



ST EDMUND'S SCHOOL

CANTERBURY

Missing Pupil Procedure

Senior School

THIS POLICY SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SCHOOL SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION 2021.
THESE CAN BE FOUND ON THE SCHOOL WEBSITE HERE:
<https://www.stedmunds.org.uk/about-us/policies-inspection-reports/>

The law requires a member of staff always to be mindful of pupils' safety and welfare. Our responsibility for our pupils goes beyond the professional duty of teaching them effectively and safely; there is also a wider legal and moral "duty of care" to see that they come to no harm while they are on school premises or on a school trip. In the classroom, on duty, and while they are on the school site, therefore, we must be aware of our legal duty to provide effective and reliable supervision.

National conditions of service for teachers contain an obligation to maintain good order and discipline among their pupils and to safeguard their health and safety both when they are authorised to be on the school premises and when they are engaged in authorised school activities.

This document should be read in conjunction with the School Safeguarding Policy, the Staff Code of Conduct, the DfE publication *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, September 2021. These can all be accessed at the following link:

<https://www.stedmunds.org.uk/about-us/policies-inspection-reports/>

It is vital that staff check which children are present and which absent at the start of any lesson or activity they are supervising. Absentees may be checked against 3Sys or with The

Attendance Officer: anybody unaccountably absent from a lesson or activity whose name is not on that list may be considered to be missing.

During normal school hours

On discovering that a pupil is unaccountably missing during the school day it is the duty of a member of staff to **report the matter without delay** to the relevant Housemaster and to The Attendance Officer. If the Housemaster is not available another member of the Senior Management Team should be notified - the Deputy Head, Assistant Head, Chaplain. Staff should the School Office to see if the pupil has signed out of school.

Staff should try to establish details from the missing pupil's peers:

- Where/when the pupil was last seen
- What they were wearing at that time
- What state of mind he/she was in when last seen
- Any motive for absconding
- Likely bolt-hole on the school campus
- Likely destination if he/she has left the site

Having reported the matter and passed on any available information, the priority for a member of staff is to supervise the remaining children in their care.

The Senior Management will carry out the 'missing pupil procedure' as follows.

1. Check with the Attendance Officer and School Office that there is no obvious or known reason for absence.
2. Gather a small group of available adults & delegate the following tasks:

Telephone all the departments in school where a pupil might possibly be: Medical Centre, Music Dept, Science Dept, Art/Technology Depts, Senior IT Dept, EFL, Curriculum Support, Chaplain.

Check the following places (using help where possible from Housemasters/Deputies and Prefects): All Boarding Areas, All Changing Rooms, Chapel, Old Gym, Sportshall, School Hall, Junior School and Pre-Prep, The Jackman Field, The Astro and Tennis Courts, 'The Sheeps' Field', Library/IT, Music Block, Classroom Blocks.

3. Inform The Head that a pupil is missing & request Sixth Form assistance to comb the school campus if deemed appropriate.

Once all reasonable steps have been taken to establish that the missing pupil is not on site, the pupil's parent(s) must be informed that their child is missing. This telephone call should be made by the Housemaster or, in his/her absence, the most senior member of staff present.

As a guide, this call should be made no later than **30 minutes** after the pupil's absence has been reported. In relation to a pupil who would be deemed by the school to be a vulnerable child, the call will be made no later than 20 minutes after the pupil's absence has been reported. In all cases, the parent or guardian will be advised to remain wherever the child would expect them to be at that time of the day (ie at home or at their place of work etc.)

4. The police should be informed. Be prepared to give the following information about the missing pupil:
 - Name, age, gender
 - Description of appearance of the pupil
 - Approximate time when he/she went missing
 - What he/she is likely to be wearing
 - Where he/she might be heading
5. Once the pupil has been found, ensure that the parents and the police are informed immediately, and that all members of the school involved in the search are also aware of the outcome.
6. A report must be entered into the Housemaster's Incident Log/Pupil Tracking Sheet and entered on CPOMs.

Boarding

If a member of Senior Boarding is reported missing outside normal school hours, the Director of Boarding and Deputy Head should be informed in person or by telephone immediately whatever the time of day or night.

Missing Pupil Procedure for Boarding Duty Hours

Boarding staff may, at certain times, become concerned that a pupil is missing. This happens quite often due to appointments or illness or for reasons mentioned above. On the very rare occasion, a pupil may be missing for more serious reasons such as failing to return from town in order to spend more time with friends, or, in the worst case scenario, because they have run away.

Staff should check the following places.

- The signing in/out book located in the Boarding Office

- The Medical Centre
- With the Director of Boarding in person or by mobile phone
- By calling the pupil concerned on their mobile phone – mobile phone numbers are kept with the Director of Boarding and in the Fire Register

If the pupil is found using the final method, we must ensure that the pupil is actually where they say they are. This may mean asking them to return within a few minutes where they claim to be outside the building (this happens particularly in the summer) or by passing the phone to a responsible adult if they claim to be with their parents or guardians.

If the pupil has absented themselves and cannot be traced by the methods above, the Director of Boarding will call parents or guardians. If these calls do not provide an explanation, the Director of Boarding will, in consultation with the Deputy Head involve the Police in searching for a missing pupil.

These issues are especially pertinent when pupils return from Exeats or Holidays. A list of 'late returns' will be made available to the boarding staff on duty. If a boarder is not on that list we assume that they are not legitimately absent and begin procedures as we would at any other time of year.

If a Boarder is Discovered Missing in the Night

This would be an extremely unusual event and the member of staff alerted to the absence (ie that the boarder is not in their bedroom after 'lights out') must contact the Director of Boarding and the Deputy Head immediately. They must then contact resident staff in all boarding houses and enlist their help in going room-by-room, including bathrooms and toilet blocks in all areas. The Director of Boarding or Deputy Head will try to contact the pupil's mobile phone and then both will aid in the search as appropriate.

If the boarder is not discovered to be inside the building, boarding staff will co-ordinate to allow for a search party to extend into the grounds while not leaving the remainder of the community unattended. At this point the Director of Boarding will contact parents or guardians of the missing boarder while the Deputy Head will contact the Head and the police.

Outings, Trips, Expeditions, Holidays etc

If a pupil goes missing whilst away from school on a day or residential trip (abroad included), the member of staff in charge of the trip must do the following:

Ensure the safe and proper supervision of the rest of the party. Ensure by whatever means necessary that no-one in the party telephones home to give 'bad news' as lots of other parents getting involved can badly hamper those directing the search and cause undue distress.

Organise as coherent a search of the locality as possible immediately, using available staff and any proper local support (museum staff etc).

Inform the local police.

Once certain the pupil is properly missing inform The Head and Deputy Head (or other senior manager at school), giving a brief outline of the circumstances. Leave a contact number for the SMT to contact you and have this telephone manned.

The Head or Deputy Head will then contact the pupil's parents and maintain liaison with them throughout the search.

Keep the Head or Deputy Head informed of all developments.

Follow Up

Once the pupil is found, ensure that all parties involved in the search are aware of the outcome.

The Deputy Head will write a report on the events with dates and times and a list of actions.

In following up such incidents, the School will be mindful of the broader safeguarding context and possible implications as described in *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)*:

“All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.”

The pastoral team will monitor these incidents, put appropriate responses in place and liaise with external agencies where necessary.

EOC

September 2021

1. September 2018
2. September 2019
3. September 2020
4. September 2021

Review: September 2022