

WHOLE SCHOOL MISSING STUDENT POLICY

1 Introduction

The welfare of all our students at New Hall School is our paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the School is aware that they have a responsibility for helping to keep all of the students safe at all times. It is therefore the responsibility of all staff to search actively for students who are missing, including working with the police where appropriate.

All New Hall School students are registered before school starts in the mornings. Registration is taken again after lunch for all students. A list of absentees is held in the School Office. Therefore, for the purpose of this policy, the term 'missing' refers to a student being not present without authorisation or explanation. On occasions when a staff member identifies a student as missing from their expected location, immediate action is required, as outlined in the procedures below.

Communications with parents and the appropriate services (particularly the police) are an integral part of the procedure, and all instances of a missing student must be reported to the Principal, the relevant Head of Division or the Deputy Principal during the day and the Vice Principal (Boarding) after school hours, whereupon the appropriate investigations will be made. At all stages, consideration will be given as to whether children's social care should be contacted in line with local procedures and the School's *Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy*.

This policy applies to all members of our School community; New Hall School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the School's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

New Hall School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document. In line with our Provision of Information policy, this document is available to all interested parties on our website and on request from the main School Office and should be read in conjunction with the following document: *Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy*, and *Attendance Policy*. This documentation also complies with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (2022), Standard 20: Staffing and Supervision and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

2 Senior Divisions Procedure: Missing Day Students (between 8.00am and 6.00pm)

A student may be identified as missing:

- After an absence at morning registration is not confirmed by the office staff's contact with home
- By comparing students in a class with the day's absence sheet
- On reconciliation with the afternoon registration
- By a report of a missing child by a fellow student

Any member of staff discovering a discrepancy must immediately notify the School Office who will:

- Contact and make the necessary check such as the tutor/teacher to assess whether the absence is expected, the Health and Wellbeing Centre to check for any known medical emergency
- Check all lists of trips out of School and check the signing out books at Reception

If the student is still found to be missing, the School Office will immediately:

- Inform the Deputy Principal/the Head of the relevant Division/or SLT members, who will initiate and oversee a search of the site
- Coordinate and make the necessary search over the School grounds
- Advise all teachers due to teach or tutor the student later that day that they must immediately inform the office if the student appears
- Set off the School fire alarm

If, within the next 10 minutes, the site search and fire alarm fail:

- The Principal and parents will be informed, and in some cases a search of local roads will be made on foot, or by car, by available staff and parents as appropriate
- On completion of this, and any subsequent searches made over the day, parents will continue to be informed of progress
- At her discretion, the Principal will arrange for the Police to be informed
- The Principal will notify the Chair of Governors

If the student is found, or the incident is otherwise resolved:

- The Principal, Head of the relevant Division and parents will be directly informed by the School Office
- The Police will be informed if they have been involved
- The Principal/Head of the relevant Division will initiate a full inquiry, and provide a written report. This report and the incident log will be kept on the student's file

3 Procedure: Missing Boarders (between 6.00pm and 8.00am)

During the school day, the procedure is the same as that for a missing day student, but includes:

- Contact the Vice Principal (Boarding) and the Head of Boarding of the relevant house

A Boarder may be identified as missing if their whereabouts cannot be confirmed visually, from information provided by the student or other trustworthy students regarding their movements, the sign-in book or telephone contact with them or their parent/guardian.

Staff discovering a discrepancy must:

- Notify the Head of Boarding of the relevant house, the Vice Principal (Boarding) and/or the duty boarding staff member
- Attempt to ascertain whereabouts from friends
- Attempt to contact the student on his/her mobile phone
- Arrange a check of the School grounds
- Contact staff who might previously have taught the student that day
- Check the list of trips and activities out of School

If a student is still missing after 10 minutes, the staff should:

- Inform the Vice Principal (Boarding) and the Principal, or in her absence the Deputy Principal
- Set off the School fire alarm
- Contact their parents/guardians (with due regard for time zones)
- Contact back-up duty staff, and request assistance as appropriate
- If necessary, a search of local roads, shops, potential haunts etc. should be made on foot or by car where appropriate

On completion of this and any subsequent searches made, the Principal and parents/guardians will continue to be informed of progress. The Principal and Vice Principal (Boarding) will arrange for the Police to be informed. The Principal will notify the Chair of Governors.

If the student is found, or the incident is otherwise resolved:

- The Principal, Parents/guardians, Deputy Principal will be directly informed by the Boarding staff
- The Police will be informed, if they have been involved
- The Principal or Vice Principal (Boarding), along with the Head of Boarding of the relevant house, will initiate a full inquiry and provide a written report. This report and the incident log will be kept on the student's file

4 Preparatory Divisions Procedure (between 8.00am and 6.00pm)

A pupil may be identified as missing:

- After an absence at morning registration is not confirmed by the office staff's contact with home
- By comparing pupils in a class with the day's absence sheet
- On reconciliation with the afternoon registration
- By a report of a missing child by a fellow pupil

Try to establish why the child may be absent – check with children in the class:

- Was the child in registration?
- Is the child in the toilet? Send a pupil to check
- Is the child at a music lesson or at a fixture?
- Was the child sent to the office unwell?
- Do they know where the child may be?

If not:

- ALERT THE OFFICE FIRST to check:
 - Is the pupil in the Medical Room?
 - Is the child in a music lesson or at a fixture?
 - Is the pupil temporarily absent? (dentist, etc.)
- If not:
 - Check with the teacher on movements, when last seen
 - Consider emotional problems and state of mind
 - Notify the Heads of the Preparatory Divisions
 - Use any available staff to assist with search
 - One member of staff should stay in the office to co-ordinate
 - All other staff take mobiles or walkie-talkie and search:

If not found, the SLMT member on duty will **notify the Head of the Preparatory Divisions** and search.

If not found after 10 minutes:

- Set off fire alarm

If still not found after 15 – 20 minutes:

- Call parents
- Call the Police **999**
- **Notify the Chair of Governors**

5 Early Years Foundation Stage Procedure

Child going missing on the premises:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the key person/staff will alert the Nursery Manager/Head of Preparatory Divisions, School Office and site team
- The Nursery Manager/Head of Pre-Prep Division will carry out a thorough search of the building and garden. Estate staff will be asked to search the wider grounds
- The register will be checked to make sure no other child has also gone astray
- Doors and gates will be checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out
- Senior Management will decide when to call the police and then the parent will be contacted
- The Nursery Manager/Head of Pre-Prep Division will notify the Principal, who will contact the Chair of Governors

6 Students missing during a school trip or following a journey

6.1 Years 1 to 13 procedure:

As soon as it is noticed that a student is missing, the member of staff in charge will:

- attempt to contact the student where appropriate
- check whether there were any delays or changes to the journey
- check with other students and ask them if they have any knowledge of the missing student's whereabouts
- contact the student's accommodation, if applicable
- contact the venue or the people that the student had visited, if applicable

If the student is still missing, the member of staff in charge will contact the Principal, or in her absence the Deputy Principal, who will then arrange for the parents to be contacted, together with relevant hospitals and the Police.

6.2 Early Years Foundation Stage procedure:

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing will ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member will search the immediate vicinity but will not search beyond that
- The Nursery Manager/Head of Preparatory Divisions will be contacted immediately, and the incident will be reported
- The School will make the decision when to call the police
- The Nursery Manager/Heads of Preparatory Divisions will contact the parent, who makes their way to the setting/outing venue as agreed with the setting leader. The setting is advised as the best place, as by the time the parent arrives, the child may have been returned to the setting
- Staff will take the remaining children back to the setting
- In an indoor venue, the staff will contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the Police if the child is not found
- The Nursery Manager/Heads of Preparatory Divisions, or designated staff member may be advised by the Police to stay at the venue until they arrive

7 After The Incident (all stages)

- The senior member of staff involved will sensitively discuss with the child's parents the events surrounding the disappearance of the child
- The Principal, or the relevant Head of Division, will carry out a full investigation, taking written statements from all the staff present at the time
- The incident report will detail:
 1. The date and time of the report
 2. What staff/children were in the group/class
 3. When the child was last seen in the group/class/boarding house
 4. What has taken place in the group/class/boarding house since then and the time it is estimated that the child went missing
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened and, if appropriate, procedures (including risk assessments and training) may be updated

8 Review

This policy shall be reviewed every year, and updated as necessary, as part of the School's annual review of safeguarding. In undertaking the review, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will take into account any incidents of missing students that indicate that there may be a problem with supervision, student support or security at the School and any issues raised by individual members of staff, parents and students.