



Gidea Park

PREPARATORY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Safeguarding: Children Absent From Education

Inc procedures for absent pupils

This policy applies to all staff in school, including in the EYFS

Reviewed	<i>September 2023</i>
Next review	<i>September 2024</i>
Revised by	<i>C Douglas</i>

Legal Framework

A Legal Requirement incorporated into the EYFS Statutory Framework, an ISI Reporting Standard for Independent Schools with Early Years provision, a National Minimum Standard for Boarding Schools

References:

- A: ISI, Commentary of the Regulatory Requirements, January 2017:
<https://members.theisba.org.uk/member-tools/reference-library/inspections/isi/commentary-on-the-regulatory-requirements-january-2017.aspx>
- B: Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, April 2017 (Updated Jan 2024):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>
- C: Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE guidance, September 2023:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education>
- D: Working Together to Safeguard Children, DfE guidance, 2018 (Updated 2023):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children>
- E: Signs of Abuse NSPCC fact sheet: www.nspcc.org.uk/signsofabuse
- F: CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION, DfE guidance, September 2016
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Educational and Off Site Visits Policy
- Induction for new starters

Children Absent from Education

PART ONE: ABSENT CHILD POLICY

1. General Statement.

The welfare of all our children at Gidea Park Preparatory School and Nursery is our paramount responsibility and our staffing ratios are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care. 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.

A child going missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including sexual exploitation and so called 'honour based' violence. Every member of our staff who works with children has read Part 1 and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education and is trained in how to safeguard the children in our care. This includes the importance of effective information sharing to ensure our children are safe and receiving suitable education. Where staff have concerns that a child is missing from school, this policy should be followed.

This policy was drawn up having had regard to the Independent School Regulatory Requirements (paragraph 7 and 15), Early Years Statutory Framework (paragraph 3.73) and Department for Education guidance Children Missing Education (September 2016).

We review these procedures regularly 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 young children.

2. Information for Parents

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are set out in a detailed policy document: 'Educational and Off Site Visits '. Both documents are on our website, and can be provided to parents on request. We review these policies regularly 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 very young children and read Part 1 of the DfE's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sep 2023)' guidance.

3. Pupil responsibility

Prior to any trip or visit we would also make it very clear to the pupils that they have a responsibility to behave appropriately and that they should always tell a supervising adult if anything is untoward.

4. Action to be followed by staff if a child fails to attend first day of school

All new pupils are placed on the School's admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the School has agreed that the pupil will attend the School. If a child fails to attend on the agreed date:

- a) staff must inform the Head (Designated Safeguarding Lead) without delay.
- b) The Head will call the parents to ascertain the child's whereabouts and confirm the intention to attend school.
Should the Head (Designated Safeguarding Lead) be unable to reach the parents within a reasonable timeframe/or the response be unsatisfactory/or the child has been accepted by an alternate school:
- c) The Head will notify the local authority/safeguarding partnership at the earliest opportunity.
- d) Where there are changes affecting the child (including a change of address or school), these will be reflected in the admission register. This will assist the School and external agencies when making enquiries to locate any missing children.

5. DUTY TO REPORT

The school monitors attendance closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance.

The school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.[\[1\]](#)

Where a pupil has been continuously absent without authorisation for a period of not less than 20 school days (and there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil is unwell or unable to attend because of any unavoidable cause), and the school and local authority have failed, following reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is, the school may delete the pupil's name from the admission register. The school will inform the local authority of such deletion no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register.

The school also recognises its wider reporting duties following deletions from the admission register, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, to help identify children who are missing education and/or otherwise at risk of harm.

PROCEDURES: ABSENT DURING SCHOOL DAY

6. Actions to be followed by staff if a child is not present at morning registration

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a child missing from registration is accounted for as quickly as possible.

- a) Form Teacher to check communications to ensure that school has not been made aware of absence in advance.
- b) Secretary checks registers daily and contacts parents of absent children
- c) If parents cannot be contacted, a Absent Pupil Protocol should be started (Appendix 1)

7. Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing from 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 is found to be missing, we will immediately carry out the following actions:

- d) Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children are present;
- e) Inform the Head (or Deputy in their absence)
- f) Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child;
- g) Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s);
- h) Check with school office to see if the child has been signed out by a parent or is at an activity in another part of the school;
- i) Check that the child is not with the Welfare team;
- j) Alert the School Secretary ;
- k) At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the School, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms where a small child might hide;
- l) Check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit.

If the child is still missing, the following steps should be immediately taken:

- k) 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;
- l) The Head will arrange for staff to systematically search the rest of the school premises and grounds;
- m) If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her;
- n) Where the child is still missing, the Head will immediately report this to the Havering Borough Attendance Service. 01708 431777 ews@havering.gov.uk. Where appropriate the police will also be informed.
- o) The Proprietors will be informed.

- p) The School would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
- q) Arrangements will be made for dealing with media enquiries;
- r) The insurers will be informed (this is a requirement of EYFS).
- s) A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.
- t) If the child is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

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

8. Actions to be followed immediately by staff if a child goes missing on an outing or activity

- a) An immediate head count will be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present;
- b) An adult will search the immediate vicinity;
- c) The remaining children will be taken back to school;
- d) The Head (or Deputy in their absence) will be informed by phone;
- e) The Head will ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion.
- f) Ask them to come to the venue/ the school at once if possible;
- g) If offsite, contact the venue manager and arrange a search;
- h) Where the child is still missing the Group Leader will contact the Police and will confirm this to the Head
- i) The Head will immediately report this to the Havering Safeguarding Partnership.
- j) The Proprietors will be informed.
- k) The School would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
- l) Arrangements will be made for dealing with media enquiries;
- m) The insurers will be informed (this is a requirement of EYFS).
- n) A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.
- o) If the child is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

9. Actions to be followed immediately by staff if a child does not arrive as expected for After School Club or extra-curricular activities

- a) If a child does not arrive at a club or After School Care (ASC) when they are expected to attend, the club leader or member of staff supervising ASC will notify the School Office;
- b) Club and ASC registration lists will be checked in addition to absence lists;
- c) All communications will be checked for a message regarding collection;
- d) Any sibling connections on site will be checked;
- e) All of the adults and children will be asked calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child;
- f) Often children do fail to notify the office if they have been collected but have been confirmed as attending ASC;

- g) A member of the SLT will be notified and arrangements made for one or more adults to search everywhere within the School, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms where a small child might hide. This will include the changing rooms and the child's form room;
- h) If the child has not been located, the School Secretary or member of SLT will contact the child's parents to confirm if they have been collected or have arrived home.
- i) If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff will set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her;
- j) If the child has not been found, the Child Protection Officer/Head will be informed and the Police notified;
- k) The Head will arrange for staff to conduct a further search of the rest of the school premises and grounds;
- l) The Head will decide at what point it is appropriate to inform the Proprietors;
- m) Arrangements will be made for dealing with media enquiries;

10. Actions to be followed by staff as soon as the child is found

- a) The Head and the parents will be directly informed by the member of staff managing the incident;
- b) The police and Social Services will be informed if they have been involved;
- c) An appropriate member of staff will talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child;
- d) Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing;
- e) The Head will initiate a full inquiry and require a written report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted;
- f) If the child is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE;
- g) The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements;
- h) 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 length of time that the child was missing and how s/he appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future. The report and the incident log will be kept on the pupil's file.

PART TWO: FAILURE TO COLLECT A CHILD

PART 2: Procedure to be followed by staff when a child is not collected on time

If a child is not collected within 20 minutes of the agreed collection time,

- a) we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer:
- b) the member of staff on duty 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 carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a 2-hour period, or when the premises are closing, the member of staff will:

- c) contact the Havering Child Protection Team on 01708 433222 (office hours) or 01708 433999 (out of office hours), who will make emergency arrangements for the child and will arrange for a visit to be made to the child's house and will check with the Police.
- d) 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 s/he has been collected by a parent, guardian or carer, 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/carers 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 Safeguarding Policy.

Appendix 1

Absent Pupil Protocol - To be used if a child is not present at morning registration with no explanation.

1. Secretary to call all available landline and phone numbers. To email on all available email addresses. Repeat calls every 30 minutes.
2. Log time and outcome of all calls and emails.

Time	Action	Outcome

- Keep Head informed throughout the day.
- If possible, Head or member of SLT will visit the child's home.
- Once parents are contacted and reason for absence is ascertained Secretary to complete register, inform Head and Form Teacher.