SUTTON VALENCE SCHOOL
SINCE 1576

Missing Pupil Policy

(Senior School)

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This policy addresses ISI Regulatory Requirements (effective February 2016, updated February 2020 and implemented via the new Inspection Framework operational from September 2023), Part 3 - Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils, para 15 and should be read in conjunction with the School's Supervision and Child Protection Policies.

1. Introduction

This policy reflects the determination of the School's Leadership team to promote the wellbeing of all pupils through taking a strategic, comprehensive and inclusive approach to identifying and managing the risk of harm to pupils' wellbeing. Consequently, this procedure is to be used when searching for, and if necessary, reporting, any pupil missing from Sutton Valence School. The procedure includes the requirement to record any incident, the action taken and the reasons given by the pupil for being missing.

NB: A child going missing from School or from home is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow this procedure for dealing with children who go missing:

Staff should act to identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation. Consequently, the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils) and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (or Assistant Head (Wellbeing)) should always be informed when a pupil is found to be missing. The Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils), the DSL or (in the case of boarders), the relevant Housemaster / Housemistress and/or Matron, (or member of staff on duty in that boarding house), will always apply the locally agreed procedure in acting to safeguard any child who is missing from School. In particular, the matter will be referred to other agencies, including children's social care services and or the police in cases where a pupil has gone missing on repeated occasions, or where a single instance of truancy or running away gives rise to concerns of abuse or neglect or other risk of harm, or where there is evidence of a crime.

2. Missing Child Procedure for Day Pupils

If a day pupil goes missing from Sutton Valence School, their tutor, or another responsible teacher, or the School Secretary ("Responsible Person") will make every effort to contact them and get them back into School, including contacting the pupil's parents. Staff should explore all available methods, such as social media (via friends/family) and messaging via TEAMS. If they cannot be traced within an hour of their being reported missing, a member of the Senior Management team (usually the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils), DSL, or Assistant Head (Wellbeing)) will make a risk assessment judgement of the situation (see below). They will make a decision as to whether to inform the police immediately; or whether a longer timescale should be created and what the Responsible Person and any other member of staff should do during any such time extension. This might include key check-

points for a subsequent further action and re-assessment, and a cut-off point after which the police must be contacted. The Responsible Person will also keep the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils) and/or DSL informed of the situation as it develops.

3. Missing Child Procedure for Boarders

If a pupil does not return to the boarding house within a reasonable period from when their return was anticipated, the duty member of staff should make every effort to communicate with them to ascertain their whereabouts. including contacting the pupil's parents. Staff should explore all available methods, such as social media (via friends/family) and messaging via TEAMS. Should this not prove to be possible, then the Housemaster and senior staff (Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils), DSL, or Assistant Head (Wellbeing)) should be informed with a view to involving the police.

A suggested timeline is as follows, it is important to note that this is not a strict protocol, but a guideline for the duty member of staff on how to respond. It is recognised that timings may vary in each case.

0 mins	Indicated return time, e.g. end of supper/commencement of prep;
0 - 30 mins	'Late return' noted in the daybook. Try to establish whereabouts of the boarder by speaking to other boarders, house staff and try to make contact by mobile phone;
30 - 60 mins	'Not returned' if unable to contact the pupil, the duty tutor should seek to make contact with friends, parents, check for School trips, conduct a basic room search for evidence of reason for being absent, etc. If for any reason there has been a delay in the absence being discovered, the timescale should be tightened accordingly, but there still needs to be the effort made to ascertain the pupil's whereabouts, a phone call must be made if there are any concerns about the pupil's welfare;
60 mins	The duty member of staff should contact the Housemaster/Housemistress and/or senior staff (Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils), DSL, Assistant Head (Wellbeing)) as appropriate, with the pupil's details and steps taken to locate them, along with the information that the search has yielded to that point. A risk assessment judgement will be made at this point about the level of concern for the pupil, and further action taken in consultation with a senior member of the staff.

Once the child is safe and immediate danger / risk mitigated, incidents (regardless of outcome) should be added to ***CPOMS*** with details of the incident, actions taken and outcomes

If a pupil goes missing repeatedly, there will be an escalation procedure.

4. Making the Risk Assessment Judgement

A number of contextual factors will be taken into account, including:

- Possible threat factors: time of day; darkness; weather conditions; known local concerns;
- Proximity of School to home, School and boarding house timings (e.g. morning or afternoon registration, house call overs) from which the pupil would not have been absent without good reason, or which are worth waiting until before considering them to be missing;
- Individual pupil circumstances: age, judgement, known personal, pastoral or disciplinary issues, mood and/or communications prior to going missing, previous instances of going missing;
- Any reassurances/likelihood as to their whereabouts;
- Any parental indication of concern.

Specifically:

- In the case of a pupil about whom there are pre-existing welfare concerns, then the time-frame must be compressed and the police must be contacted by the one hour point (see below);
- If the pupil is young (Fourth Form, or young Fifth Form) and staff have received no assurance as to their whereabouts, then the police should be contacted at the one hour point.

All staff should remember that:

- Early contact with the police may help to save a child's life or save them from significant harm;
- Failing to act within a reasonably responsive time frame could prove costly;
- Staff must feel confident in making sensible judgements as to the whereabouts of the pupil, as a normal parent would – but always erring on the side of caution, and believing that 'sooner is better than later'.

5. Contacting the Police

Generally, before the police are called, the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils) and/or the DSL and the pupil's parents should be informed.

However, where attempts to contact the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils), the DSL, Head of Senior School and/or the parents are unsuccessful, this should not delay making contact with the police.

When contacting the police to report a missing child, call 101 (not 999). Pass to the police all pertinent details as they request.

Ask for their direct contact number, so that you can make swift contact should the situation change.

Where the School contacts the police during the day or night, the following information should be provided:

- The pupil's name;
- The pupil's age;
- An up-to-date photograph if possible;
- The pupil's height, physical description and any physical peculiarities;
- Any disability, learning difficulty or special educational needs that the pupil may have;
- The pupil's home address and telephone number;
- A description of the clothing the pupil is thought to be wearing;
- Any relevant comments made by the pupil such as "I'm going to run away to Brighton";
- Any suspicion or evidence of a crime.

The information will then be passed to the various police stations through police channels and no further notifications from the School should be necessary – except if the pupil turns up, when the School will notify the police of their return.

Pupils sponsored under Tier Four of the Points Based System

As a licensed UKBA sponsor under Tier Four of the points-based system, the School has an obligation to report certain events/absences of Tier Four sponsored pupils to UKBA within ten working days. This should be done through the Admissions Officer. To comply with current legislation, the Admissions Officer maintains up-to-date records for the Tier Four pupils during School holidays. These are stored in the Admissions Office. A report will be made to the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) department of the Home Office in the cases where a Tier Four pupil is found to have contravened the terms of their visa. These can include:

- Enrolled, but not attended;
- Not enrolled within the enrolment period;
- Withdrawn due to ill health or other circumstances (including if the pupil withdraws before they travel to the UK);
- Ceased to be sponsored by the School;
- Ceased studying and stopped attending;
- Been excluded or otherwise required to leave by the School, resulting in the School withdrawing sponsorship;
- Been the subject of an administrative error in pupil reporting;
- Missed ten consecutive expected contact points without reasonable permission being given by the School leading up to those contact points, resulting in the School withdrawing sponsorship.

Reports will be made in all cases through the online Sponsorship Management System (SMS) in accordance with the reporting procedures given in the document Tier Four of the points-based system: Guidance for Sponsors (2015).

The School does not need to make a report if:

- A pupil has been given reasonable permission to miss a contact;
- The School has decided not to withdraw sponsorship even though the pupil has missed ten consecutive contacts. This should be very rare and the School must keep any evidence of any decision of this kind, together with the reasoning behind it.

6. Record-Keeping

Depending on the incident, the DSL will keep a record of the incident either on the Welfare Concern or Child Protection file; in the case of a boarder going missing, the Housemaster will also keep a Missing Child Incident folder.

As such, as soon as possible following the conclusion of the incident, the member of staff responsible for leading the School's response should provide to the DSL (and in the case of boarders, the Housemaster) a written record of:

- The pupil's name;
- Relevant dates and times;
- The decisions and actions taken to find the pupil and the reasons for them;
- Whether the police or social services were informed;
- Outcome or resolution of the incident;
- Any reason given by the pupil for going missing;
- Any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident;
- A record of the staff involved;
- Any other salient information.

7. Follow-up to a Missing Pupil Incident

Once a pupil returns from being missing, they will be provided with support and the opportunity to discuss the incident with the DSL, the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils), the School medical team including perhaps the School counsellor, and in the case of boarders, the Independent Listener. They may also be provided with the contact details for external support services (e.g. NSPCC).

The pupil's parents will also be given the opportunity to discuss the incident with the DSL, who will provide advice and support where required.

Any residual concerns about the pupil's welfare resulting from an incident will be acted upon and, where appropriate, Children's Social Care Services and or the police will be informed, in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures.

8. 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 registers.

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 Headmaster 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 form the register.

9. 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 unexplained Poor Attendance:

- 95 - 100% attendance – tutor to investigate and notify HSMS or CPC of any concerns. Any unexplained absences are followed up each morning by the School Secretary;
- 90 - 95% attendance where absences have been unexplained – HSMS 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).

Annexe A – Individual Boarding House Plans relating to this Policy

Emergency Cover Backup Plan for Sutton House
Day Time (7.20am – 5.15pm, Monday-Friday)

In case of a Sutton boarder needing emergency care;

1. Phone the School Nurse **07725 467793** or **999** if necessary;
2. If possible (and with agreement of nurse) move patient to the Medical Centre;
3. If Matron is required to leave the House to go to Accident and Emergency etc. cover for the House must be found. Then;
4. Matron or Nurse to phone Housemistress (Sophie de Castro) **01622 845256 / 07815 907525**. If HSM is unavailable, contact the School Secretary **01622 845200**;
5. Inform House staff by mobile phone and email about the situation. Sophie de Castro **07815 907525,** Gretchen Kube-Clare **07894 333 450**
6. If no response from staff or unavailable, request School Secretary **01622 845200,** Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils), Will Walker **07458 021803** or Steve Head **07971 494778** to find suitable member of staff to cover House;
7. If you need to leave and no cover has arrived clear the Boarding House of pupils, place the sign on the front door to say the House is closed;
8. When accompanying the pupil, take the Sutton mobile phone.

Emergency Cover Backup Plan for Sutton House
(Saturday 8.15-12.45)

In case of a Sutton boarder needing emergency care;

1. Matron Phones the School Nurse **07725 467793** or **999** if necessary;
2. If possible (and with agreement of Nurse) move patient to the Medical Centre;
3. If Matron is required to leave the House to go to Accident and Emergency etc. the Shadow Duty member of staff should inform all mentioned on this list in this order:
    - phone Housemistress (Sophie de Castro) **07815 907525;**
    - The School Secretary **01622 845200** who will inform the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils), Will Walker **07458 021803** or Steve Head **07971 494778;**
    - The nominated member of SMT on Duty – see rota;
4. If you need to leave and no cover has arrived clear the Boarding House of pupils, place the sign on the front door to say the House is closed;
5. When accompanying the pupil, take the Sutton mobile phone with you.

Emergency Cover Backup Plan for Sutton House
When on duty by yourself (Evenings, Nights and Weekends)

If a Sutton pupil requires emergency medical care;

1. Stabilise the pupil and administer first aid;
2. Phone **999** if necessary;
3. Contact member of staff on site, Housemistress **07815 907525** or Resident Tutor **07894 333 450**
4. If the pupil requires immediate Accident and Emergency, it is imperative they are accompanied by House staff or parent;
5. If no off-duty House staff are available to cover the Boarding House phone Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils), Will Walker **07458 021803** or Steve Head **07971 494778.**
6. If this fails phone St Margaret's House **07703 567134**;
7. Take the Sutton mobile phone with you should you leave the House.

Emergency Cover Backup Plan for St Margaret's House
Day Time (7.20am – 5.15pm, Monday-Friday)

In case of a St Margaret's boarder needing emergency care;

1. Matron phones the School Nurse **07725 467793** or **999** if necessary;
2. If possible (and with agreement of Nurse), move patient to the Medical Centre;
3. If Matron is required to leave the House to go to Accident and Emergency etc. cover for the House must be found. Then;
4. Matron or Nurse to phone Housemaster, Mark Howell – **07779 002251**. If HSM is unavailable, contact the School Secretary **01622 845200**;
5. Inform House staff by mobile phone and email about the situation. Chloe Barden - **07595 325863** and Harrison Wells – **Tel No 07935 392084;**
6. If no response from staff or unavailable, the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils), Will Walker **07458 021803** or Steve Head **07971 494778** to find suitable member of staff to cover House;
7. If you need to leave and no cover has arrived clear the Boarding House of pupils, place the sign on the front door to say the House is closed;
8. When accompanying the pupil, take the St Margaret's mobile phone.

Emergency Cover Backup Plan for St Margaret's House
(Saturday 8.15-12.45)

In case of a St Margaret's boarder needing emergency care;

1. Matron Phones the School Nurse **07725 467793** or **999** if necessary;
2. If possible (and with agreement of Nurse) move patient to the Medical Centre;
3. If Matron is required to leave the House to go to Accident and Emergency etc. the Shadow Duty member of staff should inform all mentioned on this list in this order:
   - Housemaster, Mark Howell – **07779 002251;**
   - The School Secretary **01622 845200** who will inform the Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils), Will Walker **07458 021803** or Steve Head **07971 494778;**
   - The nominated member of SMT on Duty – see rota;
4. If you need to leave and no cover has arrived clear the Boarding House of pupils, place the sign on the front door to say the House is closed;
5. When accompanying the pupil, take the St Margaret's mobile phone.

Emergency Cover Backup Plan for St Margaret's House
When on duty by yourself (Evenings, Nights and Weekends)

If a St Margaret's pupil requires emergency medical care;

1. Stabilise the pupil and administer first aid;
2. Phone **999** if necessary;
3. Contact member of staff on site, Housemaster **01622 845266 /07779 002251;**
4. If the pupil requires immediate Accident and Emergency, it is imperative they are accompanied by House Staff or Parent;
5. If no off-duty House Staff are available to cover the Boarding House phone Steve Head **07971 494778 or** Deputy Head (Pastoral and Pupils), Will Walker **07458 021803;**
6. If this fails phone Sutton House **07703 567168;**
7. Take the St Margaret's mobile phone with you should you leave the House.