



Merchant Taylors' School

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Missing Child Policy

Title Missing Child Policy (MTBS)
Author: Deputy Head Pastoral
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Missing Child Policy

1. Introduction

The welfare of all of 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 keep all of the children safe at all times. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is appropriately supervised when they are 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 below:
 - 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 boy's Form Tutor in the first instance. The Form Tutor will use the appropriate code in the register on the day of the boy's absence to indicate the cause.
 - In the case of unexpected absence, most typically because of illness, parents are requested to telephone (0151 928 3308) or e mail (MTBS-Reception@merchanttaylor.com) 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.
- The receptionist telephones parents or guardians of those who are absent without explanation to establish whether the boy is unwell or whether there is some other explanation for his absence.
- The school is required to hold more than one emergency contact number 'where reasonably possible'. The relevant Group Tutor may also try to make contact with the emergency contact. In the case where there is only one parent, the second emergency contact has to be another close relative or nominated family friend.
- The receptionist e-mails a list of unauthorised absentees to all staff so that any information which may have been sent to Form Tutors can be shared with the receptionist.
- The relevant Head of Section/Deputy Head exercises their professional judgement on how to pursue any unresolved instance of unexplained absence, if necessary contacting the police or social services.

3. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CHILDREN WHO HAVE MUSIC, SEND LESSONS OR COUNSELLING SESSIONS

- Where possible music lessons, counselling sessions and learning support lessons should not clash with registration. If this does happen, the teacher/counsellor must email reception to inform them that a boy has been with them during the registration period.

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

- Boys cannot leave the school site without permission and must sign in and out at reception if they are given permission to leave the school buildings.
- Teachers are expected to take a register at the beginning of every lesson and make a note of who is absent.
- If a boy is absent and there is no satisfactory explanation for his absence (e.g. she is absent from school for the day, has a music lesson or is with the School Nurse) the teacher reports his absence to reception at the earliest opportunity.
- Unexplained absences from lessons of those who are registered as being in school are reported to the relevant Group Tutor or Deputy Head Pastoral, who investigates the absence, organising a search of the premises if necessary.
- In cases, where a boy absents himself within school on successive occasions, the relevant Group Tutor, pending further investigation, may seek to apply the appropriate sanctions or put in place a reporting mechanism to help monitor this in line with the School's Behaviour and Rewards and Sanctions Procedures.
- 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 the school will contact the boy's parents or guardians and the police.

5. 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.
- Boys are kept under direct or remote supervision at all times and are given clear instructions of how to act if they do get lost or become detached from the party. This information includes teachers' contact mobile phone numbers and emergency rendezvous instructions.
- If a child does get lost and cannot be contacted, 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 Headmaster

6. 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.
- The Headmaster will arrange 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 she appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.

7. 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 Attendance Officer and may contact Children's Services 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

- Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2022
- School Health and Safety Policy
- School Educational Visits Policy