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Policy in the Event a Child Goes Missing from School/School Activities 2023



Policy in the Event a Child Goes Missing from School/School Activities 2023 2024

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1 Statement

- 1.1** This policy is addressed to current or prospective parent/s or legal guardian/s or education guardian/s, governors, staff and volunteers. It is available, upon request to the School Office, to the parents and prospective parents, governors, staff and volunteers at the School.
- 1.2** The guidance and procedures in this policy have been approved by the Head, CEO and the Court of Governors of the Mill Hill School Foundation. Separate procedures apply in the event of a child protection issue (see the Safeguarding and Protecting the Welfare of Pupils Policy).
- 1.3** The safety and security of the children in our care at the Mill Hill School Foundation is paramount. Every care is taken to ensure that the children are accounted for at all times. This policy should be read in conjunction with:
- Early Years Policy
 - Educational Trips and Visits Policy
 - Safeguarding and Protecting the Welfare of Pupils Policy
 - Supervision Policy
 - Wrap around Care Guidelines
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE Guidance (Sept 2023)

2 Aims

- 2.1** The aim of this policy is:

To inform Governors, staff, and parents of pupils of the procedures to be followed in circumstances where a pupil may be missing.

3 Procedures

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 There is an individual handover of the child at the door between the school and parent or person who drops the child off at the start of the day. This is represented by the handshake or similar between the child and senior member of staff at the door (usually the Head or Deputy or Assistant Head).
- 3.1.2 Children are made aware of the boundaries within Grimsdell.
- 3.1.3 Children are always supervised in class and around school throughout the school day
- 3.1.4 Children are supervised during other sessions within the school day – during break time, meal times, PE or Games lessons, after school clubs and during our before and after school care facility.
- 3.1.5 Children are also supervised during their transition between locations within the school building as appropriate.
- 3.1.6 Children have a degree of independence to take themselves to their own classroom in the morning and to go to the toilet. Some children will also be permitted to go to post a smiley, go to the library or the office unsupervised, but the whereabouts of a child or group of children is always known, checked or followed up if they do not return promptly.
- 3.1.7 Children are not able to leave the building unsupervised. The doors and exits are secure and open doors are always manned by a member of staff.

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- 3.1.8 In any walk or journey on foot outside the school building there will always be a member of staff at the front and back of a line.
- 3.1.9 If a member of staff accompanies a small group of children on their own within the grounds of the Foundation, they lead from the back or organise the children so that their eyes are on them at all times.
- 3.1.10 When a child is collected from School during the school day, due to illness or a prearranged appointment, they must ALWAYS be collected from the School Office. A note is made in the register to record the fact that they are no longer on premises. Pupils are not allowed to leave the School premises alone during the course of the school day.
- 3.1.11 Visitors to the School are signed in upon arrival and signed out when they leave. They wear an identity badge if they remain on site for an activity. Parents who visit the School during the School day, or after the day has ended, are requested to report to the School office.
- 3.1.12 Teachers shake hands or similar with the child at the end of the day and hand directly to the parent, carer or person authorised on the pupil collection form, observing the union of the adult/child before dismissing the next pupil. The same procedures are applied at after school clubs and visiting coaches are supervised by a member of staff during dismissal, until they know all the parents and carers by sight. It is noted that the child has been collected on the club register.
- 3.1.13 Parents must give written permission for a child to go home with another parent or adult. These permitted 'safe' persons are specified on the child's 'Safe to Collect' list. Pupils are not dismissed to any parent or adult unless they are specified on this list.
- 3.1.14 Ratios in the early years are always observed and for all year groups on leaving the school or returning to the school after visit (on site or off site), head counts are always carried out.
- 3.1.15 The outdoor toilets are always checked by duty staff before leaving the playground.
- 3.1.16 Head counts are carried out before exiting or returning to the school building.
- 3.1.17 In the first term whilst settling in, Reception children wear different coloured bibs to identify them easily when bringing them into lunch from the playground.
- 3.1.18 Lunchtime staff have class numbers and count the children before bringing to the lunch hall or leaving the lunch hall.

3.2 Registration

- 3.2.1 All children are registered twice a day electronically, at the start of the School day and after lunch.
- 3.2.2 Absences are followed up with parents as soon as the registers close.

3.3 Missing Child at School

- 3.3.1 If the expected number of children are not accounted for at the start of a lesson, it should first be established which child is missing.
- 3.3.2 The member of staff will check with the School Office immediately as to whether the child has another commitment e.g. support lesson, Grimsdell event, external appointment etc and inform the Staff member on duty in the School Office of the situation. This can be done using a walkie talkie.
- 3.3.3 The Head or Senior Deputy will be informed immediately.
- 3.3.4 All available staff will be assembled in the staff room and given instructions by The Head or Senior Deputy to check grounds and rooms to ensure the child has not hidden or been locked in anywhere within the boundary.
- 3.3.5 The Head / Senior Deputy Head will make timely contact the following people, as

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appropriate:

- The Parents/Carer of the child
 - Other sectors of the Foundation
 - The police and / or any other appropriate emergency service
- 3.3.6 The Head will then inform the other Mill Hill School Foundation Executives, the Director of Safeguarding, and the CEO who will inform the Chair of the Court of Governors. If the Head cannot reach the CEO, they must inform the Chair of Governors themselves.
- 3.3.7 A written record of the incident and any action taken should be made as soon after the incident as practicable and placed in the pupil's confidential record (Appendix A).
- 3.3.8 Other parents should not be involved in the communication of a missing child scenario, unless this is deemed necessary by the Head in order to secure the child's safety or aid the search. An analysis of how the child became a 'missing child' should take place and action taken to prevent this from being a risk in the future.

3.4 End of Day/After School Clubs/Stay and Play

- 3.4.1 At the end of the School day or after activities, the children are only allowed to leave the School premises if their parent, or an adult approved by their parents, collects them. The handover of responsibility between school and parent or carer is represented by the handshake.
- 3.4.2 If no approved adult is present at normal pick up time or at the end of sibling supervision, the child will be supervised until the member of staff on late duty arrives. Once the late duty person finishes their duty, they will be placed into stay and play (our after school care facility) and, depending on the circumstances, the parents will be charged)
- 3.4.2 If a missing child scenario arises at dismissal, any other parent who becomes aware or is involved should be instructed not to contact the parents of the missing child. This should be handled by the school.
- 3.4.3 The School has clear procedures in the event of a parent failing to collect a child at the appointed time (Appendix B).

3.5 Missing Child on an Educational Visit

- 3.5.1 When on an Educational Visit outside the school environment staff will ensure they take precautions to ensure the safety of all pupils in accordance with the School's Educational Visits Policy and refer to the individual risk assessment prepared for that trip. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take lifesaving action in an extreme situation.

If a pupil goes missing, the priorities are to:

- assess the situation;
- safeguard the other members of the group;
- seek for and then attend to the pupil(s) involved;
- inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the incident.

The Group Leader will usually take charge in an emergency and would need to ensure that emergency procedures are in place and that back up cover is arranged.

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All those involved in the school trip, including supervisors, pupils and their parents, should be informed of who will take charge in an emergency, the named back up cover and what they are expected to do in an emergency.

We ensure that correct ratios in trips are observed in the EYFS and KS1.

3.6 Standard Procedures

- 3.6.1 On trips away from the School setting, children should be divided into groups in accordance with the Educational Visits policy. Each adult will have details of which children they are responsible for, including names and any special requirements (dietary/medical). For trips that occur out of school hours, consent forms and contact details for Parents/Carer will be taken on the trip so that Parents/Carer can be contacted in case of an emergency.
- 3.6.2 The Group Leader will make sure that the children know who is responsible for them, including the adult's name and what they are wearing. The children will also be briefed to ensure that they know that they must stay with their group leader at all times.
- 3.6.3 Children and staff wear high vis vests when on the school trip.
- 3.6.4 If appropriate, the children will be given labels or wristbands with the setting's name and a contact number on them.
- 3.6.5 The children will be told what to do if they become separated from the group:
 - Stay where you are - we will come back to look for you
 - Look around you- can you see your group or one of the other groups?
 - If it seems like a long time before we find you, whom can you talk to?
 - Someone in uniform from the attraction you are visiting
 - A uniformed policeman or woman officer
- 3.6.6 The group should stay still and keep together. If there is another adult with the group, one of them will retrace their steps (to a pre-agreed distance, for no more than five minutes away), to look for the child.
- 3.6.7 If the child is still missing after 5 minutes, the member of staff of the venue will be informed and asked for their help in finding the child. He/she will be asked to contact the police on 999. Staff should be prepared to give them the following information:
 - The adult's name and phone number and where the group is
 - What has happened
 - Name, age and address of the child
 - Description of the missing child
 - Time of incident
- 3.6.8 A member of staff will contact the School Office. The Parent/Carer of the missing child will also be informed by the Head, the Deputy Head or a Senior Teacher, giving them details of what has happened and the steps that are being taken to find their child.
- 3.6.9 The Group Leader will ensure the Head knows what actions have been taken. The Head will then inform the CEO, who will in turn inform the Chair of the Court of Governors. If the Head cannot contact the CEO, they must inform the Chair of the Court of Governors themselves.
- 3.6.10 The search will continue after calling the Police although staff should be guided by the Police as to the action taken to locate the child.
- 3.6.11 The Group Leader involved will complete an Incident Form as fully as possible on return to school (Appendix A).
- 3.6.12 No-one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this could cause distress to their families. Media

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enquiries should be referred to the Head.

3.6.13 No-one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties.

3.7 Review of Missing Child Procedures

3.7.1 When the situation has been resolved, the Head will review the reasons for the event happening and make any necessary amendments to School procedures.

3.7.2 A written record of any pupil who goes missing from School, the action taken and the reason given by the pupil for going missing, will be held centrally by the Designated Person at the School who is responsible for matters relating to child protection and welfare. These records will be reviewed annually by the Head and members of the SLT and will be discussed with the Executives of the Foundation as soon as is practicable.

4 Review

The Head will monitor the operation of these procedures, their efficiency and effectiveness and make an annual report to the Court of Governor.

The Court of Governors will undertake an annual review of this Policy through the Court of Governors' Pastoral Sub-Committee and the Heads.

This Review: September 2023

Next Review: September 2024

This Policy was approved by the Pastoral Committee of the Court of Governors on 19th September 2023.



Appendix A: Missing Child – Incident Form

Reporting Person Information

Name:

Date:

Position/Role:

Group Leader:

Name of Missing Child:

Date Child went Missing:

Time: am/pm.....

Please give a brief account of the incident:

(please include times you contacted the school and other agencies and the advice given)

Signature:

Appendix B: The Procedure To Be Followed In The Event Of A Parent Failing To Collect A Child At The Appropriate Time

- Once the child has been placed in Stay and Play at 3.15pm, the Duty teacher should ask the Office to contact the parents/carers/emergency contact of the child to find out who should have collected the child at 3.15pm
- If there is no response a message will be left
- The child will remain in Stay and Play and be given snack
- If after 5:30pm when Stay and Play closes there has been no response to messages, the Stay and Play teacher must inform the member of SLT on duty
- If by 6:30 p.m. there has still been no response from the parents, or the emergency contact numbers, the member of SLT on duty will contact the Senior Deputy Head who will contact Social Services

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