



# Old Vicarage School

## Missing Child Policy & Procedures

**This policy applies to the whole school including the EYFS.**

**This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Supervision, Minibus and Child Protection & Safeguarding Policies.**

### **Introduction**

The safety and welfare of all the pupils at the Old Vicarage School is our paramount responsibility and everyone who works at the School is aware that they must do their utmost to ensure this. Making sure the pupils are present, accounted for and safe is a vital role of the staff at the school.

**Note: A child going missing from school or from home is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow this procedure for dealing with children who go missing and refer to the Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy if appropriate.**

### **Ensuring all pupils are present during the school day**

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. Pupils are registered at the start of each day and before the start of the afternoon session. A record of their attendance is kept on the school's database system.

Parents are responsible for making sure their children come to, and are delivered to, the school safely. If a pupil is not present, the office staff will attempt to make immediate contact with the parents or carers of the pupil to establish the reason for the absence. If the school is unable to establish a reason for the absence, the Head will consider notifying the Local Authority.

Year 5 & 6 pupils may travel to school unaccompanied provided parents have advised the School in writing. The School will follow up on any non-appearance in the same way.

Staff will do informal checks on the class during the day, particularly if they are moving around, leaving the building or going on transport. A register is taken at the start of each club activity and any unexpected absence is followed up with the parents by the office staff.

### **If a child is missing during the school day**

If a member of staff is concerned that a pupil is missing they should check with the School Office or Little Vic Administrator (Little Vic pupils), to see if there is any explanation for the absence and, if not, they must inform the Head or another member of the Senior Management Team immediately who will organise a search of the premises.

If the child is still missing following an initial search of the School premises (both inside and out), the following steps will be taken:

- The Head (or in her absence, Deputy Head) will ring the child's parents for further checks.
- The child's teacher must establish where and when the child was last seen.

If the child is still missing:

- The Head (SMT member) should contact the police (by calling 101 or 999) to report a missing child. Although there is usually an explanation for a missing child, it is still better to contact the police earlier rather than later.
- If instructed to do so by the Police, the Head or Deputy will also complete a secure on-line form (link provide by Richmond AFC) to report a missing child. This form is only made available to specific organisations with safeguarding responsibilities and will provide the Police with all the essential details in one go, making it easier for them to share this information.
- Staff will undertake a further search of the rest of the school premises and grounds.
- If the pupil's home is within walking distance, a member of staff will be sent out on foot to the home address, to see if the child is walking home.

If the child is still missing:

- The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the local Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- The Head or Bursar will inform the Chair of Governors and the Safeguarding Governor.
- If the pupil is found injured, the School will make a report under RIDDOR to the HSE.

#### **Following a missing child incident:**

The Head will give a full account of events to the parents of the pupil and the Chair of Governors. The School will undertake a full written investigation of the incident up to the stage at which the child was found and, if necessary, the School's procedures will be adjusted.

The School will cooperate fully with any investigation by the local Safeguarding Children Partnership or the Police.

Old Vicarage School is a registered charity and has a duty to report any actual or alleged serious incident to the Charity Commission even if it has already been reported to the police or other regulatory agency/body.

#### **Handing over children at the end of the School day**

At the end of the School day, the form teachers or club staff wait with their pupils until they have been collected by an authorised person. Staff will only release a child into the care of a parent or other individual whose name has been notified to us in writing in advance. If such notice has not been received, the School will contact the parents before the child is released. Staff will not hand a child over, or let them go, unless a known adult is collecting.

If a pupil is being collected from an off-site sports location, the parent must physically sign their child out with the teacher before leaving the site. If a pupil is being collected by anyone other than their parent, the School is to be advised in advance in writing. If the collecting adult is not known to staff, the pupil will have to return to School with a member of staff.

Year 5 & 6 pupils are permitted to leave school or the off-site sports location unaccompanied if parents have advised the school, in writing, that they may do so.

Children are always fully supervised until they are collected.

#### **Procedures for an uncollected child**

If a child is not collected within ten to fifteen minutes of the agreed collection time, the child is sent to After-School Care where she will be safely looked after. The School will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers and, if there is no answer, the School will call the emergency contact numbers.

If there is no response from any of the contact numbers called within a 2 hour period, or when the premises are closing for the evening, the Head will contact the local Safeguarding Children Partnership (Richmond SPA) on 020 8547 5008 or 020 8770 5000 (out of hours).

Richmond SPA will make emergency arrangements for the child and liaise with the Police. The child will remain, fully supervised, in the care of school staff until collected.

The School will make a full written report of the incident.

#### **If a child goes missing during an outing (including off-site school sports lessons)**

If a child goes missing on a school outing or whilst participating in an off-site school sport session, the staff member in charge must:

- Instruct an adult to search the immediate vicinity and, if necessary, seek the help of the staff on-site or at the transport terminus.

If the missing child is found:

- The staff member in charge will comfort the child, take appropriate action if she has any injuries, and advise the Head/SMT member.

If the child is still missing, the staff member in charge must:

- Contact the Head (or SMT member) by mobile phone and explain the situation. The Head (or SMT member) will then follow the 'missing child' steps detailed above.
- Take the remaining children back to school – one member of staff is to remain at the site until given permission to leave by the Head/SMT member.

#### **If a child is not attending School**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

The School has a duty to inform the local Safeguarding Children Partnership (Richmond SPA) 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, as this may be an indicator of abuse or neglect. Richmond SPA will then make a referral to the most appropriate service.

Signed: **Gillian Linthwaite**  
Position: Headmistress

**Lucy Barnes**  
Safeguarding Governor

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