



Merchant Taylors'
School

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Missing Child Policy

Stanfield

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Author: Headmistress Stanfield

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1. Introduction

The welfare of all the children at the school is our paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to always keep all of the children safe. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is appropriately supervised when he/she is in our care.

2. PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH A CHILD WHO IS MISSING FROM MORNING REGISTRATION

- Procedures for parents to follow in the case of pupil absence are set out in The Parents' Handbook.
- Parents are requested to inform the school in advance of any planned absence, for example for medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged during the school holidays.
- They should write to the Headmistress who will inform the Class Teacher. The Class Teacher will use the appropriate code in the register on the day of the pupil's absence to indicate the cause.
- In the case of unexpected absence, most typically because of illness, parents are requested to telephone or e mail the school before 8.00am on the first day of the absence.
- Morning registration takes place at 8.40am and registers are checked by the morning receptionist who makes a list of any unexplained absences.
- All teaching staff contact reception to notify them of any girls missing from their class without explanation, in order to ensure that they are not in fact in school and have been registered as absent in error.
- The receptionist telephones parents or guardians of those who are absent without explanation to establish whether the pupil is unwell or whether there is some other explanation for their absence of which they have failed to inform the school.
- The receptionist contacts the Class Teacher with an explanation where one has been discovered and highlighting unexplained absentees whose parents or guardians she has not been able to contact.
- The receptionist investigates those absences that continue to be unexplained, for example by calling again the contact numbers associated with the pupil until contact is made.
- If there is unresolved unexplained absence, the Headmistress will judge how to pursue and if necessary contact the police or social services.

3. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CHILDREN WHO GO MISSING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

- Stanfield is located on a secure site. Once the school day has begun, there is only one entry and exit point via reception which is manned throughout the school day and which is covered by CCTV.
- Stanfield Boys' site is located at School House on MTBS site. Pupils are supervised when outside of School House.
- Pupils cannot leave the school site without permission.
- Teachers take a register at 8:40 and again at the beginning of afternoon lessons (1:05pm)
- If a pupil is absent and there is no satisfactory explanation for their absence (e.g. they are absent from school for the day, has a music lesson or is with the School Nurse) the teacher reports her absence to reception at the earliest opportunity. All teachers have timetables of when pupils are in music lessons.
- Unexplained absences from lessons is investigated by the class teacher in liaison with the receptionist. A search of the premises takes place if necessary.
- In the very unlikely event of a pupil not being found when the premises are searched, and if it is suspected that they have managed to leave the school undetected (for example if they have somehow managed to exit through the main reception area), the school will contact the pupil's parents or guardians and the police.

4. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CHILDREN WHO GO MISSING DURING EDUCATIONAL VISITS AWAY FROM THE SCHOOL SITE

- All members of staff receive training on safety on educational visits, risk assessment and dealing with emergencies. All educational visits are subject to a rigorous process of planning and approval which includes giving due consideration to staffing ratios and supervision arrangements.
- Pupils are always kept under direct or remote supervision.
- If a child does get lost, the teachers in charge of the visit will contact the local police and will contact the school emergency SMT contact.
- Staff will be deployed so that enough teachers remain with the main party to ensure their safety whilst others assist the authorities in the search for the missing child.
- The school emergency SMT contact will activate the school's Contingency Plan in consultation with the Headmistress.

5. 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 Headmistress will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
- The Headmistress will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving Sefton Social Services).
- Media queries should be referred to the Head of Marketing.
- 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 appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.

6. PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE OR FREQUENT OR PROLONGED ABSENCES WHICH LACK A SATISFACTORY EXPLANATION

- If parents request permission to take their children out of school for a purpose which does not accord with DFE regulations governing schools' ability to grant authorised leave of absence, such as a family holiday in term time, permission will be refused and parents will be warned that if they do take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised
- If a child repeatedly takes unauthorised absence, or if the unauthorised absence is prolonged, the school will consult the Sefton DO and may contact Children's Services and/or the attendance service in the child's home location.
- The same procedure will be followed if the school considers that no satisfactory explanation of a child's absence has been received

REFERENCES

- Parents Handbook/Prep Parents Handbook
- Pupil Code of Conduct
- School Health and Safety Policy
- School Educational Visits Policy
- School Contingency Plan

Reviewed: January 2022

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