



MISSING CHILD POLICY

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Signed: ***Seren Wildwood***
Clerk of School Committee

Sibford School Child Missing Child Policy applies to Sibford Senior School, both day and boarding, and Sibford Junior School, including our Early Years Foundation Stage. The procedures described comply with the Independent Schools Standards Regulations (The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended as from January 2013) also known as the registration standards or ISSRs; the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (made under section 87 of the Children Act 1989 (NMS) and the most recent Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS 2014). These regulations are laid down by the Department for Education.

In accordance with these regulations, Sibford School makes all of its policies available to parents and prospective parents on the public area of the school's website – www.sibfordschool.co.uk; printed copies can be made available on request to the Head or viewed in school.

The welfare of all of our pupils at Sibford School is our paramount responsibility. 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 pupils safe at all times. Our staffing ratios are generous and in EYFS and the Junior School, are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is appropriately supervised. In the Senior School systems are in place to follow up any absence speedily.

Junior School and EYFS

Action to be taken if a child is missing during the school day, in after school care or school based extra-curricular activity times

- If a child is missing from a lesson/registration/lunchtime or other school based activity, the teacher responsible should, in the first instance, ask other children in the class/group if the whereabouts of the missing child are known.
- It is important that, whilst children understand the seriousness and urgency of the situation, calm is maintained so that accurate information can be gleaned.
- As a rule, the younger the child, the more quickly secondary action is required. If the child is missing from EYFS for more than 5 minutes, the teacher should contact Junior School Reception, who should ask for senior colleagues to attend.
- The Secretary in the Junior School office should be the contact point. In her absence, the Head of the Junior School will ensure that alternative arrangements are in place. This information to be communicated to all by a Senior Colleague.
- Senior colleagues and available staff should search the immediate area and high risk areas – eg. pond, maintenance yard.
- Friends of the missing child should be interviewed so that the last known sighting of the child can be determined.

- The senior colleague should contact the police as soon as it has been ascertained that the child is missing – this may well be within ten minutes.
- Staff should continue to search even after the police have been called.

Action to be taken if a child is missing whilst on an out of school visit

- If a child is missing on a school visit, the teacher responsible will need to ensure that all staff, volunteers and other pupils/students on the visit are immediately made aware.
- The last known sighting should be ascertained.
- A number of other actions should be taken, depending on the location:
 - tannoy announcement made
 - school contacted
 - police contacted
 - parents contacted

Action to be taken 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 Head of Junior School will speak to the parents of children involved to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
- Head of Junior School or 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.

PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN THE EVENT OF A PARENT FAILING TO COLLECT A CHILD AT THE APPOINTED TIME

Junior School

At the end of the school day.

- a) The child should be taken to Junior prep/activity and the Junior School office notified.
- b) If the child has still not been collected by 4.30 pm, when the Junior School office closes, the parent should be contacted and messages left on home, work and mobile numbers to say that the child is with the teacher on prep duty if KS2 or after school care supervisor if EYFS or KS1. The teacher or after school care supervisor should be told that this message has been left.
- c) If the child has not been collected by the end of the activity, the teacher or after school care supervisor should take the child to tea and inform the Senior School teacher on duty.
- d) If the child is not collected by the end of tea, the after school care supervisor or senior school teacher on duty should contact the member of SLT who will re-contact the parent, leaving a message to say that the child has been taken to Fielding boarding house.
- e) The child will be taken to the boarding house and boarding staff informed.
- f) The child should not be released to the collecting adult unless the after school care supervisor, boarding staff, or SLT member on duty is present.

At 4.30 pm on Fridays, or when no school activity/prep is taking place

- a) The parent should be contacted and messages left on mobile, work and home numbers to say that the child is being looked after – giving the name of the teacher responsible, and the location.
- b) The teacher should inform the member of SLT as soon as the parent has been contacted.

In the school day:

- a) If a child is due to be collected during the day, say for a medical appointment, and the parent fails to turn up, the child should re-join his/her activity and the school office should telephone the parents.

In all cases, once the child is collected, it is the responsibility of the teacher/member of staff handing over the child to contact all members of staff involved.

Senior School

During the School Day, in “prep time” or school based extra-curricular activities

The school follows the same ‘missing pupils policy’ for all pupils, day or boarding.

Registers are taken electronically both morning and afternoon in tutor groups, and for Prep in the evening by staff on duty. The secretary in reception responsible for attendance follows up recorded absences. After checking with the signing out book in reception and the health centre, secretarial staff will then inform a senior member of staff if a pupil is deemed to be ‘missing’. The senior member of staff will immediately follow up the concern by exploring all other possibilities of where the pupil might be and then contact the Head / Deputy Head, parents or the appropriate authorities.

If a teaching member of staff is aware that a pupil is missing from their lesson they should immediately inform Main School Reception. If it is not possible to phone the message through to Reception a written note should be sent with a reliable pupil.

At the end of the school day senior school pupils are expected to return to reception for help if they miss their bus or the adult collecting them does not appear by 4.45pm. Parents will then be contacted and the pupil will join prep until they are collected by parents. If parents are unable to collect a pupil by the end of prep, the pupil is expected to go to tea and then to the appropriate boarding house until their parent arrives.

During a day trip away from the School Setting (day and boarders)

If a pupil goes missing on a school trip during the day staff should:

- Check with staff and pupils when the child was last seen
- Try ringing a mobile phone number for the child
- Check toilets and rest areas
- Get help from staff at the venue to search for the missing pupil

If the child is NOT located after a careful search of the premises then:

- Contact a senior member of staff at school
- Contact the police
- Contact parents

During a residential school trip (day and boarders)

- Follow the centre’s guidelines or the school’s trip risk assessment

- **OR Follow the guidelines for boarders in the evening (as below)**
- **Ensure that all additional risks are considered such as physical location of the centre, a location outside of the UK etc**

During Boarding Times

House Parents are responsible for knowing the whereabouts of all the children in their care when on duty in the evenings or at weekends. Pupils must be checked into the house in the evening, using the house list and noting any flexi-boarders.

Pupils should use the house signing out book if:

- They have permission to leave the campus when they would normally be in the boarding house, for example a meal out with parents
- When they are visiting another boarding house on campus;
- Leaving the house for a one off special event when pupils would normally be in the house for example a drama or music production at school;
- Using the art/music/gym/swimming pool in the evening with staff permission.

Boarders are registered at breakfast and evening tea during the week and more informally checked at the weekend, with house parents on duty accompanying boarders to meals. In the evenings boarders are registered when they come into the house after tea and later in the evening at house collect (usually at 8pm or 9.30pm in 6th form house). A final check is done at night after 'lights out' before the house parent returns to their flat. In the event of unexplained absence of a boarder outside normal school hours, the following should happen:

If you cannot find a pupil and you think you have checked everywhere- always check the bathrooms and all bedrooms **AGAIN!** It is very rare that a pupil decides to run away, but it does sometimes happen.

If you are still unsuccessful:

- Check the house diary carefully for notes
- Check phone and email messages
- Check outside play areas & MUGA micha
- Ring the other houses & ring the child's mobile phone if they have one
- Ring the art/music sports hall or send reliable pupils to check these areas
- Ring parents or guardians if they are in the UK once all other possibilities are exhausted or if they live relatively locally.

If you have not located the child within the hour then notify the senior member of staff on duty. They will decide whether or not the police should be called or what the next steps should be.

Guidelines of Questions to be asked:

- a) When was he/she last seen?

- b) Who was he/she with?
- c) Where might he/she have gone?
- d) Is this child 'vulnerable' in any particular way?
- e) Is there a School activity/ trip that he/she might be on?
- f) Has he/she been ill or injured and gone to the doctor or hospital?
- g) What emotional state did he/she appear to be in?
- h) Has anything upset him/her recently?
- i) Did he/she speak to anyone about leaving?
- j) Who are his/her main friends at School?
- k) Does he/she have a mobile phone and what is the number?
- l) Does he/she have a special friend?
- m) Is there any reason to believe he/she might have been abducted? (e.g. family custody dispute; very wealthy/prominent parents.)
- n) Have there ever been concerns of this nature before?

What to do if a boarder is not collected for an exeat weekend or a school holiday

If a parent or guardian does not appear within the expected time to collect a boarder, house parents should stay with the boarder (or make arrangements for the boarder to be supervised) and check the following:

- Messages on the house phone
- Messages on the boarder's phone
- Notes in the house diary
- Email messages
- Possible delays on roads

The house parent should then:

- Phone parent's or guardian's contact numbers
- Check with other house parents that a driver/taxi has not gone to the wrong house
- Ring reception (if still open)
- Ring the Head of Boarding or Head
- Ensure the boarder is supervised until they are collected or alternative arrangements have been made.

On NO account should a boarder leave school unless the person collecting the child is known to the school or has been instructed to collect the child by parents or guardians and confirmed by a phone call or in writing.

On NO account can a boarder stay in school during school holiday times.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Staff duty rotas, Boarding House Parents Handbook

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

NMS 15.6 - Staff working within the school should know and implement the school's policy in relation to children going missing and their role in implementing that policy. Staff actively search for children who are missing, including working with police where appropriate.)

EYFS 3.73. - Providers must make the following information available to parents and/or carers: details of the provider's policies and procedures including the procedure to be followed in the event of a parent and/or carer failing to collect a child at the appointed time, or in the event of a child going missing at, or away from, the setting.