SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL
SINCE 1576

Missing Child Policy

(Prep School)

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This Policy applies to Sutton Valence School (including, as the context requires, the Nursery, and the Prep School).

Introduction

The welfare of our children at Sutton Valence School Prep and Nursery 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 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 he or she is in our care, whilst proving freedom and opportunity for independence.

Procedures to be followed by staff if a child goes missing from School, including EYFS

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. At all times, the emphasis should be on ensuring that the other pupils are supervised and there is no sense of panic. This policy is applicable to Breakfast Club and Little Suttons (after-school care) as well. If a child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

- Staff will be asked to take the register of the children they are teaching to ensure all other children are present;
- Inform the Head and Deputy Head (who is also the DSL) or Head of Pre-Prep (for EYFS/KS1). During periods when the main School is closed, the Nursery Manager or Pre-School Lead should be informed. They should be told the name of the child (or description if the child is not known); what the child was last seen doing and where; how long since they saw the child;
- During School holiday periods, whilst the Nursery is open, the Nursery Manager or Pre-School Lead should inform the SMT member of staff who is on call. SMT will inform the member of staff making contact of a time when a member of the SMT will be on site.
- Relevant enquiries will be made into where and when the child was last seen. This will include asking the children in the missing child's class, calmly, if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child and whether the child was happy or unhappy;
- Occupy all the other children in their classroom(s), for example, by reading to them. Do not send them out at break time;

- At the same time, arrange for as many adults as possible to carry out a thorough search, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards and washrooms where a child may hide. The grounds staff would also be asked to assist and to man the entrance and exit. CCTV footage could also be checked;
- Inform the Bursar;
- The safety and supervision of other children will be ensured.

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

- The Head or, should it be during School holiday periods, the Nursery Manager or Pre-School Lead will ring the child's parents and explain what has happened and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the School at once, or delay until further information has come to light;
- The Head, DSL or, should it be during School holiday periods, the Nursery Manager or Pre-School Lead, will notify the police and take advice;
- The Head or, should it be during School holiday periods, the Nursery Manager or Pre-School Lead will arrange for all available staff to further search the rest of the School premises and grounds;
- If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set off on foot to attempt to catch up with them;
- The DSL would inform the local children safeguarding board;
  The School would cooperate fully with any police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by social care;
- If the child remains missing, the Headmaster would be informed, OFSTED and or ISI would be informed and the School's insurers would be informed;
- If the child is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. Witnesses would be interviewed and asked to provide written statements. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

Procedure to be followed by staff if a child goes missing on an outing

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present;
- If not already known, identity of missing child and details of last sighting will be confirmed as rapidly as possible;
- The safety and supervision of other children will be ensured;
- As many members of staff as can be made available will be dispatched to search the area;
- The venue will be alerted and any advice taken. Ask the venue manager to arrange a search;
- The School Office along with the Head and Deputy Head (DSL) or Head of Pre-Prep (EYFS/KS1 DSL) will be alerted;
- Ask the Head (or Deputy Head or Head of Pre-Prep or, should it be during School holiday periods, the Nursery Manager or Pre-School Lead) to ring the child's parents and explain what has happened and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the venue or the School (as appropriate);
- Contact the police and take advice;
- The DSL would inform the local children safeguarding board;

- The School would cooperate fully with any police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by social care;
- If the child is not found before the end of the trip, subject to advice from authorities, a member of staff will stay behind to help the search and bring the child back once found;
- If the child was not quickly found the School would inform the Headmaster, OFSTED and or ISI and the School's insurers;
- If the child is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. Witnesses would be interviewed and asked to provide written statements. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

Actions to be followed by staff once the child is found

- The Head (or Deputy Head or Head of Pre-Prep or, should it be during School holiday periods, the Nursery Manager or Pre-School Lead) will contact the parents and any emergency services involved;
- 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 School premises or be separate from a group on an outing;
- Inform all staff involved in the search that the child has been found;
- The Head or Head of Pre-Prep or, should it be during School holiday periods, the SMT member who is on call will speak to the parents to discuss the event and given an account of the incident;
- The Head will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving social services or the local children safeguarding board);
- Media queries should be referred to the Head, who will seek lines to take from the Headmaster;
- The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements;
- The report should be detailed covering: time and 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 they appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.

Procedure for Late Pick-up

It is preferable that parents are not late picking up their children, however the School does understand that in exceptional circumstances this can happen. Should parents be late, we would ask them to contact the School Office to let us know. Please note that it is not always possible for office staff to get a message to individual children, so parents and children are briefed to follow the procedure below and make a note of School Office times:

Years 3-6

- Late for 4.10pm pick up - children should go to Why Don't You? Club;
- Late for 5.20pm pick up - children should go to the Dining Hall, with the exception of Fridays, when they should the taken to the duty SMT member;

- Late for 6.00pm pick up - children should be brought to the duty SMT member, who will contact parents.

  Reception –Year 2
- Late for 3.30pm pick up - Form teacher will take them to Little Suttons (there may be the charge per session for this).
- Late after 4.10pm - Children be taken to the School Office to check if parents have telephoned. Depending on the message from parents, the children will either wait at the School Office or be taken to Little Suttons (there may be the charge per session for this).

  Nursery
- Nursery children will be cared for by the Nursery team and the office/duty SMT member will be informed to contact parents.

If parents call the School Office after 5:30pm, the call will be diverted to SMT.

If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency contact numbers, within a two-hour period, the Head (or another member of SMT or, should it be during School holiday periods, the Nursery Manager or Pre-School Lead) will contact the social care duty officer. 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. A full written report of the incident will be made.

Children Missing from Education

In accordance with the law, the School has an admission register and an attendance register and all pupils are placed on both.

The School will inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of School by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- Have ceased to attend School and no longer live within reasonable distance of the School;
- Have been certified by a medical professional as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend School before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither they nor their parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the School after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the Head does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the School at the end of that period; or, have been permanently excluded.

The local authority will be notified when the School is to delete a pupil from its register under the above circumstances so that the local authority can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education. Follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect. In any case, where a pupil of compulsory school age is to be deleted from the School register, when the next school is not known. The School is required to report the circumstances, as soon as possible after the grounds for deletion are met, to the LEA in which the pupil lives and in any event before the pupil's name is deleted from the register.

Children who fail to attend School regularly

The School has agreed with the Kent County Council PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service the following timeline of School action for poor attendance:

- 95 - 100% attendance – form teacher to investigate and notify the Deputy Head (Y3-6) or Head of Pre-Prep (Pre-Prep) of any concerns. Any unexplained absences are followed up each morning by the School Secretary;
- 90 - 95% attendance where absences have been unexplained – form teacher to arrange meeting with parents;
- Below 90% - Where the absences have not been authorised consult with the local authority school liaison officer and make further referrals as appropriate. The School will also inform the relevant authorities as appropriate, immediately if a single absence raises child protection concerns (see above), or a pupil has ten days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence).
- For children in the EYFS who are not compulsory school age we would still ask that parents inform the school of any absence. If the school have not heard that day, a courtesy call will be made by a member of staff.

Further information can be found in the Sutton Valence School Attendance Policy.