



Missing from School and Serious Incident Policy

Document Control Information

Version	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1	September 2020	
2	September 2021	
3	September 2022	Updated
4	January 2023	Updated
5	January 2024	Under review with SLG
6	January 2025	Updated

Reviewed	01/2025
Responsibility	Debbie Hanson
Committee	Schools Advisory Board
Review Date	01/2026
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Meath School
Missing from School and Serious Incident Policy

1. Introduction

“Missing - Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.”

The pupils at Meath School present with severe and complex speech, language and communication needs that affect, to varying extents, their ability to understand and use language effectively for all communication.

Our pupils are aged 4 to 11 years of age and as such are classed as higher risk by Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership and if their whereabouts are unknown must be classed as missing or absconded. The safety of our pupils is our priority whilst they are in our care at school.

It should be used in conjunction with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Absence, Attendance and Registration, Educational Visits and Missing from Care and Home Policies.

2. Aim

This policy sets out our procedures for dealing with the unlikely event of a pupil going missing during the school day, whilst out on a school trip or when staying in Residential.

3. Objective

To safeguard, as far as possible, the welfare of our pupils who may be absent without authority and/or missing.

4. Procedures aimed at reducing risk of a missing pupil

- The school premises are fully secure with high secure fencing and coded locks to all gates. These are not left open without supervision from a member of school staff. The only exit (apart from fire doors, which are only used in an emergency) into the unfenced school grounds is the main door which is buzzer controlled.
- Information to staff about challenging unknown persons on the premises.

- Requirements for all visitors to register on arrival with the office, present evidence of identity and obtain a visitor's badge and appropriate lanyard.
- Visitors without a DBS certificate must always be accompanied by a member of staff when on the premises.
- Boundary security regularly checked by health and safety and maintenance team.
- Supervision of children at all times.
- Sufficient staff to maintain ratios appropriate to the venue and nature of the activity being undertaken.
- Risk assessments for trips/visits.

Start of the day:

- Any pupil attending Breakfast Club must be handed over to a member of staff so that it is known that they are on the premises.
- All pupils who have not slept at school the night before must arrive at school no earlier than 8.45am and must come through the main school entrance and into the quiet room (unless alternative individual arrangements have been made) where they are logged into the register.
- If a pupil has slept at school the night before they will be escorted to the playground and marked into the register.
- As the pupils arrive they are handed over to school staff by parents/carers or their individual taxi escorts. They are marked into the main school register by a member of staff on duty.
- If a taxi escort passes over information that a pupil is not in school that day (illness, appointment, exceptional circumstances) the member of staff on duty will inform the front office who will then send a message to the class team.
- Pupils then either go out to play in the playground or in the case of wet play will go straight to the school hall.
- At school time the pupils are lined up in class groups and escorted by the adults that have been on play duty to their classrooms where they are met by the adults in that class.

During lesson time:

- Staff mark registers promptly and accurately – mornings and afternoons and return them to the school office. If a child is not at school by 10.00am the office will phone the family/carers to understand the absence.
- If pupils leave the classroom security to work in other parts of the school, the class teacher must ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times and all pupils are accounted for on return to the classroom.

Playtime:

- Pupils are to be escorted to the external doors or hall by staff.
- Duty staff are on the playground before pupils come out.

- External gates remain locked. Staff observe all areas in playground throughout the session.
- Staff on duty escort pupils back to the school hall and into classrooms.

Lunch time:

- As above.

Home time:

- Parents/carers or taxi escorts wait on the playground for the pupils.
- If a pupil is going home they are escorted by a member of staff from their classroom and handed over to the person collecting them.
- A member of staff will sign them out on the register as the pupil leaves the school.

Leaving during the school day:

- If a pupil is picked up during the school day, they will be signed out by the office staff.

After School Club/Sleepover

- If a pupil is staying for After School Club or sleeping at school they will wait in the school hall with the residential team.
- A register of pupils who should be staying is taken and the pupils are escorted to the residential area.
- If there are any discrepancies between who is staying and the list this should be clarified with the Residential Services Manager. If the query cannot be answered then a phone call home should be made immediately by the front office to clarify.
- Once After School Clubs are finished pupils are handed over to their parents/carers or taxi escorts.

5. Procedures for the event of a child going missing in school:

In the event of a member of staff fearing that a pupil has gone missing while at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will calmly check with other adults to see if they know where the pupil has gone and then if the pupil cannot be located will inform the Principal (or in her absence the Deputy or Assistant Head or the Residential Services Manager).
- The Class Teacher will promptly but calmly round up all pupils to the classroom area and a designated member of staff will read the group a story.
- Class Teacher will count and name check all the pupils present against the register while the group are assembled in one place.
- AT THE SAME TIME all other available staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises and notify the Principal (or in her absence the Deputy or Assistant Head or the Residential Services Manager) immediately if the pupil is found.

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- A thorough check of all exits to be made to make sure all gates/doors were locked/bolted and there are no other ways a pupil could have left the school. If something is discovered this needs to be drawn to the attention of the Principal (or in her absence the Deputy or Assistant Principal or the Residential Services Manager) immediately. The Principal will alert the Speech and Language UK CEO.
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school, using cars as necessary and keeping in contact with the school.
- If the pupil has not been found after 30 minutes from the initial report of them as missing then the police and parents/carers should be notified. A member of SLG will contact the police by dialling 999 or 112 and they will also contact parents/carers.
- A recent photograph of the pupil must be made ready.
- The Class Teacher must try to remember and write down a description of what the pupil was wearing and any distinguishing features.
- Any special medical needs and the difficulties the pupil may have need to be noted, to be disclosed to police or other agencies.

In the event of a member of staff fearing that a pupil has gone missing while at After School Club or Sleeping at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will calmly check with other adults to see if they know where the pupil has gone, and if the pupil cannot be located, will inform the Residential Services Manager.
- A designated adult will promptly but calmly round up all pupils to one of the residential playrooms and organise an activity.
- A designated adult will count and name check all the pupils present against the register while the group are assembled in one place.
- AT THE SAME TIME all other available staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises and notify the Residential Services Manager if the pupil is found.
- A thorough check of all exits to be made to make sure all gates/doors were locked/bolted and there are no other ways a pupil could have left the school. If something is discovered this needs to be drawn to the attention of the Residential Services Manager immediately.
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school, using cars as necessary and keeping in contact with the school.
- If the pupil has not been found after 15 minutes from the initial report of them as missing then the Residential Services Manager will contact the Principal and the police and parents/carers should be notified. The Residential Services Manager will phone the police on 999/112. The Principal will alert Speech and Language UK CEO.
- A recent photograph of the pupil must be made ready.
- The adult who has been with the pupil must try to remember and write down a description of what the pupil was wearing and any distinguishing features.
- Any special medical needs and the difficulties the pupil may have need to be noted, to be disclosed to police or other agencies.

The police will want to know:

- Where you are (address of setting/venue).
- The next of kin of the pupil.
- A detailed description of the pupil, including age, sex, working down from head to toe including as much clothing description as possible.
- The circumstances of the incident, including anything that may have triggered the disappearance, how long have they been missing, where were they last seen, was there an argument (older pupil).
- Who is looking for the pupil, where are they, do they have a mobile with them (which is highly unlikely for our pupils), what is the number?
- Whether the pupil has any medical needs.
- Any safeguarding information.
- The incident should be relayed to other important agencies:

The School, using the Emergency Incident Forms – Appendix 1
The pupil's Local Authority.
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In the event of a missing child that attracts media attention, the line of policy to be taken by ALL staff is:

“At this moment in time we are doing all we can to locate the child with all other agencies, and supporting the family” and then refer to the Press and PR at Speech and Language UK.

6. Procedures for the event of a child going missing on a school trip or visit:

If the event of a member of staff fearing that a pupil has gone missing while off school premises on a school trip or visit:

- The Trip leader must ensure the safety of the remaining pupils.
- One or more adults should immediately start searching for the pupil.
- The Emergency Procedures for Meath School Educational Visits information (contained in every Risk Assessment) should be followed.

7. Safety and Emergencies:

- It is important to continually reassess risks during the visit. Changes in the weather need to be monitored.
- Changes to the itinerary may introduce new hazards not covered in the original risk assessment.
- Regular head counting of pupils should take place, particularly before leaving a venue. Teachers/Residential Staff are clear of their responsibilities.

8. Emergency Procedures

Emergency Procedures for Meath School Staff, Pupils and Volunteers undertaken in the event of an accident or situation specifically **involving Meath School:**

- The trip leader/organiser in discussion with other staff will be responsible for making all decisions relating to the trip.
- Group leaders will count their groups.
- If a member of a group is missing the group leader will immediately raise their arm indicating that a pupil is missing.
- The trip leader (teacher/residential staff) will then take control of the incident and locate the pupil if in close proximity.
- If a pupil is missing and cannot be found the school must be called on 01932 872302, and the Principal alerted either at school.
- The police must then be called on 999/112.
- In the event of an accident or other serious incident the school must be called immediately on 01932 872302, and the Principal alerted.
- The school must be constantly kept informed of the situation.
- If hospitalisation is required a staff member must go in the ambulance.
- The Principal or a member of SLG will:
 - notify parents/carers.
 - Report the incident to Social Services (where necessary)
 - Report the incident to Chair of Governors
 - Report the incident to the CEO and Director of Education of Speech and Language UK
- In the event of an accident happening whilst on a coach, train, car or other form of transport, pupils will collect in their groups, with their group leader, away from the accident. The above procedures are then followed.
 - A decision will be made whether a member of SLG needs to go to the trip site.

9. When the Pupil Is Found:

- Members of staff will care for and talk with the pupil, bearing in mind that he/she may be unaware of having done anything wrong or, alternatively, may also have been afraid and distressed and may now be in need of comfort.
- Other adults present will take the opportunity to speak to the remaining pupils to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises and why.
- The police may want to speak to the pupil to find out what has happened and in this case it may be necessary for an adult from Meath to act as an interpreter.

10. After The Incident:

- The class teacher and Principal (or SLG member) will sensitively discuss with the pupil's parents/carers the events surrounding the disappearance of the pupil.

- If appropriate, a short meeting will be held or a note sent home with the pupils to give parents/carers brief, accurate information about the incident, as soon as possible.
- The incident will be reviewed with the DSL.
- Liability should not be discussed until the incident has been fully investigated by the school and Speech and Language UK.
- Staff and parents/carers should be asked to refer any enquiries they have or any enquiries from the media about the incident, to the Principal.
- If the incident requires reporting to Ofsted, in respect of RIDDOR or any other official body, such action will be taken.
- The incident and effectiveness of subsequent action taken will be reviewed at the next Governors meeting.
- SLG will issue advice to staff and pupils and implement any necessary measures to ensure it does not happen again.

11. The Investigation:

- The Principal carries out a full investigation taking statements from all the staff present at the time, or those who were on the trip – Appendix 2.
- The trip leader will write an incident report detailing:

The date and time of the report;
What staff/pupils were in the group/outing;
When the pupil was last seen in the group/outing;
What has taken place in the group/outing since then; and
the time it is estimated that the pupil went missing.
Actions taken to locate the pupil.
Outcome.

A conclusion is drawn as to how the incident happened and used to inform future Risk Assessments.

12. Pupils missing from home

If it is brought to our attention that a pupil has gone missing from home and it has not been reported by the parent/carer we have a duty of care to inform the police and the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership. We would then work with these agencies and their guidelines (see Children missing from Care and Home Policy).

APPENDIX 1

Emergency Incident Form and Report for Missing Child

To be used by the school in the case of an emergency or missing child.

Child's Name	
Date of Birth	
Class/ Residential Group	
Parent/Carer	
Parent/carer phone no.	
Staff phone no:	
Details of Incident	
Description of child	
Date	

Report Structure:

What staff were in the group?	
What children were in the group?	
When was the child last seen in the group and what was the estimated time of the last sighting?	
What has taken place in the group since the child was last seen?	
Actions taken to locate the child	
Outcome	
Actions to be taken for future trips	
Signed:	
Date:	

If this relates to a missing child or accident on a trip/visit or residential:

Ring Meath School on 01932 872302

Inform Principal teacher, who will inform parents and carers senior staff, office staff, Speech and Language UK leadership team.

The Principal teacher and staff under her guidance will:

13. Set up a Gathering Room for parents and carers.
14. Direct parents and carers directly into the room, ensuring that there are members of staff / governors available.
15. Ensure parents and carers have places to sit down, and inform them of the current situation.

No press are to be present, either in person or on the phone. Ensure ALL staff members know the statement to be given to the press/media enquiries:

“At this moment in time we are doing all we can to understand the incident, and inform and support the family/families”. Refer enquiries to Press and PR at Speech and Language UK Central Office.

NB: The Press must NOT come on to the school site.

APPENDIX 2

Missing Child Statements

Statements from all the staff present at the time,
or those who were on the trip

Staff Name:	
Child/ren Name/s:	
Parent/s/Carers:	
Details of incident:	
Signed:	
Date:	
SLG signature:	
Date:	