Missing / Absent and Uncollected Pupils Policy

Part 1: Missing/Absent Child Policy

This policy covers:

1. Information for parents
2. Action to be followed by staff if a child fails to attend first day of school
3. Duty to report
4. Actions to be followed by staff if a pupil goes missing from the School
5. Actions to be followed by staff where a boarder is absent at night or fails to return from 'leave out' at the appointed time
6. Actions to be followed by staff if a pupil goes missing on an outing
7. Actions to be followed by staff once the pupil is found

Introduction

The welfare of all our children at Lincoln Minster School is our paramount responsibility. Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Every adult who works at the School has been trained to appreciate that they have a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. This includes the importance of effective information sharing to ensure our children are safe and receiving suitable education. Where staff have concerns that a child is missing from school, this policy should be followed.

Every member of our staff who works with children has read Part 1 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE). Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care.

The School will always consider the wider circumstances around a child going missing from School and whether there are wider safeguarding concerns that may need to be addressed in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct. This policy was drawn up having had regard to the Independent School Regulatory Requirements, Early

Years Statutory Framework, National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools and Department for Education's guidance KCSIE and '*Children Missing Education'*.

Information for parents

All safeguarding policies are reviewed regularly (at least once a year as a minimum) by the School's Local Governing Body in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. This policy is ratified annually by the United Learning Group Board in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

Where reasonably possible, the School will hold more than one emergency contact for each pupil. This is to give the School additional options to make contact with parents and/or a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of all pupils, what to do if a child goes missing and are required to read Part 1 of KCSIE, or Annex A of KCSIE if their role does not require them to work directly with children.

In addition, all pupils and parents will be made aware of:

- Arrangements when arriving at school and leaving the premises at the end of the day.
- Arrangements for registration in both morning and afternoon. Parents are responsible for notifying the School if their child is absent for any reason. The School will always contact the parent if the child fails to arrive at school without an explanation.
- The physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to or exit from the building, including onsite supervision including of the playground and the physical barriers that separate it from the rest of the School.

Actions to be followed by staff if a child fails to attend first day of school

All new pupils are placed on the School's admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the School has agreed that the pupil will attend the School.

If a child fails to attend on the agreed date, staff must inform Head / Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Head / Designated Safeguarding Lead will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts and will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. If the Head / Designated Safeguarding Lead believes the pupil is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate) without delay.

Where there are changes affecting the child (including a change of address or school), these will be reflected in the admission register. This will assist the School and external agencies when making enquiries to locate any missing children.

Duty to Report

The School monitors attendance closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance. The School will inform the local authority (and the local authority where the child is normally resident) of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more without permission.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 school days after an authorised absence or has been continuously absent without authorisation for a period of not less than 20 school days (and there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil is unwell or unable to attend because of any unavoidable cause),

and the School and local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is, the School may delete the pupil's name from the admission register. The School will inform the local authority of such deletion no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register.

The School also recognises its wider reporting duties following deletions from the admission register, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, to help identify children who are missing education and/or otherwise at risk of harm.

The School will report to OFSTED within 14 days any incident of a missing EYFS pupil as is required under the Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (EYFS) 2021, for registered providers.

Actions to be followed by staff if a pupil goes missing from the School

The School's 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, the School will carry out the following actions without delay:

- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other pupils are present OR Carry out a thorough search of the boarding area
- Check with the pupil's friends to see if they know their whereabouts
- Check the medical centre
- Check with reception who will check the signing out/in book
- Inform the Head or the senior member of staff on duty
- Call the pupil's mobile telephone
- Ask all of the adults and pupils calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the pupil
- Occupy all of the other pupils in their classroom(s)
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the Nursery Department, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms etc. where a small child might hide OR At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search the school grounds.
- Consult the senior member of boarding staff on duty in School (see duty rota)
- Check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit.

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

- Inform the Head and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Head of Safeguarding/UL Safeguarding Lead where appropriate
- 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 DSL / 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 the local authority designated officer 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 the LGB 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).

During the course of the investigation into the missing child, the School, in consultation with Children Services, will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

A record will be kept by the School of any instances in which a pupil is missing from School without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the pupil's explanation. In addition, a full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the pupil was found will be made. If appropriate, these procedures will be adjusted.

Actions to be followed by staff where a boarder is absent at night or fails to return from 'leave out' at the appointed time

If a pupil is missing at bedtime or in the early hours, or they fail to return from 'leave out' at the appointed time, the School will carry out the following actions:

- Check with the pupil's friends to see if they know their whereabouts
- Carry out a thorough search of the boarding area
- Ring the medical centre
- Call the pupil's mobile telephone
- Consult the senior member of boarding staff on duty in School (see duty rota)
- Check exeat forms or any other information before contacting the senior member of staff on duty who will then deal with the matter of there is not a suitable explanation.

A record is kept by the School of any instances in which a boarder is missing without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the boarder's explanation.

If the boarder is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Inform the Head and the and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Ask the Head to ring the boarder's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the school at once, if viable
- The DSL / Head will immediately notify the Police
- The Head will arrange for staff to search the rest of the School premises and grounds and all boarding accommodation
- The DSL will contact/refer to their local Children Services Department and the local authority designated officer 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.
- Inform the Head of Independent Schools and Chair of UCST without delay
- The School's insurers will be informed
- If the boarder is injured, a report will be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)
- During the course of the investigation into the missing boarder, the School, in consultation with the LADO, will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

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 pupils are present
- An adult will search the immediate vicinity
- Immediately inform the Head and the DSL by mobile phone
- The remaining pupils will be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- Ask the Head to ring the pupil's parents as soon as reasonably practicable to explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the Venue/ School at once
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search
- Immediately contact the Police
- The DSL will contact/refer to their local Children Services Department
- Follow any specific local safeguarding procedures.
- The School will cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- The Head will inform the Regional Director or Head of Independent Schools and Chair of UCST or Chair of ULT without delay
- The School's insurers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable
- If the child is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE). If the child is injured and is taken directly from the scene of the accident to hospital for treatment, a report will be made under RIDDOR to the HSE as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 15 days of the accident.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. The School will review its procedures and, if appropriate, these would be adjusted.

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 pupils to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
- The Head/Deputy will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident (having discussed this beforehand with the Local Authority, police and United Learning Safeguarding Lead, if necessary)

- The Head/Deputy will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the LCSB OR local safeguarding partners)
- Media queries should be referred to the Head (after discussion with the LADO if appropriate)
- The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements
- The report should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and pupils, when the pupil was last seen, what appeared to have happened, the purpose of the outing, the length of time that the pupil was missing and how s/he appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future.

Part 2: Procedures to be followed by staff when a child is not collected on time

Introduction

The School undertakes to look after all pupils safely throughout the time that they remain under our care, until such a time as s/he has been collected by a parent, guardian or carer, or until appropriate alternative care arrangements have been made with Social Care and/or the Police in order to prioritise a pupil's safety.

Procedures if a pupil is not collected on time

If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed collection time or by 6.10pm, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. Where reasonably possible the School will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. If there is no answer, the Head of the Department / the Teacher will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after.

- If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a one hour period / when the premises are closing, the DSL will contact/refer to their local Children Services Department to seek advice and agree what actions should be taken and by whom. This may include contacting the police.
- Children's social care will make emergency arrangements for the child and will arrange for a visit to be made to the child's house and will check with the Police.
- The School will look after the child safely throughout the time that they remain under the School's care, until such a time as they have been collected by a parent, guardian or carer, or until appropriate, alternative care arrangements have been made with children's social care and/or the Police in order to prioritise the child's safety.
- Follow any specific local safeguarding procedures.

If any concerns about the child's safety and welfare result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the School's safeguarding procedures detailed in **staff** code of conduct and School's Safeguarding Policy.

Records

The School's DSL will keep a record of incidents where parents/carers do not collect a child from school or are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents.

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