

## MISSING CHILD POLICY

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### MONITORING AND REVIEW

Person Responsible	Senior Deputy Head
Reviewed by	SLT
Approved by	SLT
Frequency of Review	Annually
Date of Last Review	January 2025
Date of Next Review	January 2026

The School refers to all staff and students in St Mary's School, which includes the Early Years/Foundations Stage (EYFS), the Preparatory Department (Years 1-6), Senior House (Years 7-11) and the Sixth Form (Years 12-13).

The term 'parent' refers to those who have parental responsibility for a child.

## AIM

To ensure that all students are accounted for at all times during the school day.

## WIDER REFERENCES

This policy operates within a wider national policy framework, which includes:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
- The Children and Families Act (2014)
- Working Together to improve attendance (2024)
- Summary of responsibilities where Mental Health issues are affecting attendance (2023)

## RELATED INTERNAL POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with St Mary's School:

- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Major Incident Policy

## CHILD MISSING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Every care is taken to ensure that our students are accounted for at all times. However, in the unlikely event that it is suspected a student has gone missing, the following procedure is followed:

1. Class register is taken by the member of staff in charge at the time
2. If a student is absent the member of staff will immediately alert the Action group by sending an email to the group labelled 'Action' on Outlook
3. If available, the relevant member of staff, usually a member of SLT, or the Head of Section/Year will start a search of the buildings and grounds. If they are unavailable, office staff and/or the Medical Team should assist. The member of staff may enlist others to help if appropriate. The staff involved in the search will quickly confirm that they are doing so, to ensure that it is clear who is participating
4. Staff involved in the search should clarify which areas of the school they will search in and reconvene at the front office once the search is completed to review the situation.
5. If the student is found, the relevant staff will be updated via 'Action' email
6. If the student is still not found after 20 mins the Headmistress should be informed at which point the DSL and Headmistress will consider if there is a need to alert parents and/or emergency services.

On the arrival of the emergency services, the Senior member of staff in charge at the time is responsible for apprising them of all the information in respect of the missing child and what action has been taken.

## CHILD MISSING AT THE START OF THE SCHOOL DAY

It is the practice of this school to register all students (including those over and under compulsory school age) twice a day. This is done electronically on the school information management systems 'iSAMS' at the start of the morning and at the end of the afternoon session in both sections of the

school. In addition, all Senior House teaching staff take an electronic register each lesson. The Prep staff check that all students are present each lesson.

Morning registers close at 8.40am. Any student arriving after 8.40am will be required to sign in on the INVENTORY system at the school office. Students arriving after 9.00am must provide a note from their parents explaining the reason for their lateness unless they are accompanied by a parent at the time who can explain.

## MORNING REGISTRATION PROCEDURE

1. Form Tutor completes ISAMS register at the designated time. If there is a problem with ISAMS registration staff should complete a paper copy from the Office or email the list of girls to the Attendance Officer via the 'ABSENCE' email.
2. The early morning receptionist checks for any contact from parents via email or phone and informs absence@ and relevant staff
3. A list of students who are absent without explanation is produced and emailed to the unaccounted group
4. The Attendance Officer will double check to see if the student has arrived in school. If this is not the case, they will email parents by 9.30am at the latest to alert them that their child has not arrived at school and then will follow up with a phone call if no response is received. A minimum of two contact numbers are held for every student
5. The Attendance Officer records the reason for absence
6. If the student is still unaccounted for the Attendance Officer will continue to call and e-mail, including all emergency contacts, until the absence is accounted for. The Headmistress, Senior Deputy Head and the relevant Head of Section/Year in Senior House or The Head of Prep Department in the Prep Department will be alerted, and records double checked
7. If the Attendance Officer is still unable to make contact with the relevant parent and the student is in Year 6 or above, staff will enquire of her friends to see if they are aware of any reason for the absence without causing alarm. However, this is only to inform further action and cannot be used to authorise the absence
8. If by 10.30am the student remains unaccounted for the morning receptionist will inform the DSL. The Headmistress and DSL will consider if it is appropriate to make a home visit and/or contact emergency services or social care. If the student is already known to social care, they must be informed

## SCHOOL TRIPS INCLUDING SPORTS FIXTURES

If a student is missing whilst partaking in a school trip the procedures detailed in the risk assessment will be followed. Generally speaking, this will consist of the following procedure:

If a child is lost on an outing, the member of staff noticing the child missing should alert other members of the party and carry out a roll call/ headcount.

A member of staff (or the whole group if appropriate) should retrace their movements to the last place where the child was seen. A member of staff should alert the management/security services of the organisation being visited and the school office to let them know the situation. The SLT link should also be notified. Children on the visit should be asked for any relevant information if appropriate. If

the child is not found within 30 minutes the police will be called and the school will alert the parents. Staff will cooperate with the police and take any action as directed by them.

### STUDENT REMOVED BY UNAPPROVED ADULT

No child is allowed to leave the school site, or school trip, with an adult other than a parent without prior permission being received from a parent either by telephone or email. This rule must be rigorously enforced. In cases where a parent is legally denied access to their child, all staff must be informed in writing of the circumstances together with a photo of the child and, if possible, the parent. If a child is seen (or believed) to be taken from the school site by an unapproved adult, the police and parents (who have legal access) will be immediately informed.

### FOLLOWING UP AN INCIDENT

When the situation has been resolved, relevant members of staff, including the Senior Leadership Team, should review the reasons for it happening and ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to prevent it from happening again.

- Reviewing the incident with the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Assessing the effectiveness of risk assessment procedures
- Taking written statements from and interviewing staff involved
- Collecting information from any other relevant adult witnesses, including officials from the venue where a child has gone missing off-site
- Discussion, as appropriate with students
- Informing relevant stakeholders of updates
- Referral to police or social care if required
- The incident and effectiveness of subsequent actions taken will be reviewed by SLT. SLT will issue advice to staff and students and implement any necessary measures to ensure that it does not happen again.