Missing student policy

Action	Policy to be reviewed annually		
	Owner	Date	Completed
Reviewed	Director of Pastoral Care	September 2023	✔
Approved	Compliance Group/High Mistress	November 2023	✔

To be published on the following:	
Staff Portal	✔
School website	✔

ST PAUL'S
GIRLS' SCHOOL

Missing student policy

Who this policy applies to

This policy applies to staff (including volunteers), students and parents at St Paul's Girls' School (school). It applies to all students, even when away from the school, e.g., on a school trip.

What this policy is for

This policy aims to:

promote the safety of students at all times
- ensure that school staff know how to respond if a student goes missing during the school day or on a school visit
- set out procedures for liaising with the local authority in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (the Regulations) and to promote effective information sharing for the wellbeing of students.

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

(i) Legal framework

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (amended 2016)
- Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2014
- DfE Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care
- DfE Children Missing in Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2016)

(ii) Other relevant school policies

- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Educational Visits Policy

(iii) Appendices
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Missing student policy

1. Responsibility

1.1   The Governors delegate appropriate responsibilities for the day-to-day management of the school to the High Mistress. In practice, all members of staff contribute to the safety of students at the school by providing appropriate supervision in accordance with the school's Supervision of Students Policy, the staff duty rota and any other directions of the High Mistress and Senior Management Team. Schools are under a general duty to supervise students to the standard of a prudent or careful parent.

1.2   As required, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) liaises with the local authority in accordance with the DFE guidance Children Missing in Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2016).

1.3   Where reasonably possible, the school should hold students' personal numbers and more than one emergency contact number for their students. Access to the students' phone number is available under student profiles on iSAMS.

2. Registering students

2.1   **Students in MIV to VI (year 7 to year 11)** are registered at 8.30 am by tutors and then at the start of every lesson. Students who arrive late (between 8:30-9:00am) will be noted by tapping in upon arrival. The Head of Year can access this data on iSAMS. Students arriving later than 9:00am will sign in at the Front Office upon arrival. If a student is authorised to leave school during the school day, they are required to sign out at reception. In addition, all students must tap into school digitally on arrival every morning.

2.2   **Students in the Senior school (years 12 and 13)** also register in the same way. Morning registration is conducted via tutors; lesson registration via individual teachers as usual. Afternoon registration is taken via one of the following methods:

- If a student has a taught lesson in period 5, they are registered by the teacher as usual

- If a student does not have a taught lesson, they must register by 1.30pm with the Senior School Administrator. All VII students are registered in this way on Friday afternoons due to the phased Friday timetable and St Paul's Programme.

2.3   Senior students are authorised to leave the school site during the day when they have no taught lessons, so long as their parents have not opposed this privilege. Students in VIII (year 13) with no afternoon lessons may leave the school for the day after pause. They are required to tap and sign out (and indicate non-return). Procedure for students in the lower and middle school (MIV – VI) missing from registration is set out in *appendix 1.*

2.4   The school uses a system that records when students tap in on arrival and departure from school using their lanyards. This information is used as part of the fire evacuation process and as a back-up to registration procedures.

3. Procedure for students MIV - VI missing from registration

3.1   If the tutor (for morning registration) or a teacher in periods 1-8 marks the student as absent, the registration officer and the Pastoral Administrator will initiate the following **initial search.** The below will be activated if a pre-authorised absence has not been recorded in the school's management information system. The Registration Officer:

- check the 'call in' list of reported absences for that day and the sign in / out sheets and muster report at reception.

- ring the Wellbeing Centre to check whether the student has reported sick or has an appointment

- check the student's timetable for that day and visit the class they should be in. If the student is absent, the Registration Officer or the Pastoral Administrator will ask the teacher and the student's classmates if the whereabouts of the student are known. The Registration Officer or the Pastoral Administrator will validate any information received second hand by either contacting the parents or the student's form tutor.

- check the list of music lessons (through the Music Department ACT report in iSAMS) and ring the music department in case the student is there and check with the library.

- ring their mobile (if they have one)

- contact the form tutor or the Head of Year (or Director of Pastoral Care in their absence) for any information.

3.2   If the student cannot be found following the above investigation, the Registration Officer or Pastoral Administrator will attempt to contact the student's parents as soon as possible and no later than 10.30am to verify whether an absence should have been reported to the school.

3.3   If the parent confirms that the child should be at school, or if the parent is unavailable, the Registration Officer or the Pastoral Administrator will contact the Head of Year immediately. If the Head of Year is unavailable, the Director of Pastoral Care is contacted. The Head of Year will initiate an **extensive search** of the school site with the assistance of caretakers and administrative staff as required. The missing student's classmates and friends will be asked if they have any knowledge of the missing student's whereabouts, and the Head of Year/DOPC/DSL will gather any information.

3.4   If the parent cannot be contacted, and the student is identified by the Head of Year/DOPC/DSL as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern, the Registration Officer or the Pastoral Administrator should phone the student's emergency contact number.

3.5   If the student is not found after the extensive search, the Director of Pastoral Care will be informed immediately (if they are not already aware). In their absence, the Senior Deputy is informed.

3.6   At this point, the Director of Pastoral Care (or in their absence, the Senior Deputy) will contact parents again if available. In some circumstances it may be appropriate for the Head of Year to make contact (e.g., where there is a known pastoral concern which is being managed by the Head of Year). The Director of Pastoral Care or Senior Deputy will be kept informed. The school will work with the parents to try to locate the student.

3.7   If the student's whereabouts cannot be ascertained, the Director of Pastoral Care (or in their absence the Senior Deputy) will discuss a course of action with 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 student.

4   Procedure for students MIV - VI missing from after-school activities

4.1   If a student misses an after-school activity for which they are registered, the member of staff in charge should alert the front office.

4.2   The front office staff will contact the Head of Year on duty and follow the procedure set out in section 3 of this policy:

- The Head of Year will call the student on their mobile

- If they do not manage to speak to the student, they will call parents

- The DSL will be made alert of the situation.

5   Procedure for students in the Senior School (VII and VIII) missing from registration *(see appendix 2 for summary)*

5.1   Arrangements for students in the Senior School seek to reflect the age and maturity of the students while providing sufficient safeguards to ensure that the school meets its welfare and pastoral responsibilities. If a senior student is registered as absent at morning registration with no pre-authorised absence the following procedures apply:

5.2   The Senior School Administrator checks the 'call in' list of reported absences for that day and the sign in / out sheets and the digital signing in report, then contacts any missing students and instructs them to report by a given time. If a student does not make contact by the given time, the Senior School Administrator will:

- contact the Wellbeing Centre, library, and the Music Department to check whether the student is there.

- visit the lesson that the student should be in or if the student had a scheduled free period, check with other senior students to obtain any information about the possible whereabouts of the student.

- attempt to contact the student again and attempt to contact parents to check whether an absence should have been reported.

5.3   If the parent confirms that the student should be at school, or the parent is unavailable, the Senior School Administrator informs the Head of Year or the Director of Senior School, who will initiate an extensive search of the school with the assistance of caretakers and administrative staff as required. If the student cannot be found, the Director of Senior School must be informed if they are not already aware. In their absence, the Director of Pastoral Care is notified.

5.4   If the parent cannot be contacted, and the student is identified by the Head of Year or Director of Pastoral Care as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern, the Registration Officer or the Pastoral Administrator should phone the student's emergency contact number.

5.5   At this point, the Director of Senior School (or in their absence, the Director of Pastoral Care) will contact parents again if available. Alternatively, it may be appropriate for the Head of Year to make contact (e.g., where there is a known pastoral concern being managed by the Head of Year) but the Director of Senior School will be kept informed. The school will work with the parents to try to locate the student.

5.6   If the student's whereabouts cannot be ascertained, the Director of Senior School (or in their absence, the Director of Pastoral Care) will discuss a course of action with 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.

5.7   Senior students absent in the afternoons are investigated by the Senior School Administrator, staff and senior tutors as appropriate. Students with unauthorised absences or who have not followed signing in / out procedures in the afternoon may face appropriate sanction.

5.8   Questions to be asked, in all cases:
– When and where were they last seen?
– Who were they with?
– Where might they have gone?
– What emotional state did they appear to be in?
– Has anything upset them recently?
– Did they speak to anyone about leaving?
– Did they message any of their friends about leaving?
– Who are their main friends at school?

6   Procedure for students missing during or following a school trip or visit

6.1   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 Director of Co-Curriculum and supervising arrangements will be relevant to the locality, age of students, type of activity and staff experience. The following procedures apply if a student goes missing on a school trip or visit or has not arrived at the school following a journey.

6.2   The member of staff in charge will:

- attempt to contact the student
- organise for accompanying staff / volunteers to search the immediate vicinity and/or the group's recent locations
- check whether there were any delays or changes to the journey
- check with other students and ask them if they have any knowledge of the missing student's whereabouts.

6.3   If the student is not found, the member of staff in charge will contact the Director of Pastoral Care (or in her absence, the Director of Co-curriculum). The Director of Pastoral Care will contact the student's parents. If the trip is taking place during school holidays, the designated senior staff contact for the trip will be contacted. The Director of Pastoral Care / senior staff contact will agree with the member of staff in charge of the trip the procedure for contacting the student's parents and if necessary, the local police (see section 7).

6.4   In all instances, once the incident is resolved, a full written account of the incident must be produced by the Director of Pastoral Care or the Deputy who took responsibility for the incident and recorded on CPOMS.

7   Information to be provided to the Police

7.1   When the school contacts the Police, the following information should be provided:

- the student's name
- the student's age
- an up-to-date photograph if possible
- the student's height, physical description, and any distinguishing physical features
- any disability, learning difficulty or special educational needs that the student may have
- details of any pastoral or safeguarding concerns, including suspicion of self-harm or suicidal ideation
- the student's home address and telephone number
- a description of the clothing the student is thought to be wearing
- any relevant comments made by the student such as "I'm going to run away".

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

7.3   The school will liaise with social services in accordance with local multi-agency procedures.

8 Once a student has been found

8.1 The attitude of professionals towards a student 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 student's needs will have a greater chance of preventing them from going missing again and safeguarding them against other risks.

8.2 If an extensive search of the school premises (or the surrounding area on a school trip) has been initiated due to a student going missing, the Head of Year will meet with the student and consider the following:

- whether the absence was deliberate or if the student has broken school rules in which case sanctions may apply

- whether the student 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, in which case the matter will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads.

9 Persistent non-attendance (including lateness) and students of compulsory school age[1] leaving the school

9.1 We recognise that absence from school may be a welfare or safeguarding concern. If a student does not attend school without a good reason or goes missing from school on repeat occasions and/or is late on repeat occasions, the student's Head of Year will raise the matter with the Director of Pastoral Care/DSL or the Director of Senior School. The Director of Pastoral Care/DSL or Director of Senior School will take the necessary steps to determine whether there are any safeguarding concerns that should be addressed, meeting with the student and parents as appropriate. The threshold for identifying a potential welfare or safeguarding concern is lower than 90% attendance considered on a half term basis. In certain circumstances (including a potential welfare safeguarding concern relating to attendance), a referral will be made to children's social services (family support) and/or the borough ACE[2] team (who may issue a penalty notice warning), and in accordance with the school's Safeguarding (Child Protection) policy.

9.2 The DSL will notify the local authority's ACE team (see local authority contact below) when a student 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. If a student has not attended school for 10 days or more and no explanation has been given, the student 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 student is. In any event, a student 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 student is unable to attend due to sickness or other unavoidable causes.

9.3 The school is also required to notify the local authority's Admissions and School Planning team if a student 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 (part 8), which include a student leaving to start at another school or the student 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

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[1] A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach eighteen.

[2] **ACE** stands for the attendance (statutory), child employment & entertainment, elective home education and children missing education **team.**

fails to start school as a new student 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 (2016) (See Appendix 3)*. The school also notifies the local authority of new students of compulsory school age.

9.4   We are also required to follow up on any student who leaves or joins the school at non-standard times. We are required to contact the school they are leaving or joining and acquire confirmation of their either attending the school they are leaving or being added to the school roll of the school they are joining. A record of all leavers and joiners at non-standard times is kept by the DSL. If the student has a safeguarding file, it will be requested or passed to the new school as appropriate. A record of receipt of safeguarding files is also kept by the DSL.

9.5   We are required to confirm the primary school attendance of all new joiners in Year 7 in addition to requesting and confirming receipt of any safeguarding file attached to a student. A record of confirmation of this for all new joiners in Year 7 is kept by the DSL.

9.6   The local authority has put in place arrangements for the school to provide this information and the student data required to the Admissions and School Place Planning team.

10   Review

10.1   This policy is reviewed biennially or as and when new statutory guidance to schools may apply and updated as necessary. In undertaking the review, the Director of Pastoral Care/DSL will take into account any records of incidents that indicate that there may be a problem with supervision, student support or security at the school and any issues raised by individual members of staff, parents and students.

11   Records of incidents

11.1   The Director of Pastoral Care will keep a record in MyConcern of any missing student incident involving the police and/or social services, and/or the local authority pupil attendance services.

12   Contacts

Hammersmith & Fulham ACE Team 3rd Floor, 145 King Street, London W6 9XY **Elizabeth (Liz) Spearman** – Hammersmith and Fulham Head of ACE and Admissions Direct Line: 020 8753 6231 elizabeth.spearman@lbhf.gov.uk	
Family Support 020 8753 6600 Familyservices@lbhf.gov.uk To report unauthorised absences which take attendance below 90%, and where the family may need support,	
Admissions (for transfer of data regarding starters/leavers):	Telephone number: 0208 753 1085
CME (for students missing education)	**Kathy Costello** - CME and EHE Data Officer Direct Line: 020 8753 6268 kathy.costello@lbhf.gov.uk

13   Publication

13.1 This policy is provided to all staff via the Staff Portal. Parents may request a copy from the school or view the policy on the school website. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible formats if required.

Availability of this policy

A copy of this policy may be downloaded from our website or is available on request from the school office, St Paul's Girls' School, Brook Green, London, W6 7BS (tel: 0207 603 2288). This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Flow chart for staff: procedures for students missing from registration (MIV – VI)

Tutors/teachers register students

Policy section 3

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Pastoral Administrator / Registration Officer check absences and initiate search if required

Policy section 4

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Pastoral Administrator / Registration Officer attempts to contact student's parents if student cannot be found. Attempt to call the student's mobile.

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Pastoral Administrator / Registration Officer contacts head of year if parents confirm student should be at school, or if the parents cannot be contacted. Head of Year initiates an extensive search. Emergency contact to be called if parents cannot be contacted and if there is a safeguarding / welfare concern.

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Director of Pastoral Care/DSL is notified if student cannot be found.

Policy section 4.3

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Director of Pastoral Care/DSL will discuss a course of action with the student's parents. If parents are not available, the Director of Pastoral Care/DSL will decide on the appropriate course of action and call the police.

Flow chart for staff: procedures for students missing from morning registration (Senior school)

Tutors/teachers/senior school administrator register students

Policy section 3

Senior School Administrator checks absences and sign in/out sheets

Policy section 5.1

Senior School Administrator tries to make contact with any 'missing' students and tells them to report to the senior school by a given time

Policy section 5.1

Senior School Administrator initiates search for any missing student. If not found, Director of Senior School will be notified and will initiate an extensive search

Policy section 5.2

If student's whereabouts cannot be ascertained, the Director of Senior School will discuss a course of action with the parents if available

Policy section 5.4

If parents are not available, the Director of Senior School will decide on the appropriate course of action, in conjunction with the Director of Pastoral Care/DSL.