



Woodcote House School

Missing Child Policy

INTRODUCTION

The welfare of all of our children at Woodcote House School 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. Every member of our staff who works with children has read Part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2022). 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.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Our various policies describe:

- The arrangements for children arriving at school and leaving the premises at the end of the day
- The qualifications of our staff and the arrangements for supervising the children whilst they are in school
- The arrangements for registering the children. Parents are responsible for notifying the school if their child is absent for any reason. The school will always contact the parent if the child fails to arrive at school without an explanation.
- The physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to or exit from the building

All relevant policies can be found on the school's website or can be supplied on request.

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our pupils are set out in a detailed policy document: 'Educational Visits Policy'. This document is also on our website and can be provided to parents on request. We review all our policies regularly (at least once a year) in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of pupils and read Part 1 and Annex A of the DfE's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance.

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM THE SCHOOL

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions during the working day:

- Check with the pupil's friends to see if they know their whereabouts
- Check the medical centre
- Check with reception
- Inform the senior member of staff on duty
- Ask all of the adults (via Staff Whatsapp group) and pupils calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the pupil
- Occupy all of the other pupils in their classroom(s)
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search the school grounds
- Check the doors, gates for signs of entry/exit

If a pupil is missing at bedtime or in the early hours, or they fail to return from 'leave out' at the appointed time, we would carry out the following actions:

- Check with the pupil's friends to see if they know their whereabouts
- Carry out a thorough search of the boarding area
- Check with the medical centre
- Consult the senior member of boarding staff on duty in School (see duty rota)
- Check exeat forms or any other information before contacting the senior member of staff on duty who will then deal with the matter if there is not a suitable explanation.

A record is kept by the school of any instances in which a pupil is missing from school without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the pupil's explanation.

If the pupil is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Inform the Head and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Ask the Head to ring the pupil's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the school at once
- The DSL/Head would notify the Police
- The Head would arrange for staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds
- If the pupil's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her
- The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the school's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- The school would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
- Inform the Proprietor
- The school's insurers would be informed
- If the pupil is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

During the course of the investigation into the missing pupil, the school, in consultation with the LADO, will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the pupil was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

ACTIONS 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 pupils were present
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity
- Inform the Head and the DSL by mobile phone
- The remaining pupils would be taken back to school
- Ask the Head 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 school at once
- If appropriate, contact the venue manager and arrange a search
- Contact the Police
- The DSL would inform the LSCB
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- Inform the Proprietor
- The school's insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (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. The school will review its procedures and, if appropriate, these would be adjusted.

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF ONCE THE CHILD IS FOUND

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child
 - Speak to the other pupils to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
 - The Head will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
 - The Head will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the LSCB)
 - Media queries should be referred to the Head
 - The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements
 - The report should be detailed covering: time, 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 he appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future.
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PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED ON TIME

If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed collection time, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or guardian. If there is no answer, the Teacher or Matron will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child.

During this time, the child will be safely looked after.

If there is no response from the parents' or guardians' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a three hour period, the Head will contact the Social Care Duty Officer. Social Care will arrange for a visit to be made to the child's house and will check with the Police. We will make a full written report of the incident.

We undertake to look after the child safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care, until such a time as he has been collected by a parent or guardian, or until appropriate, alternative care arrangements have been made with Social Care and/or the Police in order to prioritise the child's safety. The school's DSL will keep a record of incidents where parents do not collect a child from school or are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents. If any concerns about the child's safety and welfare result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the school's child protection policy and procedures detailed in its staff behaviour and child protection policy.

September 2022