



Missing Pupil Procedure

1. Introduction

This procedure is to be used for searching for, and if necessary, reporting, any pupil missing from Trinity School. The procedure includes the requirement to record any incident, the actions taken to establish the whereabouts of the pupil 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. When dealing with a missing pupil incident, staff should act to identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation.

The Deputy Headmaster and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (or, in her absence, one of the Deputy DSL) should always be informed when a pupil is found to be missing. The Deputy Headmaster or DSL/ DDSL will brief the Headmaster as required.

In cases where a pupil has gone missing on repeat 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, the matter will be referred to other agencies, including children's social care services and/or the police.

2. Missing Child Procedure

- The Deputy Headmaster and DSL are to be informed immediately if a pupil is found to be missing from School.
- The Deputy Headmaster will inform the Headmaster and keep him apprised of developments.
- If a pupil goes missing, his/ her tutor, or another responsible teacher e.g. Head of Year (hereafter referred to as the "Responsible Person") will search the School in order to determine whether or not the pupil is on-site. While carrying out this search, the Responsible Person will also make every effort to contact the pupil by phone and get him/ her back into School.

- The Deputy Headmaster or DSL will contact the pupil's parents in order to inform them of our concern and to find out whether or not they know the whereabouts of their son/ daughter.
- If the missing pupil cannot be traced within an hour of being reported missing, the Deputy Headmaster, having consulted with the DSL, will make a Risk Assessment Judgement of the situation (see below) and make a decision as to:
 - whether to inform the Police immediately;
 - 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, including key check-points for a subsequent further action & re-assessment, and a cut-off point after which the police must be contacted.
- The Responsible Person will keep the Deputy Headmaster and DSL (or, in her absence one of the Deputy DSL) informed of the situation as it develops.
- The Deputy Headmaster will remain in contact with the pupil's parents and keep them apprised of developments.

3. 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 timings (e.g. morning or afternoon registration) 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 (JBug – Year 5) and staff have received no assurance as to his 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 pupil's life/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 err on the side of caution, and believe that 'sooner is better than later'.

4. Contacting the Police

Generally, before the Police are called, the Deputy Headmaster, DSL/Deputy DSL and the pupil's parents should be informed. However, where attempts to contact the Deputy Headmaster, DSL/Deputy DSL 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 in the first place but, if circumstances dictate, do not hesitate to call 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, the following information should be provided:

- the pupil's name
- the pupil's age
- if available, the pupil's mobile telephone number
- 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 Edinburgh".
- any suspicion/ 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 his/ her return.

5. Record-Keeping

Depending on the incident, the DSL will keep a record of the incident. As such, as soon as possible following the conclusion of the incident, the Responsible Person should provide to the DSL 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.

6. 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 and the School Counsellor. 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.

Author / Reviewer:	Eugene du Toit (Deputy Headmaster)
Date of last review:	September 2018
Policy approved by:	Senior Management Team
Date of Approval:	September 2018
Date of next Review:	September 2020
Governor committee responsible for oversight:	Welfare Committee
Chairperson of Governor committee:	Mr Jon Crozier
Date of review by committee:	October 2018