

Missing Child Policy & Procedures

Guidance

- A: Handbook for the inspection of association independent schools, including residential (boarding) schools and registered early years settings, July 2023
- B: ISI Inspection Framework, July 2023
- C: Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, September 2021
- D: Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE guidance, September 2023
- E: Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE guidance, (dated July 2018 but updated in 2020)
- F: Signs of Abuse NSPCC fact sheet: www.nspcc.org.uk/signsofabuse
- G: Children Missing Education, DfE guidance, September 2016
- H: Working together to improve school attendance. DfE guidance, May 2022

Introduction

KCSIE 2023 states that governing bodies and proprietors should ensure there are appropriate policies and procedures in place in order for appropriate action to be taken in a timely manner to safeguard and promote children's welfare. These policies should include appropriate safeguarding arrangements to respond to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions.

In any EYFS setting, the procedure for dealing with the circumstance of a child going missing at, or away from the setting is part of the information which must be made available to parents and/or carers (EYFS 3.74: Information for Parents and Carers).

Where a school has boarding provision, National Minimum Standard 20.6 requires that "*staff working within the school know and implement the school's policy, and any local protocols, in relation to boarders going missing and understand their role in implementing that policy. Staff actively search for boarders who are missing, including working with police where appropriate*".

Contents of policy

The model policies consist of two parts; the first covering a missing child and the second, covering the procedure to be followed by the school in the event of a parent failing to collect a child at the appointed time. They are divided into relevance to EYFS, day pupils and boarders and schools may adapt the policy as appropriate.

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Parents should have their attention drawn to the existence of both procedures, in the school's staff behaviour and child protection policy and, for example, the school's policy covering the information for parents of EYFS and early years children. There are clear links between this policy and policies on staff behaviour and child protection, all of which apply to the nursery in exactly the same way as they apply to the whole school. The policy should be kept under regular review and updated to keep pace with changes to DfE and ISI guidance as well as the EYFS framework.

Related policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Staff Behaviour Policy / Staff Code of Conduct
- Educational Visits Policy
- Policy for Induction of New Staff, Governors and Volunteers in Child Protection

Missing Child Policy & Procedures

Part One: Missing Child Policy (EYFS)

Introduction

The welfare of all of our children at Tower College 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.

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

All new pupils (regardless of their age) 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 the Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

The School admission register, also known as the School roll, 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. The School also has an attendance register which records pupil attendance.

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.

Registers are legal records. The School will preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry.

Missing Child Policy & Procedures

Duty to Report

Tower College monitors attendance of its pupils closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance.

Tower College will 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 without permission¹.

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 admission register. Tower College 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, Tower College 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.

Tower College 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. Tower College'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.

Actions to be followed by staff if a 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 child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions without delay:

- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- Check the toilets
- Check the medical room
- Check the school office
- Check with the office who will check the signing out/in book
- Inform the Senior Management Team and the Safeguarding Team (they will check the CCTV)

¹ Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals in which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission. It is for schools to decide, in liaison with the local authority, what 'regular' absence would be.

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- Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) with a relevant activity
- 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
- Check the doors, gates [and CCTV records] for signs of entry/exit.

A record is kept by Tower College 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:

- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Principal
- Ask the Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 School at once
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead would immediately notify the Police
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 maintenance team would set out in the van to attempt to catch up with the child.
- The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate. The DSL will check with the LSCB this has happened
- The School would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- 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.

Missing Child Policy & Procedures

Tower College 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 [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy].

Missing Child Policy & Procedures

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

- 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 manager and arrange a search (where relevant)
- Immediately inform the School and DSL by mobile phone
- The remaining children would be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- Ask the DSL to ring the child'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/ the School at once
- Immediately contact the Police
- The DSL would inform the LSCB 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
- Inform the Chair of Governors without delay
- The School's insurers would be informed as soon as reasonably practicable
- 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. Tower College 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 Trip Leader and DSL will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
 - The Trip Leader and DSL will oversee a full investigation (if appropriate involving the LSCB)
 - Media queries should be referred to the Principal
 - 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 [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy] where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.
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Missing Child Policy & Procedures

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

If a child is not collected at 3:40pm (with the expectation of being collected by 3:40pm) The teacher will take the child to Twilight and will inform the office and request that contact is made to ensure the parents/carers are on route and aware that their child is in Twilight. If a child is not collected by 6pm, the School 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 Teacher will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after by the teachers. If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers the Teacher will contact Mrs Wright and Ms Gregory who will contact the relevant Social Care Duty Officer. 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. Tower College will make a full written report of the incident.

Tower College 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 Social Care and/or the Police in order to prioritise the child's safety. The 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. If any concerns about the child's safety and welfare result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and procedures.

Missing Child Policy & Procedures

Part One: Missing Child Policy (Day Pupils, Non-EYFS)

Introduction

The welfare of all of our children at Tower College is our paramount responsibility. A child being absent from education, particularly 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 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. 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. 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 at least 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 they are in our care.

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

All new pupils (regardless of their age) 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 the Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Principal / Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

The School admission register, also known as the School roll, 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. The School also has an attendance register which records pupil attendance.

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.

Registers are legal records. The School will preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry.

Missing Child Policy & Procedures

Duty to Report

Tower College monitors attendance of its pupils closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance.

Tower College will 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 without permission².

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 admission register. Tower College 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, Tower College 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.

Tower College 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. Tower College'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.

Actions to be followed by staff if a 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 child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions without delay:

- Check with the pupil's friends to see if they know their whereabouts
- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- Check the medical room
- Check the school office
- Check with reception who will check the signing out/in book
- Inform the Senior Management Team and the Safeguarding Team (they will check the CCTV)

² Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals in which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission. It is for schools to decide, in liaison with the local authority, what 'regular' absence would be.

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- 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 the school grounds
- Check the doors, gates [and CCTV records] for signs of entry/exit.

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 pupil is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Principal
- Ask the Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 Designated Safeguarding Lead would notify the Police
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead would 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 may be asked to check if the pupil has gone home and would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with them. The Maintenance Team would sent out in the van to attempt to catch up with the child.
- The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate. The DSL will check with the LSCB this has happened
- The School would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- The School's insurers would be informed
- If the pupil is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

During the course of the investigation into the missing pupil, 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 pupil 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 [Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy].

Missing Child Policy & Procedures

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

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other pupils were present
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search (where relevant)
- Inform the School and the DSL by mobile phone
- The remaining pupils would be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- Ask the DSL 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 Police immediately
- The DSL would inform the LSCB who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate. The DSL will check with the LSCB this has happened
- The School would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- Inform the Chair of Governors without delay
- The School's insurers would 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 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.

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- The Trip Leader/DSL will oversee a full investigation (if appropriate involving the LSCB)
- Media queries should be referred to the Principal
- 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 they appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future

Missing Child Policy & Procedures

- Consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Child Protection policy where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.
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Part Two: Procedures to be followed by staff when a child is not collected on time

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