

Missing Child Policy
including our Early Years Foundation Stage provision

Authorised by	resolution of the Board of Governors
Date	Autumn 2010
Reviewed	Autumn 2015 Autumn 2016 (1-0-1) Spring 2017 (1-0-2) Autumn 2019 (1-0-3) Autumn 2022 (1-1-0) Autumn 2023 (1-2-0) Autumn 2024 (1-3-0)
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Introduction

The welfare of all of our children at St Gabriel's is our paramount responsibility. A child being absent from education, for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including abuse or neglect, 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. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that they have 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 being absent in the future. Where staff have concerns that a child is absent from school for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, or missing from school, this policy should be followed.

Every member of our staff who works with children has read the relevant parts 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.

Guidance

This policy has regard to the following guidance

- The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework December 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE guidance, September 2024
- Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE guidance, (December 2023)

- Signs of Abuse NSPCC fact sheet: www.nspcc.org.uk/signsofabuse
- Children Missing Education, DfE guidance, September 2016
- Working together to improve school attendance. DfE guidance, February 2024

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Educational Visits Guidance

Information for Parents of EYFS pupils

Our companion document, "Nursery Parent Handbook" describes:

- The arrangements for handing over children to the care of their parents 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
- 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

The supervisory arrangements for educational visits involving all our children are set out in the Supervision of Pupils policy including EYFS. The document is on our website and can be provided to parents on request. We review this policy regularly in order to satisfy ourselves that it is robust and effective. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of very young children.

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

All new pupils (regardless of their age) 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

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.

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.

The School also has an attendance register which records pupil attendance. The attendance register is taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion we will record whether each registered pupil is physically present in school or, if not, the reason they are not in school by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Registers are legal records. The School will preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date of entry. Where amendments are made to the registers, the School will ensure that the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment.

Duty to Report

The School monitors attendance of its pupils closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance. 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.

Prolonged and/or persistent absence

Where a pupil has not returned from a period of leave or has had a continuous period of absence, the School, together with the Local Authority, may need to carry out joint reasonable enquiries under regulation 9(1)(h) or (i) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to try to find out where the pupil is.

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.

In addition, the School 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.

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 (including EYFS)

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible.

Teachers and supervisors take a register at the beginning of lessons and sessions of other activities. If a child is marked as present in school but is not in the expected location at the expected time, the teacher or supervisor will call the office (or make contact with the member of the Leadership team on duty if the office is closed.)

For a child that is not subject to an individual risk assessment, the office will check whether the child has left the premises for authorised appointment, or if they are currently with another adult. If the child cannot be located then the office will inform the relevant member of the leadership team. A search will take place of outdoor and indoor spaces to locate the child.

If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Inform the Executive and Emma Hammons the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or in her absence Rebecca Wright (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead); Pete Dove or Clare Lawrence (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads for the Junior School) and Katie Noonan (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for the nurse.)
- Ask the relevant personnel to check the controlled access doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit
- The Principal or another nominated person will contact the child's parents within 30 minutes and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Parents will be requested to come to the school immediately
- A member of the Executive or the Designated Safeguarding Lead would notify the Police within 30 minutes
- The Principal or another nominated person 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 would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her if it is thought that this is appropriate
- The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate. The DSL will check with the LSCB this has happened.
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- Inform the Chairman of Governors and the Governor responsible for Child Protection
- The Executive will instigate an appropriate major incident procedure

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.

For a child that is subject to an individual risk assessment, the form in Appendix 1 must be used.

Actions To Be Followed By Staff If A Child Goes Missing On An Outing

- An immediate head count and register would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity and contact the venue manager
- Arrangements will be made to take the remaining children back to school or to supervise them in a safe location
- Inform the appropriate Head of School, if not accompanying the trip, the Executive and the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Ask the Principal or another nominated person to ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the venue or the school as appropriate at once
- Contact the Police
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the LSCB who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- Inform the Chairman of Governors and the Governor responsible for Child Protection
- The Executive will instigate an appropriate major incident procedure

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.

Actions To Be Followed By Staff Once The Child Is Found

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child
- The Principal or nominated person will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Principal or nominated person will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving Social Services)
- Media queries should be referred to the Executive
- 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 they may have gone missing, and any lessons for the future.
- Consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.

Procedures To Be Followed By Staff When A Child Is Not Collected On Time

If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed collection time (or if appropriate the end of supervised study after school hours), we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, the member of staff on duty will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child and inform a member of the Executive who will provide support and advice.

If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a 1 hour period or within 1 hour of the premises closing, a member of the staff duty team will West Berkshire CASS (01635 503190) or the Emergency Duty Service (EDS) outside office hours on 01344 786543.

Staff must Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Vice-Principal of the situation by phone and email.

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. 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.

Date	Version	Changes
Autumn 2019	1-0-3	Designated Safeguarding Leads checked Details of records to be kept of event amended

Autumn 2022	1-1-0	Appendix 1 – Search record for child on individual risk assessment added.
Autumn 2023	1-2-0	Guidance section added Action to be followed if a child fails to attend the first day of school added Duty to report section added
Autumn 2024	1-3-0	Policy amended for KCSIE 2024, and WT to improve Sch Attendance 2024

MISSING CHILD CHECKLIST – For pupils subject to a Risk Assessment

Name of student _____ Date _____ Time _____

Office Mobile -- 07551 558563

Please tick and initial each box below once done

1.	Office to check medical room	
2.	Office to check pastoral offices	
3.	Office to check library	
4.	Office to check music lessons	
5.	Office to check LAMDA lessons	
6.	Office to check Individual Needs room	
7.	Office to check counsellor	
8.	For Sixth Form, office to check Scholl Library and common room	
9.	Office to alert SLT member on call	
10.	All office staff and SLT who are free to check around school, including all toilets, changing rooms and outside areas and music practice rooms If toilet found locked and no response after trying, two members of leadership team to open	Geography:
		White corridor:
		Science:
		Outside swimming pool:
		Sports Hall:
		Changing rooms:
	Music practice rooms:	
11.	Once all areas exhausted SLT to call parent and ask them to phone child	
12.	Site team to check grounds	
13.	If no success then SLT to phone 999	
NB	If a class teacher has reported a pupil missing to the office then should they return the class teacher should let the office know to stop the search	

For all those pupils on a Risk Assessment please follow the above procedure and also

1. **Contact home for them first** if they are absent in the morning registration.
2. **Phone all contacts until you have spoken to someone to ascertain the reason for absence.** Keep trying until you do and if within 30 minutes you have not managed to contact anyone then please alert SLT.
3. **All office staff and SLT who are free should help with search for missing pupil on Risk Assessment.** Marketing to oversee front office in absence of office staff.
4. Office to hold a set of keys to toilets