

Lincoln Minster School

Missing Pupils

1. Policy Statement

The welfare of all of our children at our 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.

Thus, any member of staff who suspects that a pupil may be missing should follow the procedure appropriate to their section of the school, which is outlined below. The definition of 'missing' in this context is *'not present without authorisation or explanation'*.

When a pupil repeatedly goes missing, the relevant procedure should be followed, but in addition, intervention support will be arranged. If the child is missing education, then this is reported to the Local Authority.

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including those in our EYFS setting and boarders.

Lincoln Minster School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Missing Pupil Policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunities Policy document. This policy also complies with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2022), Standard 15: Staffing and Supervision.

Lincoln Minster School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.

In line with our Provision of Information policy, this document is available on request from the main school offices. It should be read in conjunction with the following policies: Supervision, Child Protection, Health and Safety.

This document is reviewed annually by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) and Head of the Preparatory School or as events or legislation change requires. The next scheduled date for review is September 2024.

Reviewed By	C Brigden – Deputy Head Pastoral A Coupland – Prep Head
Approved By	J Tyler - Head
Date	September 2024
Next review date	September 2025

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2. Procedures

a. Senior School

A pupil absent from either am or pm registration:

- Mark the pupil as absent even if another pupil says that they know where they are.
- The office staff will follow up any pupil recorded as absent by checking whether they have signed in or whether a parent has contacted school with a reason for their absence. If the pupil cannot be accounted for, then a phone call is made to parents to check on their whereabouts. If the pupil has been sent to school by the parent, then the procedure outlined below should be followed.

A pupil who goes missing during the course of the day:

Follow outlined procedure:

- Alert staff on reception with the name and form of the pupil along with information about where that pupil should be (assuming you know that).
- The local area within school should be searched, in particular, toilets, storerooms, resources room and changing rooms.
- Enquiries should be made with their tutor, Head of Key Stage and Pastoral Officer in the Hub as to possible locations. Questions may be asked of their friends including the mobile phone number of the pupil. This may be phoned by an appropriate member of staff.
- If the pupil still has not been located then the Deputy Head (Pastoral) should be informed. They will then inform the Head.

If the pupil is still missing, the following steps would be taken without delay:

- Inform the Head and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) + UL Safeguarding Lead
- Ask the Head to ring the pupil's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the School at once
- The Head of the School will immediately notify the Police
- The Head will arrange for staff to search the rest of the School premises and grounds
- If the pupil's home is within walking distance, a member of staff will set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her
- The DSL will contact/refer to their local Children Services Department 01522 782111 to seek advice and agree what actions should be taken and by whom. This may include contacting the police.
- Follow any specific local safeguarding procedures.
- The School will co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- The Head will inform the Head of Independent Schools and Chair of ULT without delay
- Inform the School's insurers
- If the pupil is injured, the School will make a report under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

b. Preparatory School (including EYFS)

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing pupil is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a pupil was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the pupil
- Inform Office Staff with the name and form of the pupil along with information about where that pupil should be (use displayed timetables in Office and Registers and Peripatetic Music Teachers' Registers to locate where pupil should be).
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the School, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms where a small child might hide.
- Inform the Head of the Preparatory School
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s)
- Check the doors, gates for signs of entry/exit

***In the event of a missing pupil the Head of the Preparatory School will undertake an appropriate investigation.**

If the pupil was still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Inform the Head and the DSL

- The Head of the Preparatory School rings the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the school at once
- The Head of the Preparatory School notifies the Police
- The Head of the Preparatory School arranges 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
- The DSL would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- Ofsted would be informed / Ofsted informed within 14 days in the case of an EYFS pupil
- The Insurers would be informed
- If the pupil is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the pupil was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

3. Action to help prevent missing pupil

The information below is taught and reinforced to all children in the school through form times and PSHE in order that they know the correct procedure:

- All pupils to know the bounds of the school and not to leave School premises without adult supervision.
- If at any point a child finds themselves lost within the School premises, they are to go into a classroom and report to an adult immediately.
- If a child goes missing on repeat occasion appropriate action / support is put in place to give the pupil the opportunity to share any worries / concerns that they may have. This may take the form of mentoring support or counselling.

4. Actions to be followed by staff if a pupil goes missing on an outing

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity
- The remaining children would be kept together and at a suitable time be taken back to school
- Inform the Head of the Preparatory School / Deputy Head Pastoral by mobile phone
- Ask the Head of the Preparatory School / Deputy Head Pastoral 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/ the school] at once
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search
- Contact the Police
- The DSL would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board

- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- Inform the Chairman of Governors
- Ofsted would be informed
- The Insurers would be informed
- A report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the pupil was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

5. Action to help prevent missing pupil on an outing

Pupils who are involved in a visit's planning and are well prepared, will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Providing guidance and information is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected and why rules must be followed. Pupils should also be told about potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others. This is done age appropriately with all guidance and information to safeguard the pupils at all times.

6. Actions to be followed by staff once the pupil is found

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the pupil
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
- The Head of the Preparatory School / Deputy Head Pastoral will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Head of the Preparatory School /Deputy Head Pastoral will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving Social Services/ Local Safeguarding Partner)
- Media queries should be referred to the Head
- 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 s/he appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.

7. Boarding

a. On School Premises

A register of pupils boarding is taken by the boarding staff in each house via the official duty sheets at the following times Monday to Friday:

- Morning
- Upon return to each boarding house upon completion of the school day
- During Prep Time
- At Bed Time

Signing in and out sheets are regularly made reference to at House meetings and the pupils are all well versed in using such sheets appropriately.

All absences and sicknesses are notified to relevant boarding and academic staff, with the school office also notified.

The school office is notified of any pupil marked present on the school register and not found to be present in the boarding house by 4.30pm. The Office will trace the pupil through school and refer back to boarding staff, unless boarding staff have been notified in advance that any pupil is participating in an after school Club or activity (music practice. Sports practice, for example).

In the event of a pupil, or group of pupils, being missing an immediate search of usually frequented areas will be affected by the staff currently responsible for the pupil/s.

If, after a thorough search of the premises, the pupil is not found the most senior member of staff is notified who will then inform the Deputy Head Pastoral. They will notify the police, the pupil's parents and if appropriate social services. In the meantime, all available staff members will initiate a further search of the premises and the school locale.

Photos will be given to the police in order to help their efforts.

Further action will be taken in liaison with the police and social service authorities.

b. Off School Premises

Pupils involved in off site visits may carry I.D. cards detailing the school telephone number, the pupil's name and the name of the staff member to be contacted.

Boarding visits follow the same procedures as for school trips and visits.

All staff on visits out should have access to a mobile telephone for emergency purposes.

A count of the pupils is made at regular intervals and always before a mini-bus leaves a venue. If a pupil/s is/are discovered as missing then a search of the area is taken by the member of staff.

If the missing pupil is not located then the staff member must:

- Notify the police and provide them with as precise a description of the pupil/s as possible, the last known whereabouts of the pupil/s and any other details they may require.
- Notify, if appropriate, staff at the venue that is being visited and ask them to initiate their lost child protocols.
- Notify the most senior staff member at the school and act on any instructions.

- The senior staff member will notify the pupil's parents.

The member of staff initiating the search must remain **in situ** until the police or assistance from school arrives, in case the missing pupil/s should return.

In such stressful circumstances it is important that staff remain as calm and collected as possible.

A written record must be made of any incident of a boarder missing from school, the action taken and the reasons given by the pupil for being missing.

It is important that following an incident of a boarder missing from school the issues that arise are addressed for example –

- Up to date risk assessments for the activity or the individual pupil involved.
- Talk through the incident with the pupil(s) involved emphasising the worry that was caused.
- Discuss in supervision the incident.
- Formally record the reasons given by the boarder as to why they have gone missing.

If the pupil/boarder gives a reason for going missing that is linked to either bullying or inappropriate behaviour from a member of staff, it is important that this is both recorded and reported to outside agencies. Staff are reminded to read the school's anti-bullying and child protection policies.