



CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION & PROCEDURES WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED ON TIME

1. Introduction

The welfare of children at The Chorister School is of paramount importance. 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. This policy is written with reference to KCSIE 2018, Children Missing Education September 2016 and 'Prevent Duty'.

Children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in the future. The Chorister School monitors the unauthorised absence of pupils.

2. Information for Parents

The school completes an admission register and a daily attendance register; all pupils are on both registers. A pupil is added to the admission register as soon as it has been confirmed that the child will attend the school. If the child fails to attend on the agreed or notified date of starting, the school will consider notifying the local authority to prevent the child from going missing in education. The admission register records the full name of the parent with whom the pupil lives, the address and the date when there is any change to these arrangements.

Our documents, "The Pre School Parents' Handbook and the Pre-Prep Parents' Handbook" describe:

- The arrangements for registering the children and the arrangements for handing over children to the care of their parents at the end of the day – see 'Registration and end of the school day'
- Arrangements for supervising the children whilst they are in school.
- The physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to or exit from the building – see 'Entrance doors'
- The supervision of the playground and the physical barriers that separate it from the rest of the school

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are set out in a detailed policy document: "Educational Visits Policy." We review these policies

regularly in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective safeguarding of very young children.

It is worth noting at the outset that prevention of instances such as outlined here is always the best policy, and we work hard to ensure that children are safe within the school environment.

3. Steps to be followed if a child goes missing from school

a. Child missing at morning registration or not attending school

If a child is absent from school the school will contact a parent or guardian to ascertain the reason for absence. Where there are any concerns that the child may be at risk (reference Children Missing Education, the Prevent Duty and KCSIE 2018) the School's safeguarding procedure will be followed. If a child is to be removed from the school's admission register on certain grounds then the local authority where the child is resident should be informed. These reasons include a child being taken out of school to be home educated and when the family has apparently moved away or when the child is removed or added at non-standard transitions (refs Children Missing Education)

When a child remains absent 10 school days after an authorised period of leave or after 20 days of unauthorised leave the school will contact the local authority regarding making reasonable enquiries regarding the pupil's whereabouts. The local authority will also be notified if a pupil fails to attend school regularly or is absent without leave for more than 10 school days (continuous).

When a pupil has left to join another school contact will be made with that school to confirm that the pupil has indeed been admitted onto their pupil roll. If the pupil has not joined that school then clarification will be sought to identify where that child is now being educated. The school provides, during term time, the following Local Authority department with a monthly list of starters and leavers. This list is compiled by the Registrar

Children Missing from Education (CME)

Pupil Casework Office

Children and Adults Services (Education)

County Hall, Durham, DH1 5UJ

Tel 03000 265 902

b. Child missing after registration

Our procedures at The Chorister School are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child were found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

- Arrange immediately for one or more adults to search everywhere within the school bounds, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms, changing rooms, corridors, playgrounds, dormitories etc. where a small child might hide.
- Sound the fire alarm and take a register in order to ensure that all the other children are present and ensure the safety of the remaining children without causing undue panic.
- Inform the Headmaster or the most senior teacher available.
- Calmly ask all of the adults and children if they can reliably say when they last remember seeing the child.
- Occupy all of the other children.
- Check the doors and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit.

If the child were still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Inform the Headmaster or the most senior member of staff available.
- Arrange for staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds, the riverbanks and the rest of the surrounding area.
- If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff may set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her.
- Ask the Headmaster to ring the child's parents or nominated carer and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the school at once.
- The Headmaster would notify the Police, giving a full description of the child and requesting an immediate and full search of the area.
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Local Children Safeguarding Board.
- Inform the Chairman of Governors.

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

4. Steps to be followed if a child goes missing on an external excursion

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present.
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity.
- Contact the venue/site manager and arrange an additional and wider search by adults with local knowledge.
- The remaining children would be taken back to school, if appropriate.
- Inform the Headmaster/School Office by mobile phone.
- Ask the Headmaster to ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. The Headmaster may ask them to come to the venue/ the school at once.

- Contact the Police.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board.
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Local Children Safeguarding Board.
- Inform the Chair of Governors.

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

5. Steps to be followed once a 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 ensure that a full investigation is undertaken.
- Media queries should be referred to the Headmaster.
- 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.

6. Procedures to be followed by staff when a child is not collected on time

If a child is not collected within a reasonable period of the arranged collection time, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, we will call the emergency numbers for this child.

We undertake to look after the child safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care. We are able to do this with particular effectiveness as a boarding school.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed in October 2019.