



Missing Pupil Policy

Introduction

This policy is applicable to all pupils at Newcastle Preparatory School (the School). It has been drafted in compliance with *Keeping Children Safe In Education (2022)* and *Children Missing in Education (September 2016)* and should be read in conjunction with the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*, which is available on the School's website.

The School expects to be notified by parents or legal guardians of all pupil absences either in advance of the day or at the start of the day they are absent (details of this procedure are in the Information for Parents booklet). The School will follow up any unexplained absences as soon as is practicable using the procedures detailed below. Where reasonably possible the School will hold more than one emergency contact for each pupil so that the School has additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

It is important to distinguish between a pupil's absence from school for an unknown reason (Children Missing from Education) and a pupil's disappearance from a lesson or activity after arrival at school.

Children going missing, particularly persistently (including during the school day), can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation. The School's policies are designed to assist in identifying such abuse and also help prevent the risk of them going missing in the future. The School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* sets out the School's approach, both to support early help assessments when problems are first emerging and also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as those on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where going missing from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. School attendance registers are carefully monitored to identify any trends. Action should be taken in accordance with the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*, if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

Responsibility

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for matters which are the subject of this policy.

All staff have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

All members of staff contribute to the safety of pupils at the School by providing appropriate supervision under the guidance of the Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

It is the duty of staff in charge of any pupil supervision to check why a pupil is absent, although during the school day this may be delegated if that member of staff is busy.

Procedures for Monitoring the Whereabouts of Pupils

To establish whether a pupil is missing it is a requirement to monitor the whereabouts of pupils. This includes use of the following procedures:

- Statutory registration: form teachers will register classes in both the morning (9.00am) and afternoon (by 1.30pm) via Engage.
- In all school activities on site, staff should be aware of the pupils they should have in their care. This includes taking registers for extra-curricular clubs before and after school.

- In school activities off site, registers will be taken at appropriate points during the day including the start and end of the activity.

Absence Recording and Registration

- Form teachers, when notified, must record planned absences onto Engage or ask the Receptionist to do so as soon as the School is notified and permission is granted by the Head Teacher.
- Parents are expected to contact the School every day their child is absent unless previous permission has been granted. Such absences must be recorded on Engage when notified to the School.
- Form teachers will register classes in both the morning and afternoon via Engage using the recording structure recommended by the DfE and detailed in the Admissions and Attendance Register Procedures.
- If a pupil is absent without a reason being known, the category 'Absent – no reason provided' will be recorded. The Receptionist will follow up these absences marked before 10.00am in the morning, and 2.00pm in the afternoon.
- Off site, staff must make meeting times and locations clear to all pupils. Regular head counts must be undertaken, especially when moving from one location to another.

When would a pupil be identified as missing?

A pupil may be identified as missing:

- If an absence from school is not confirmed by contacting the home contact.
- Off site, if there is a no show at a regular head count.
- On site, if a pupil does not show at a school activity. The member of staff should contact Reception.

Any member of staff discovering a discrepancy must immediately notify the School Reception in person, or on extension 201

Missing Pupil Procedures

1. Pupils absent from School for an unknown reason:

- At 10.00am the Receptionist will produce a list of pupils unaccounted for – i.e. those pupils who are not marked as present but for whom the School has not received a message from home regarding absence through sickness etc. The Receptionist will then check with the relevant teacher to check on these pupils' attendance. The same routine occurs after pm registration, with a check carried out if necessary.
- If a pupil is found to be absent from school and no notification has been received from parents/guardians, the Receptionist will then ring home for confirmation of absence.
- Where the home contact is not immediately available, the Receptionist will continue to try all contact numbers. If no contact can be made having tried regularly (at least every 15 minutes), Reception will inform a member of the SLT by no later than break time (10.30am) for follow up.

- Where the home contact has been spoken to and the pupil's absence is not confirmed with them, Reception will immediately contact a member of SLT (usually the Head Teacher or Assistant Head - Pastoral).
- The School has a legal duty to report certain attendance issues to the local authority as set out in the Admission and Attendance Register Procedures.

2. Pupils identified as missing during the school day:

Children are never allowed to leave the premises alone during school time. Due to the split-site nature of NPS, children are required to walk to the sports hall for PE and some other activities. The procedure for this movement is as follows:

- Children will be lined up in their usual classroom in pairs and counted.
- One teacher will lead the column, with one following behind as they move to the exit door.
- Children will pause on the path outside before moving into the street and will be counted again.
- The column of pairs (holding hands), with one teacher in front and one at the rear, will make its way to the sports hall.
- At the crossing point opposite the end of Lambton Street's northernmost footpath, the lead teacher or helper will check the road is clear and will then stand in the middle of the road as the column crosses the road.
- Children will wait at the gate of the sports hall for the gate to be opened and will move inside the grounds before one final count is taken.
- At the end of activities, break times or PE, children will be counted and then the safe movement in point (5) will be adhered to.
- Buses for transport to a trip / swimming will, wherever possible, park immediately outside the school. Points 1-4 (above) will be followed, with children moving into the bus before being counted.

Security measures in place

- Staff will maintain the correct adult to child ratios.
- Staff maintain the appropriate level of supervision throughout the day and are aware of the location of the children in their care at all times.
- A register is taken each morning and afternoon
- All final exits are monitored by CCTV to monitor people coming and going, and where 'mag-locks' have been fitted, buttons to gain exit are beyond the reach of the younger children to promote security.
- There is a push-bar fire exit out from the main hall which, it is possible may be unobserved. CCTV is present to record any usage of this door and children would not usually be in there unsupervised, and certainly not the younger children.
- The gate from the yard has a key-pad system to allow entrance to- as well as exit from the yard, to ensure security. The code is changed regularly

Action to be taken if a child is missing during the day

Nevertheless, it is possible, however unlikely, that a child may leave the premises without the knowledge or permission of the form teacher or Head Teacher. This policy is put in place to ensure that every action possible is taken to ensure the quick and safe return of that child to school.

1. If a child cannot be found by their supervising adult, the Headteacher must be notified immediately and told when and where the child was last seen. Time is of the essence and prompt actions must be taken by all.
2. The remaining children will stay in the care of suitable staff. All other available staff will conduct a thorough search of the school, including classrooms, playground, storage areas and toilets.
3. If the child is not found within a short period of time, the police will be called by the Head Teacher.
4. Members of staff not supervising children will be sent to search the immediate vicinity of the school, with particular attention given to the area towards the sports hall.
5. If a child goes missing during an outing or school visit, the teacher in charge must ensure that the remaining children are safely cared for by the other staff and adults. An urgent but thorough search should be made of the immediate vicinity and if the child is not found quickly the police must be called and the Headteacher notified. If in an enclosed space the appropriate staff in that environment may be informed before calling the police, for instance to give a message over a public-address system.
6. As soon as possible, the parents or guardians will be notified that their child is missing.
7. If a member of staff finds the child, the Head Teacher must be told at once. Parents, police and any other authorities involved will be notified.
8. The Head Teacher will investigate how the incident occurred and will take appropriate action to ensure that similar events do not happen again, including amending appropriate policies and risk assessments as required.

Record keeping

The School will keep a full written record of any incident of a missing pupil. This written record will be kept on the pupil file and in a central record of all such incidents. The written record will include:

- the pupil's name;
- relevant dates and times (e.g. when it was first noticed that the pupil was missing)
- the action taken to find the pupil;
- whether the Police or Children's Social Care were involved;
- outcome or resolution of the incident;
- any reasons given by the pupil for being missing;
- any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident;
- a record of the staff involved;
- any recommendations concerning future incidents.

Updated: September 2022