordinate, where necessary, an initial search of the building, including classrooms, toilets, storage areas, communal areas, resource rooms, outside areas and Academy grounds.
2. The following lists should be held in the school office and/or electronically and will be checked:
 - a. Attendance registers
 - b. Off-site record (trips and visits)
 - c. Lists of those attending other provisions (e.g. inclusion links, work placements or other alternative provision)

Where a search occurs:

3. Staff will count and name check all the pupils/students present against the register.
4. A thorough check of all exits will be made, to ascertain if all relevant gates/doors were secure and there are no other ways a pupil/student could have left the premises. If something is discovered, this needs to be drawn to the attention of senior staff immediately.
5. Staff will attempt to call the pupil/student on the pupil's/student's personal mobile phone, if they have one.
6. Senior staff will conduct an in-situ risk assessment to establish whether, and when, parents/carers should be notified. The Principal or next most senior member of staff on site will decide at which point the police need to be contacted, if necessary.
7. Staff will write down as full a description of the pupil/student as possible, including what they were wearing and any distinguishing features. A recent photo of the pupil/student, for example their ID photo, will be provided to those searching where this is necessary.
8. Any specific special medical or learning needs relating to the missing pupil/student should be disclosed to police or other agencies as appropriate.

9. Senior staff will speak to all staff members who have had contact with the missing pupil/student that day, in order to try and build up a clear picture of the pupil's/student's movements.

Additional procedures in the event of a pupil/student going missing while off school premises:

1. The teacher or the allocated group leader must ensure the safety of remaining pupils/students. At least one member of staff must stay with them, which will be informed by an in-situ risk assessment. The teacher or allocated group leader must make a professional judgement at the time with respect to the size of the pupil/student group, the needs of that group and the available staff-pupil/student ratios.
2. One or more staff members must immediately start searching for the pupil/student.
3. Senior staff, including the Principal and/or next most senior staff member, and Designated Safeguarding Lead must be contacted immediately.
4. If the pupil/student is not found promptly, the teacher must contact police by telephoning 999.

Where they have done so, the teacher or allocated group leader should alert the school that the police have been contacted. St Philip's will make arrangements to notify parents/carers, after which the procedures described above will be followed.

CHILD NOT COLLECTED

This procedure outlines what should happen when a 'collected pupil/student' i.e. one who is collected from school by a parent, carer or designated adult, is not collected. The guiding principle in dealing with any situation of this type must be to minimise distress to the pupil/student and for him or her to remain in familiar surroundings and/or with familiar people for as long as possible.

St Philip's School staff will ensure they are aware of all pupils/students who are collected by a parent, carer or designated adult, if they are not collected by LA transport and do not travel to and from school independently. The following general principles should be adhered to by all parties:

- Parents/carers who know they are going to be late must inform the main office in advance.
- On occasions when a pupil/student is due to be collected by someone other than their parent/carers or normally authorised person (e.g. when all of the above are unexpectedly unavailable), parents/carers must advise how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect the pupil/student. This might be through the use of a pre-determined password.

In the event of a 'collected pupil/student' not being collected at the end of the day, the following procedures will be activated:

We undertake to look after the pupil/student safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care.

- If a pupil/student is not collected promptly, and regardless, if that time exceeds twenty minutes, a member of staff will call the parent/carer or designated adult and use any other emergency contact details available in order to determine the nature and length of delay in collection. If contacts go to voicemail/answerphone, staff members should leave messages giving their name and the school telephone number and requesting a prompt return call.
- While waiting to be collected, the pupil/student will be supervised by at least two members of staff who will offer them as much support and reassurance as is necessary.
- Pupils/students awaiting collection will be taken to the school office where they will be supervised by members of staff.
- If a pupil/student has not been collected within the hour following agreed collection time, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be informed and a decision taken as to whether Social Services needs to be called.
- If all attempts within this period to contact a parent/carer, designated person or emergency contact fail then the DSL or other senior staff member should inform the Local Authority Social Services department of the situation without delay.
- The duty social worker will take ownership of the situation and decide what happens next, including whether the police need to be involved in helping to trace the parent/carer of the pupil/student.
- The pupil/student will not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file.
- Under normal circumstances, staff should not look for the parent/carer or take the pupil/student home. In exceptional circumstances, if the parent/carer or responsible adult has been contacted but is unable, for a given and accepted reason, to come to the school, the school may escort the pupil/student home with that parent/carer or responsible adult's permission. Where this does occur, this should ordinarily happen with two staff members, one of whom is a senior member of staff.
- In the event that transporting the pupil/student somewhere is agreed to be necessary, staff should not usually transport pupils/students alone in their own cars and may wish to consider using a taxi or mini-cab (approved licenced drivers only). In this instance, two members of staff will accompany the pupil/student. However, there may be exceptional circumstances (for example

in an emergency) where solo accompaniment of the pupil/student by an appropriate staff member is necessary. In this instance, the staff member must ensure that a senior leader or line manager (ideally the Principal and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead) is made aware of the arrangement beforehand and can follow up accordingly.

- Continual incidents of late collection will be recorded and discussed with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy
Health & Safety Policy
Risk Assessment Policy
Educational Visits Policy

APPENDIX A: Recording form for incidence of missing pupil/student

School / Designated Safeguarding Lead _____ / _____

Name of pupil/student: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

Tel no: _____

Name of parent/carer: _____

Date, time & location of disappearance:

Who was responsible for caring for the pupil/student at the time he/she disappeared?

What was the pupil/student wearing? _____

Any distinguishing features? _____

Circumstances surrounding disappearance:

Parent/carer contacted: Yes No

Police contacted: Yes No

What happens next?

Signed by registered person: _____ Date:

Signed by Principal/SLT: _____ Date:

APPENDIX B: Recording form for incidence of pupil/student not collected by parent/carer

School / Designated Safeguarding Lead _____ / _____

Name of pupil/student: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

Tel no: _____

Name of parent/carer: _____

Date and time pupil/student should have been collected:

Name of person who should have collected the pupil/student:

Contact made with parent/carer/emergency contact: Yes No

Social Services contacted: Yes No

What happens next?

Signed by Designated Safeguarding Lead: _____ Date: _____

Signed by Principal/SLT: _____ Date: _____