

Queen's College Preparatory School
(including Early Stage Foundation Years)

Missing Pupil

Policy Document



V2: September 2019

Review: September 2020

Missing Pupil Policy

This policy applies to staff (including volunteers), pupils and parents at Queen's College Preparatory School (the School). This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding (child protection) policy, the Supervision of Pupils policy and the DfE Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care. Where applicable, this policy is in accordance with guidance outlined in the DfE's statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (September 2019) and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (amended 2016) referred to as 'The Regulations' in this policy. This policy is applicable to all pupils.

Policy aims

Through the operation of this policy we aim to:

- promote the safety of pupils at all times
- ensure that School staff know how to respond if a pupil goes missing during the school day or on a school visit
- set out procedures for liaising with the local authority in accordance with The Regulations and in order to promote effective information sharing for the wellbeing of pupils.

For the purposes of this policy, the term 'missing' refers to a pupil being absent without authorisation or explanation.

Responsibility

The Governors delegate appropriate responsibilities for the day to day management of the School to the Headmistress. In practice, all members of staff contribute to the safety of pupils at the School by providing appropriate supervision in accordance with the School's Supervision of Pupils policy, the staff duty rota and any other directions of the Headmistress and Senior Leadership Team. Schools are under a general duty to supervise pupils to the standard of a prudent or careful parent.

As required, the Assistant Head (Pastoral) liaises with the local authority in accordance with the Regulations. Further guidance on the Regulations can be found in the DfE's statutory guidance for local authorities *Children missing in education* (September 2016).

Where reasonably possible, the school should hold more than one emergency contact number for their pupils.

The procedures outlined in this policy relating to registering pupils and pupils missing during the school day may be adapted as necessary and at the discretion of the Headmistress, Deputy Head (Academic) or Assistant Head (Pastoral).

Registering pupils

All pupils are registered electronically twice a day. The register is taken each morning at 8.35am by Form Teachers. It is taken again after lunch at 12.15pm (Period 9) for pupils in Reception – Form III, and at 12.50pm (Period 10) for pupils in Forms IV – VI. Afternoon registration is taken by the teacher conducting the first lesson after lunch.

Pupils who are late to school must sign in at the School Office and if a pupil is authorised to leave school during the school day, they are signed out by the authorised adult at the School Office.

Procedure for pupils missing from registration (see appendix 1, page 7, for summary).

If the Form Teacher (for morning registration), or the period 9/10 teacher (for afternoon registration), marks the pupil as absent the School Office Secretary will initiate the following initial investigation if a pre-authorised absence has not been recorded in the School's management information system (SchoolBase). The School Office Secretary will:

- check the list of reported absences for that day and the sign in / out sheets in the School Office
 - check the pupil's timetable for that day and visit the class they should be in. If the pupil is absent, the School Office Secretary will ask the teacher and the pupil's classmates if the whereabouts of the pupil are known. The School Office Secretary will validate any information received second hand by either contacting the parents or the pupil's Form Teacher
 - check the list of music lessons and telephone the Head of Music in case the pupil is there
 - contact the Form Teacher or the Assistant Head (Pastoral) for any information
- If the pupil cannot be found following the above investigation, the School Office Secretary will attempt to contact the pupil's parents by 10.30am to verify whether an absence should have been reported to the school.
- If the parent confirms that the child should be at school, or if the parent is unavailable, the School Office Secretary will contact the Assistant Head (Pastoral) immediately. If the Assistant Head (Pastoral) is unavailable, the Deputy Head (Academic) is contacted. The Assistant Head (Pastoral) will

initiate an extensive search of the School site with the assistance of caretakers and administrative staff as required. The missing pupil's fellow classmates and friends will be asked if they have any knowledge of the missing pupil's whereabouts and the Assistant Head (Pastoral) will gather any information.

- If the parent cannot be contacted, and the pupil is identified by the Assistant Head (Pastoral) as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern, the School Office Secretary or the PA to the Headmistress should telephone the pupil's emergency contact number.
- If the pupil is not found after the extensive search, the Headmistress will be informed immediately (if she is not already aware). In her absence, the Deputy Head (Academic) is informed.
- At this point, the Assistant Head (Pastoral), or in her absence the Deputy Head (Academic), will contact parents again if available. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the Head of Pre-Prep or Head of Prep to make contact (eg where there is a known pastoral concern which is being managed by the Head of Pre-Prep or Head of Prep. The Headmistress will be kept informed.
- If the pupil's whereabouts cannot be ascertained, the Assistant Head (Pastoral), or in her absence the Deputy Head (Academic), will discuss a course of action with the Headmistress and the parents if available and will determine whether the police should be contacted. The police will be provided with the information listed in section 7, as well as any other information reasonably requested. Where appropriate, the local social services team will also be contacted and will be given details of the missing pupil.

Procedure for pupils missing during or following a school trip or visit

The School's Educational Visits policy and detailed procedures for staff organising visits provide a framework for managing school visits, taking into account the School's safeguarding and health and safety responsibilities. Appropriate staff supervising ratios are agreed by the Assistant Head (Pastoral) and supervising arrangements will be relevant to the locality, age of pupils, type of activity and staff experience. The following procedures apply if a pupil goes missing on a school trip or visit or has not arrived at the School following a journey.

The member of staff in charge will:

- organise for accompanying staff / volunteers to search the immediate vicinity and/or the group's recent locations
- check with other pupils and ask them if they have any knowledge of the missing pupil's whereabouts.

If the pupil is not found, the member of staff in charge will contact the Assistant Head (Pastoral), or in her absence the Deputy Head (Academic). The Assistant Head (Pastoral) will contact the pupil's parents. If the trip is taking place during school holidays, the Headmistress will also be contacted. The Headmistress will agree with the member of staff in charge of the trip the procedure for contacting the pupil's parents and if necessary, the local police (see section 7).

In all instances, once the incident is resolved, a full written account of the incident must be produced by the Assistant Head (Pastoral) and the leader of the trip.

Information to be provided to the Police

When the School contacts the Police, 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
- details of any pastoral or safeguarding concerns, including suspicion of self-harm or suicidal ideation
- 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".

The information will then be passed to the various police stations through police channels and no further notifications from the School should be necessary.

The School will liaise with social services in accordance with local inter-agency procedures.

Once a pupil has been found

The attitude of professionals towards a pupil who has been missing can have a big impact on how they will engage with subsequent investigation and protection planning. A supportive approach, actively listening and responding to the pupil's needs will have a greater chance of preventing them from going missing again and

safeguarding them against other risks. If an extensive search of the School premises (or the surrounding area on a school trip) has been initiated due to a pupil going missing, the Assistant Head (Pastoral) will meet with the pupil and consider the following:

- whether the absence was deliberate or if the pupil has broken school rules in which case sanctions may apply
- whether the pupil is distressed about some element of school life and what action may need to be taken to resolve the situation
- whether there are safeguarding concerns

Persistent non-attendance (including lateness) and pupils of compulsory school age¹ leaving the School.

If a pupil does not attend school without good reason, or goes missing from school on repeat occasions and/or is late on repeat occasions, the pupil's Head of Department (Head of Pre-Prep or Head of Prep) will raise the matter with the Assistant Head (Pastoral) or the Deputy Head (Academic). They will take the necessary steps to determine whether there are any safeguarding concerns that should be addressed, meeting with the pupil and parents as appropriate.

In certain circumstances, a referral will be made to children's social services and/or the borough Admissions and Access to Education Service (AAE team) and in accordance with the School's Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy.

The Assistant Head (Pastoral) will notify the local authority's AAE team (see local authority contact below) when a pupil of compulsory school age does not attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, or fails to return to school within 10 school days after a granted leave of absence. In the event that a pupil has not attended school for 10 days or more and no explanation has been given, the pupil will not be removed from the School's admissions register until both the School and the local authority have jointly failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is. In any event, a pupil will not be removed from the register before 20 school days have elapsed and only if the School and the local authority have no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend due to sickness or other unavoidable cause.

The School is also required to notify the local authority if a pupil of compulsory school age is to be removed from the School's admissions register at a nonstandard transition point under any of the 15 grounds listed in The Regulations, which include a pupil

¹ A child is of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term immediately following their 5th birthday, when she should be legally receiving education. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the academic year in which the child has their 16th birthday.

leaving to start at another school or the pupil being withdrawn from the school by the parents. The School will also make reasonable enquiries if a child of compulsory school age has been added to the admissions register but fails to start school as a new pupil on an agreed date and will notify the local authority. Further guidance on these duties and the 15 grounds for notification can be found in the DfE's statutory guidance for local authorities Children missing education (September 2016). The School also notifies the local authority of new pupils of compulsory school age.

The local authority has put in place arrangements for the School to provide this information and the pupil data required to the Admissions and Access to Education team.

Review

This policy is reviewed annually, or as and when new statutory guidance to schools may apply, and updated as necessary. In undertaking the review, the Assistant Head (Pastoral) will take into account any records of incidents that indicate that there may be a problem with supervision, pupil support or security at the School and any issues raised by individual members of staff, parents and pupils.

Records of incidents

The Assistant Head (Pastoral) will keep a record in SchoolBase of any missing pupil incident involving the police and/or social services, and/or the local authority pupil attendance services.

Contacts

Admissions and Access to Education Team
Kensington Town Hall
2nd Floor Green Zone
Hornton Street, W8 7NX

Telephone number: 020 7745 6448

Missing.Education@RBKC.gov.uk

Admissions (for transfer of data regarding starters/leavers):

Telephone number: 020 7745 6433 schooladmissions@westminster.gov.uk

Availability of this policy

A copy of this policy may be downloaded from our website <https://www.qcps.org.uk/the-school/policies> or is available on request from the School Office, Queen's College Preparatory School, 61 Portland Place, London, W1B 1QP (tel: 020 7291 0660).

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Procedures Aimed at Reducing Risk of a Missing Pupil

- Only authorised persons have the security code to gain entry to the school building
- As girls arrive at and depart from the building staff are on duty at the front doors
- Security doors
- Front doors are opened and closed by members of staff only
- Forms are registered promptly at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions
- Parents are responsible for informing the school of any changes to the handover procedures at the end of the school day
- When leaving the school building for the Garden or elsewhere the girls are counted
- Teachers have mobile phones when outside the school building and these contact numbers are readily available in school
- When children are walking to and from the Garden or elsewhere there is the necessary adult supervision
- The Garden is a secure play area that can only be accessed by key holders
- Before leaving the Garden the girls are counted
- Girls can only leave the building at the end of the day when the parent/carer has been sighted by teacher and/or classroom assistant
- This policy is reviewed each year by the Council of Queen's College at its Annual General Meeting

Lost Child Procedure (In School)

In the unlikely event of a child going missing in school the procedure is:

- **STAY CALM** and instigate a search of the immediate area in particular areas such as toilets, cupboards and other areas of a size capable of hiding a child
- Check the doors, reception and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit
- If the child cannot be located then the Headmistress and Deputy Head must be informed that a child is missing. If both are off site then the person who is acting on their behalf must be informed
- The senior member of staff present arranges for all the other children to be satisfactorily supervised
- The Extended Leadership Team are to check premises thoroughly, including classrooms, storage areas and streets directly outside the school
- Enquiries to be made through other adults within the school and nearby vicinity
- One or more member of staff to be delegated to check local roads

If the child is still missing then the following procedure must be followed:

1. Parents must be contacted at this stage by the Headmistress or most senior member of staff available
2. Inform the Police on the number held in the office who will advise on next stage
3. Re-check all venues
4. Check by phone and/or mobiles all adults – first staff and then parents – who have recently left the premises
5. A complete account of the incident must be recorded in the Incident File
6. Staff should not speak to anyone who has no need to know or who might be a member of the media, and under no circumstances should the name of the child be divulged to any such person

7. Legal liability should not be discussed with or admitted to anyone

IF A CHILD HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM THE SCHOOL BY AN UNAUTHORISED PERSON CONTACT THE GIRL'S PARENTS AND THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY

Lost Child Procedure (Outside School)

To ensure safety on School Trips the following measures must be taken:

- All children have to have a trip consent form before being allowed on a trip
- These are held in the office
- Contact details for parents/carers to be taken on the trip so that they can be contacted in an emergency. The group leader will have a copy of these and will ensure Form Teachers have them as well
- On trips away, children will be divided into groups. The arrangement of the groups will be decided by the nature of the trip
- Each adult in charge of a group will have details of which children they are responsible for
- The children will be given a lanyard with the school's name and contact number on them
- All children will be told to stay with the adult and not to stray or go anywhere unaccompanied. If they need the loo they must ask and be taken with the group by the adult in charge
- A regular headcount will be taken of the group
- The children will be told what to do if they become separated from the group. This will depend on the nature of the trip being taken but in general it will involve telling the children to:
 1. Stay where they are as someone will come back to look for them
 2. Look around to see if they can see the group or another group from the school

3. Not to go with anyone even if they tell you they know where to find the teacher or adult they were with

In the unlikely event, when taking a headcount, a child appears to be missing the procedure is:

- **STAY CALM** and ensure the Group Leader is aware of the situation
- The group will stay still and keep together. Two adults will stay with the group and a minimum of two adults will immediately start searching for the missing child
- If the child is still missing after five minutes the staff on site will be informed, Queen's College Prep will be contacted and the Police will be called
- The group leader will be prepared to give the following information:
 1. The Group Leader's name
 2. What has happened
 3. Name, age and address of the child
 4. Time of the incident
 5. Any special medical or learning needs
- QCPS will contact the parent/carer of the missing child to inform them of what has happened and the steps that are being taken to find their child
- A search will continue to happen after calling the police and the school
- The teacher/adult involved will complete an Incident Form as fully as possible
- Teachers/adults should not speak to anyone who has no need to know or who might be a member of the media and under no circumstances should the name of the child divulged to any such person
- Legal liability should not be discussed with or admitted to anyone

School Telephone Number: 020 7291 0660

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