

DUMPTON SCHOOL

10 – MISSING OR UNCOLLECTED CHILD POLICY

Person(s) responsible:	Head of EYFS/DSL
Last updated:	May 2024
Review period:	12 months
Next review:	September 2024

PART ONE: MISSING CHILD POLICY

The welfare of all of our children at Dumpton 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

Our companion document, “A Guide to Life in the EYFS” describes:

- The arrangements for handing over children to the care of their parents at the end of the day
- The qualifications of our staff and the arrangements for supervising the children whilst they are in school
- The arrangements for registering the children in both morning and afternoon
- The physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to or exit from the building
- 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 EYFS and Pre-Prep children are set out in a detailed policy document: “Educational Visits for EYFS Children.” Both documents can be provided to parents on request. We review these policies once a year in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of very young children.

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 Head / Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Head / 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.

Duty to Report

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

The School 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 permission

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. 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 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, 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.

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 were found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- Inform the member of SLT on duty
- 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) and maintain school routine.
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the school site, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms where a child might hide
- Check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit of the school site

A record is 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.

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

- Inform the Head and the Designated Safeguarding Lead
- An email would be sent to staff outlining the situation
- The Head would arrange for staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds
- The Head or member of SLT 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/Head would notify the Police and forward an up-to-date photograph and description of the missing child.
- If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set out on foot and search route.
- The School would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- Inform the Chairman of Governors
- The Insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the 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 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING ON AN EDUCATIONAL VISIT

- 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
- The remaining children would be taken back to school
- Inform the Head and the Designated Safeguarding Lead by mobile phone
- Ask the **Head of Department** 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 venue Manager and arrange a search
- 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 Social Care
- Inform the Chairman of Governors
- The Insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE

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.

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 – counselling as necessary.
- The Head will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Head will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving Social Services/ Local Children Safeguarding Board)
- Media queries should be referred to the Head
- 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.

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

If a child is not collected on time by the person specified on the child collection form the child will be taken to Reception and the parents contacted.

If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a 2 hour period, the Head will contact the Social Care Duty Officer on 01305 228 558.

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. We will make a full written report of the incident.

We undertake to look after the child safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care.