



<b>Policy Title:</b>	MISSING CHILD POLICY	
<b>Author:</b>	The Head	
<b>Date of most recent review:</b>	June 2025	
<b>Date of next review:</b>	June 2026	

### **Rationale:**

Duke of Kent School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of its pupils and it is essential that their whereabouts are known at all times. When a member of staff identifies pupils as missing from their expected location without authorisation or explanation, immediate action is required.

Communications with parents and the appropriate services (particularly the police) are an integral part of the procedure.

A child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. This policy sets out staff responsibility to be vigilant about pupil absence from School, in accordance with the document 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Department for Education, latest update 2022).

This policy applies to all pupils in all sections of the School, including EYFS, and Duke of Kent School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures contained in this document.

## **I. Responsibilities**

- I.1 All staff are responsible for being alert to the possibility that a child is missing and for making the Office immediately aware when a child is identified as missing from their expected location without authorisation or explanation.

Office staff are responsible for informing the Deputy Head. The Head's PA will designate a member of office staff responsible for coordinating all communication, under the direction of the Deputy Head during the period in which a child is identified as missing.

The Deputy Head (or in his absence Head of relevant Section) is responsible for pupil searches (during the School Day), for informing the Head and in consultation with the Head, keeping all parties informed and updated.

Duty Staff are responsible for pupil searches before or after the School Day (during Breakfast Club, the Activity Programme, Evening Events or Weekend Activities), for informing the Head and

in consultation with the Head, alerting parents and police and keeping all parties informed and updated.

The Head (or in their absence the Deputy Head) is responsible for communicating with parents and the police either directly or by ensuring that this responsibility is appropriately delegated.

The Registrar is responsible for informing the local authority all schools of the details of statutory school age pupils when they leave or join the School.

- 1.2 Parents are responsible for ensuring that all their contact details are fully updated and correct; the School Office issues yearly reminders and will follow up any contact details known to be missing or incorrect. Parents are also responsible for promptly informing the Office when a pupil is absent.

## **2. Procedures for Missing Pupil (Pre-prep including EYFS)**

- 2.1 Duke of Kent School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils and takes a number of particular measures to ensure that the whereabouts of Pre-prep children are known at all times and that effective security is in place.

- 2.2 These measures include:

- A child gate on the Nursery door.
- Weighted double doors at each end of the Pre-prep department.
- The door to the outside learning and play areas is coded and self-locking.
- The playground gate has a latch and bolt.
- EYFS children are supervised at all times and enough duty staff are allocated to enable children to go to the toilet accompanied.
- Children in EYFS are supervised when they go outside and when they move about the School (e.g. to Music Department).

Other procedures in place are:

- Morning and afternoon register.
- Headcount check at the beginning of each session.

- 2.3 In the unlikely event that a Pre-prep (including EYFS) pupil is identified as missing the following procedure is to be followed:

The teacher currently responsible for the child delegates a member of staff to search indoor and immediate outdoor areas within Pre-prep secure area in case a child is hiding.

- In the event the child is found the parent should be advised of the incident and a review carried out. All incidents of missing pupils located in this way will be reported to the Head by the Head of Prep & Pre-prep.

- In the event this does not result in the safe location of the child, the Head of Section should be informed and the procedure should follow Section 3 Procedures for Missing Pupil (Prep and Senior), to be found below.

### **3. Procedures for Missing Pupil (Prep and Senior)**

3.1 Pupils at Duke of Kent School are registered prior to morning and afternoon lessons. Known pupil absences are recorded on the Sign-Out Sheets held in Reception (Prep and Senior Pupils) or in the Pre-prep foyer (Pre-prep pupils including EYFS). A pupil may be identified as missing:

- after an absence at morning registration is not confirmed by the parent or following the Office's call home to parents.
- by comparing pupils present in a class or activity with the day's Attendance Register or Pupil Absence Sheet.
- on reconciliation with the Afternoon Register.
- by report from a fellow pupil.

3.2 Any member of staff who becomes aware of a discrepancy must immediately notify the Office who will;

- Check absence sheets/diary/calendar/trips record/activity sheets/daily changes sheet for any recorded reason for absence.
- Check with form tutor for any known reason for absence.
- Check with Medical Room Supervisor.
- Check with Head of Performing Arts and Head of Learning Development in case of Music or Extra Learning session.

3.3 If the pupil is still missing after these checks, the Office will immediately

- Open a 'Missing Pupil' sheet to log actions taken.
- Alert the Deputy Head or delegate who will assemble Senior Leadership Team and grounds staff and initiate a site search.
- Send a message to the SLT WhatsApp group alerting them to the absence.
- Ascertain last known attendance point by checking with pupil's timetabled teachers from earlier in the day.
- Email all staff with name of pupil and time of last known attendance.
- Advise all teachers due to see the pupil later in the day that the Office must be informed on sighting of the pupil.

3.4 If the site search is unsuccessful:

- The Deputy Head or delegate responsible for the search will inform the Head, who will inform parents.
- A search of local roads will be made by staff designated by Deputy Head on foot/by car as appropriate.
- If considered appropriate a fire alarm practice or return to form base with full school registration

will be conducted.

- Police will be informed at the discretion of the Head or in her absence the Deputy Head, usually within one hour (Senior) or 30 minutes (Prep and Pre-prep) of the last known sighting by staff of the pupil.

3.5 When the pupil is found or the incident is otherwise resolved, the following actions will be taken:

- The Head, parents, Deputy Head, Heads of Section will be informed by the School Office.
- The Police will be informed if they have been previously notified.
- A notice cancelling the emergency will be emailed to all staff.
- The Deputy Head will prepare a report for the Head detailing all procedures followed; this report and the Missing Pupil incident sheet will be signed by the Head and kept on the pupil's file.
- The Head or Deputy Head will arrange a meeting with parents and pupil to discuss any issues connected with the absence and to aim to prevent a recurrence.
- The Head will report the incident to the Governors at the next scheduled meeting
- An internal review to ascertain any learning from the incident

#### **4. Pupils missing on outings/expeditions**

4.1 Staff arranging outings should consider the possibility of a child going missing while assessing risk for their trip and should take necessary measures to reduce the risk as far as possible; this includes ensuring that staff: pupil ratios are appropriate to the activity and the group.

4.2 The following procedures are to be followed:

Where coach or minibus travel forms part of the outing, pupils will be counted onto the vehicle with a double-check register taken prior to any departure; pupils need to be made aware of the importance of answering clearly to their names when registered.

4.3 Pupils must be informed by the Group Leader of the rules to follow during the outing including how to avoid getting lost and what to do in the event of becoming detached from their group.

4.4 Each adult on the outing must have a full group list as well as a clear understanding of any responsibility they have for sub-groups of pupils.

4.5 In the event that a pupil is identified as missing, the Group Leader will ascertain the pupil's last known whereabouts and report the absence to the venue and to the School Office.

4.6 The School Office will open a Missing Pupil sheet and log any actions taken.

4.7 The Group Leader will notify the Police and their advice will be followed.

4.8 The School Office will report the situation to the Deputy Head or in his absence (Head of Section) who will notify the parents and keep them advised.

4.9 Where possible a member of staff will remain at the venue and assist with the search at the end of the outing.

4.10 The Deputy Head will, in consultation with the Group Leader, investigate the incident and present the Head with a report, to be kept on the pupil's file.

## **5. Pupils missing from School (failure to attend)**

5.1 A child going missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Failure to attend School, particularly recurrent or unexplained absence, may indicate that a child is experiencing or is at risk of abuse. Teachers should act to identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse and exploitation (including forced marriage and FGM - female genital mutilation).

5.2 In the event that any teacher is concerned about the welfare of a pupil who is missing from School (failing to attend), urgent report must be made to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), in line with School Safeguarding policy and procedures.

## **6. When a Child is not Collected**

6.1 When a child has failed to have been collected every effort will be made to contact the parents / guardian whose contact details are registered on the school's MIS system. Every registered child should have two contacts provided.

6.2 In the meantime the child will be kept under supervision at the school by a member of staff. Further attempts to contact the parent / guardian will be made for up to an hour. If the child is old enough they may provide an additional contact that may be tried to provide further information / support.

6.3 Should staff be available, a visit to the family address by a staff member could be undertaken if this is considered safe and appropriate. The child should continue to be supervised at school.

6.4 After 60-90 minutes, the school will consider contacting C-SPA (Social Services) or the police to report an abandoned child.