



MISSING CHILD & CHILD NOT COLLECTED POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Consistent with Keeping Children Safe in Education

Applies to:

- the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), the out of school care and extra-curricular activities inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours.
- all staff (teaching and support staff), the proprietors and volunteers working in the school

Legislation Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including but not limited to:

Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 (ISSR);

Childcare Act 2006;

Employment Rights Act 1996;

DfE (2024) 'Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage'

DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'

DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education'

DfE (2019) 'Reducing teacher workload'

Availability:

This policy is available on the School website.

Monitoring and Review:

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headmistress.
- The Proprietor undertakes a formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require. The key priorities from the review are incorporated into the School Development Plan on an annual basis.

Reviewed by:



Michelle Jenkin (Headmistress)

Date: 1st September 2025



Kane Andrews (Proprietor)

Date: 1st September 2025

Related Documents:

- Safeguarding Policies
- Attendance Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Educational Visits Policy

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PART 1: MISSING CHILD POLICY

Introduction

The welfare of all of our children at **St John's Priory School** is our paramount responsibility. A child 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 abuse or neglect, child sexual and/or criminal exploitation and county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. 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 includes the importance of effective information sharing to ensure our children are safe and receiving suitable education. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child being absent in the future. Where staff have concerns that a child is absent from school for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, or 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.

Information for parents

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are set out in a detailed policy document: 'Educational Visits for EYFS Children'. 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.

Our Supervision of Pupils Policy describes:

- The arrangements for children arriving at school and leaving the premises at the end of the day
- The ratios of staff to pupils, including the enhanced supervisory arrangement for Early Years) and the arrangements for supervising the children whilst they are in school
- The arrangements for registering the children in both morning and afternoon. We take a register of pupils at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. On each occasion we will record whether each registered pupil is physically present in school or, if not, the reason they are not in school by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. 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 supervision of the playground

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

All new pupils (regardless of their age) are recorded in the School's information system 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 the Headmistress without delay. The Headmistress and DSL will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

The School information system contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School along with the date of admission or re-admission to the School, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended.

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

Attendance registers

The School also has an attendance register which records pupil attendance. The attendance register is taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion we will record whether each registered pupil is physically present in school or, if not, the reason they are not in school by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Parents/carers are required to inform the School of their child's absence due to sickness, and the reason for this, via the Compass app before 8.30am on the morning of each and every day of absence. Prior permission from the Headmistress must be requested in advance for any other leave of absence, including medical appointments. Where a pupil arrives late or requires to be collected early (for example, for medical appointments or in the event of the child going home unwell), the member of staff supervising the arrival / collection will record the reason and the time of arrival/departure on Compass.

Registers are legal records and Schools must ensure that their admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Please see the School's Attendance Policy for more information.

The School will preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date of entry. Where amendments are made to the information system, the School will ensure that the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment.

Duty to report

The School monitors attendance of its pupils closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance. We have a statutory duty to inform the local authority 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.

The School will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and

there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

Please refer to the School's Attendance Policy for further information on reporting duties.

Prolonged and/or persistent absence

Where a pupil has not returned from a period of leave or has had a continuous period of absence, the School, together with the local authority, may need to carry out joint reasonable enquiries under regulation 9(1)(h) or (i) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to try to find out where the pupil is.

Where a pupil 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, following reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is, the School may delete the pupil's name from the the School roll. 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.

In addition, the School recognises its wider reporting duties following deletions from the admission register, in accordance with regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 , to help identify children who are missing education and/or otherwise at risk of harm.

The School also recognises that children who are absent from education particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. The School's response to persistently absent pupils supports identifying such abuse and helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

Child goes missing from the School

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a pupil is not present at any point during the day, the teacher immediately sends a message to alert the nearest member of staff and to request support in locating the child. If a child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions without delay:

- An immediate head count/register must be carried out to ensure all other pupils are present
- Check the medical room
- Check compass to ensure the child has not been signed out
- Inform the Headmistress and the DSL and Head of Early Years (for a child in Little Prep or Reception),
- Calmly ask other adults and pupils calmly if they can say when and where they last remember seeing the pupil
- Supervise and occupy all the other pupils in their classroom
- At the same time, ask a member of staff to search classrooms and teaching area, toilets, corridors and outdoor areas, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms etc. where a small child might hide

- Check the doors and gates for signs of entry/egress.

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

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

- The Headmistress and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed
- SLT would arrange for staff to search the rest of the School premises
- The Headmistress (or member of SLT) would contact the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. The parents would be asked to come to the School at once
- The Headmistress or DSL would immediately notify the Police
- SLT would arrange 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 may be asked to check to see if the child has gone home. They would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with the child
- The DSL would inform the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate. The DSL will check with the OSCP this has happened
- The School would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- SLT would notify the Proprietors without delay
- The School's insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

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

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.

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.

Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing on an outing

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a pupil is not present at any point during a trip/visit, the supervising member of staff immediately alerts the nearest member of staff and to request support in locating the child. If a child goes missing on an outing, we would carry out the following actions without delay:

- 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

St John's Priory School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils fulfil their potential.

- Inform the Headmistress and the DSL and Head of Early Years (for a child in Little Prep or Reception),
- The remaining children would be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- The Headmistress (or member of SLT) would contact the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. The parents would be asked to come to the School at once
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search (where relevant)
- Immediately contact the Police
- The DSL would inform the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (OSCP) who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate.
- The School would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority including children's services
- SLT would notify the Proprietors without delay
- The School's insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured and is taken directly from the scene of the accident to hospital for treatment a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (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 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 Headmistress will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Headmistress will oversee a full investigation (if appropriate involving OSCP)
- Media queries should be referred to the Headmistress
- 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 the child appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future.
- Consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.

Communication

During the course of the investigation, the School, in consultation with legal advice and OSCP, will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how media enquiries are to be dealt with.

PART TWO: PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED ON TIME

It is made clear to all families that should they be delayed in collecting their child, they should email or phone the School with this information. Where possible, children should be told about when they are being collected.

Parents are required to put in writing to the School the names of those they designate in their absence to collect their child. In doing so, they are confirming that each designated adult is well known to the child. A password system is in place to further safeguard children.

If the pupil is to go home with any other parent known to both the School and the child, the parent must notify the School in advance, either by telephone, email or in person. Children will not be released to any persons not noted as designated adults or without advance notification of the parents.

We operate wraparound care in the form of an Afterschool Club. At the end of the School day, end of Prep or any extra-curricular club, any pupil who is not collected is taken to, and signed in to our Afterschool provision.

If, at the end of the Afterschool session, i.e., at 5.30pm, a pupil has not been collected, the Duty SLT member will be notified. The SLT member will telephone the parents/carers of the pupil. If a parent/carer is not successfully reached, the emergency contact will be called. The child will be kept under the supervision of the SLT member, who will ensure that the child remains happy and calm. At no time should any difficulty with connecting to the parent/carer be communicated to the pupil.

If there is no response by 6.30pm the SLT member will contact the Social Care Duty Officer on 0345 050 7666. Social Care will make emergency arrangements for the pupil, contact the Police and arrange for a visit to be made to the pupil's home. The advice of the Social Care Duty Officer and/or Police will be followed from this point. The School will make a full written report of the incident.

We undertake to look after the pupil safely, until the child has been collected by a parent or carer, or until appropriate, alternative care arrangements have been made with Social Care and/or the Police in order to prioritise the pupil's safety. The School's DSL will keep a record of incidents where parents/carers do not collect a pupil from school or are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents. If any concerns about the pupil's safety and welfare result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Safeguarding policy.