



WALTHAMSTOW HALL  
SEVENOAKS

## **MISSING CHILD POLICY & PROCEDURES – JUNIOR SCHOOL AND THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE INCLUDING:**

- 1. Pupils missing during the School day, on a School visit or not collected on time at the end of the School day.**
- 2. Pupils missing from education.**

In drawing up this policy, assistance has been sought from documents drawn up by The Independent Schools' Bursars' Association (ISBA), The Department for Education (DfE), The Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) and The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

### References:

- Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage, 2021.
- 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', statutory guidance.
- General Inspection Queries, but with particular reference to EYFS, Independent School Association (ISA) guidance ([www.isaschools.org.uk](http://www.isaschools.org.uk)).
- Independent School Standards Regulations (paragraph 7 and 15), Early Years Statutory Framework (paragraph 3.73) and DfE guidance Children Missing Education (September 2016).
- ISBA Missing Child Policy (July 2023).

### INTRODUCTION

The welfare of all of our children at Walthamstow Hall 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 I of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). All have been trained to appreciate that they have a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. 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.

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Our companion document, “Information for Parents of EYFS and Early Years Children” 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 while 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 visits involving our youngest children are set out in a detailed policy document: “Educational Visits for EYFS Children.” Both documents are on our website. We review these policies regularly in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive, through induction, advice on the importance of effective supervision of very young children and read at least Part I of KCSIE.

## 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 Headmistress without delay. The Headmistress 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 or without providing an appropriate reason for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

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 was 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 Teacher in Charge of the parallel class or neighbouring teacher.
- Inform the School Office who will check the signing out/in book.
- Inform the Head of the Nursery and Pre-School/ Head of Early Years or the senior member of staff 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 with a relevant activity such as by reading to them.
- At the same time, arrange for all other adults in the class or nearby to search everywhere, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms where a small child might hide.
- Check the doors and gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit.

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

- Inform the Deputy Head (Junior School) who will organise a further search involving all available staff.
- If the child is still not found after a thorough search of the School building and grounds, the Deputy Head (Junior School) will inform the Headmistress.
- The School's Major Incident Procedure (MIP) will be followed.
- During the course of the MIP, the child's parents will be contacted and told what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. They should come to the School at once. Other agencies will be contacted e.g. Police as appropriate during the MIP and the Chairman of the Governing Body will be informed.
- If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set out on foot to attempt to locate the child.

- If the child is not found, the Headmistress (as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)) will inform the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate. The DSL will check with the KSCMP this has happened.
- The School will cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
- The Insurers will be informed.
- If the child is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR<sup>1</sup> to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) if appropriate.

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 Child Protection Policy.

#### ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING ON A 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 thoroughly and alert staff/manager of the venue.
- The remaining children would be taken back to School as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Contact the Deputy Head (Junior School); the Deputy Head will inform the Headmistress.
- The Major Incident Procedure (MIP) will be followed.
- During the course of the MIP, the child's parents will be contacted and told what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. They will be asked to come to the School/venue. Other agencies will be contacted e.g. Police as appropriate during the MIP and the Chairman of the Governing Body will be informed.
- The Headmistress (DSL) would inform the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership 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.
- The Insurers would be informed.
- Inform the Chair of Governors without delay.
- 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. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

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<sup>1</sup> Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences. See also Annex E to the Health and Safety Policy.  
WHJS Missing Child Policy including EYFS November 2023

## 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 a visit.
- The Deputy Head (Junior School) will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
- The Deputy Head (Junior School) will oversee a full investigation, if appropriate, involving the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership.
- 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 visit, the length of time that the child was missing and how they appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.
- Consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Safeguarding Child Protection Policy where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.

## PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED ON TIME

Head of Nursery and Pre-School/ Head of Early Years will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after by the School within the Nursery/Pre-School or in Wraparound Care. If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within one hour period / when the premises are closing (6.15pm), the duty Head of Nursery and Pre-School/ Head of Early Years will contact the Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership Out of Hours Services on 03000 41 91 91 or the police. 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. The School will make a full written report of the incident.

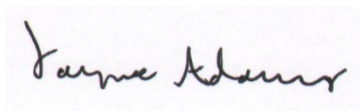
**The School will look after the child safely throughout the time that they remain under the School's care**, until such a time as they have been collected by a parent, guardian or carer, or until appropriate alternative care arrangements have been made with Social Care and/or the Police in order to prioritise the child's safety. The School's 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 Safeguarding Child Protection Policy and procedures.

This policy has regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

***Walthamstow Hall policies are approved, ratified and reviewed regularly by the Governing Body in the light of statutory requirements.***

Reviewed: November 2023  
Next Review Date: November 2024

Signed: .....



..... Date: ....17 November 2023...

Mrs J Adams  
Chairman of the Governing Body