

# Missing Pupil Policy

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| <b>Reviewed By</b>         | KP, MS, BS |
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**WYCHWOOD**  
SCHOOL • OXFORD

## Aim

The safety and security of the pupils at Wychwood School is paramount. Every care is taken to ensure that pupils are accounted for at appropriate times through the school day. This policy should be read in conjunction with the *Safeguarding Policy* and the *Supervision of Pupils Policy*.

In all cases of unexpected absence/pupil missing the priority is to discover where the pupil is and that they are safe. It is not to find out why, in the first case, they are missing. All night-time absences should be investigated as quickly as possible as the danger is increased, and the age of the pupil should be considered.

## Procedures

### 1. Normal School Routine

Each pupil who arrives at school is registered between **08:30** and **09.00** during form time. Pupils who are unable to attend registration period, must sign in 'in person' at The School Reception. The School Reception staff will check attendance during period 1 using the registers submitted and the signing in sheet that is updated by staff at Reception. The School Reception staff also notes absences submitted by parents and in all cases will follow up with the teaching staff as needed. If a pupil arrives outside of the registration window, they are expected to sign in with reception before going to lessons.

Registers are taken during all teaching periods. If a pupil is not present, the teacher or cover teacher will inform the School Reception immediately.

### The Missing Pupil Procedure - on the school campus

Immediately a pupil is suspected of going missing a member of SLT must be alerted and will co-ordinate appropriate action (see below) to locate the missing pupil.

The following procedure should then be followed:

1. Check ISAMS register, bulletin, staff room white board and the daily diary and sign out file; check with all staff, office staff and Gap assistants; check sick bay.
2. Check school premises: bedrooms, common rooms, classrooms, cloakrooms and public areas, gardens; other bedrooms; ICT, art and photography; bathrooms and loos
3. Check with pupil's friends to find out if they have information and phone the pupil's mobile. There is a list of boarders' mobile numbers in the Staff Room and in the office. If the pupil's mobile is on, but not answered, ask a friend to phone the number in staff presence
4. Send a message to all staff via email to notify them of a potential missing pupil and ask for anyone with knowledge to contact the The School Reception immediately
5. Initiate a search involving the caretaking team and support staff to search specific areas as directed by the co-ordinating member of SLT. This may include a search of the area around the school grounds.
6. If the pupil has not been found **within 45 minutes** the pupil's parents should be contacted and the police are called, if necessary. It may be that a pupil has gone 'missing' but has gone home

with someone else at the end of the school day. The school will thereafter liaise with the parents and the police until the pupil is found.

**NB: It is important to keep calm, to reassure the other pupils and to make brief written notes at each stage. If possible, two members of staff should be present when interviewing pupils and parents, one to make clear notes. If a boarder, Houseparents should be involved immediately.**

## 2. Trips

When on excursions away from the school premises, staff implement strategies to ensure the safety and security of the pupils in accordance with the School's Trips Policy. Full risk assessments are carried out.

A list of all the pupils' names, contact details and medical details is carried by the trip leader and the pupils are organised into groups according to the proper staff/pupil ratios for the age of the pupils and the purpose of the trip or activity. For sport's fixtures outside of school hours, sports staff inform School Reception who is attending the fixture and registers are updated accordingly. Forms detailing which pupils are attending a trip are received by the School Office who update school registers on iSAMS accordingly.

### Missing Persons Procedure - on a school trip

If a pupil is suspected of going missing the following immediate course of action must be taken:

#### 1. Initiate Search

Once it has been established that a pupil is missing, the teacher in charge of the trip will ensure that the remaining pupils are supervised safely and instigate a search of the area/building. At the same time, another member of staff is allocated the responsibility of informing a member of SLT by a telephone call directly or to the emergency contact if out of school hours. In turn, Office staff will be informed. The pupil's peers/friends may be questioned to see if they have any information about the whereabouts of the missing pupil.

#### 2. Contact Parents and Police

If the pupil has not been found **within 15 minutes**, the pupil's parents are contacted and the police are then called if necessary. The teacher in charge will thereafter liaise with the parents and the police and keep the Head informed until the pupil is found.

If the missing pupil procedure must be implemented, a review of the school's arrangements will be carried out and amended where necessary.

#### 3. Boarding situations

If boarders are late back from signing out (with permission) at weekends, evenings or start of term etc. then the Houseparents should after 30 minutes after expected arrival time:

1. Phone pupils' mobile and check with their friends
2. Contact parents or guardians if the boarder has been staying away for the weekend as to when they left and when their expected time of arrival should have been (*NB this should be on documents approved before leaving*)
3. **If a boarder is late back from an evening out** (with permission) then the Houseparent should phone the missing pupil and if no answer, speak to the friends in the boarding house for any information they may hold. If concern develops, then after 30 minutes the SLT should be informed after searching the boarding areas and finally the police after 45 minutes.

## **Arrangements for when a pupil is not collected**

In the event of a pupil not being collected at either the end of the day or after an extra-curricular club has ended, a member of The School Reception staff will telephone the parents to find out why they are late/have not turned up to collect the pupil. The pupil will then be supervised until such time as they are collected by the parents, or an alternative arrangement is made by the parents. The school reception is staffed until 6.45pm? each day and it is expected that all pupils will be collected by that time

Should the parents not be able to collect before 6:45 p.m. then the pupil should go prep until they are able to be collected.

In the event that the school cannot contact parents or the emergency contacts; the school will care for a pupil until such a time as a parent or carer collects them or until appropriate alternative care arrangements have been made with Social Care, and/or the Police, in order to maintain the pupil's safety

## **Repeated or suspicious absences**

School registers are monitored by the Form Tutor and the School Reception staff. The Designated Safeguarding Lead checks for unusual patterns in absences as a potential indicator of a safeguarding issue and will contact home where appropriate.

## **Pupils who Repeatedly Go Missing**

This is likely to be an indicator of emotional distress or abuse or neglect. Under these circumstances the Senior Pastoral Team and the Designated Safeguarding Lead would be aware of the absences and would be dealing with the parents or guardians and the appropriate authorities such as the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) if necessary

Pupils who go missing are breaking a major school rule and the usual sanction for this is suspension and/or exclusion depending on the circumstances.

## **Return Interviews**

If an extensive search of the School premises (or surrounding area on a school trip) has been initiated due to a pupil going missing, the member of staff in charge of the pupil when they went missing will meet with the pupil on their return and consider the following:

- Whether the absence was deliberate or if the pupil has broken school rules in which case sanctions will apply
- Whether the pupil was distressed about some element of school life and what action may need to be taken to resolve the situation
- Whether there are safeguarding concerns, in which case the matter will be referred to the DSL

All details about the incident and the action taken will be recorded on CPOMs.

## **Pupils Missing from Education**

Where a pupil should be attending school at Wychwood but who is absent, every effort should be made to find their whereabouts from their parents or guardians. If this cannot be ascertained, then the DSL will report the pupil as missing education to the Local Authority. Day-to-day responsibility for administration of the Pupils Missing Education procedure of Oxford County Council lies with the Pupils Missing Education Service to be contacted at

Children Missing Education Learner Engagement Service  
Oxfordshire County Council

2nd Floor Abbey House  
Abbey Close  
Abingdon OX14 3JD  
Telephone: 01865 323513  
Email: [childrenmissingeducation@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:childrenmissingeducation@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>