



King's Academy Ringmer

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“in pursuit of excellence”

Missing Child Policy

Date: agreed at FG on 17 September 2019, reviewed at FG on 28 September 2021 and in July 2023

Review date: July 2024

Emergency Procedures When a Student is Discovered to be Missing

Introduction

This policy is written and should be read in conjunction with the whole school health and safety policy. It also is linked to the whole school safeguarding policy.

Purpose and Aims of this Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy statement is to give all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, a clear understanding of how to respond and who to inform, should they discover a student is missing.

The aims of this policy statement are to:

- provide a clear procedure which is understood and effectively implemented by all staff
- enable the missing student to be located as quickly as possible and given the appropriate level of safety and security commensurate with the student's age and emotional/behavioural maturity.

Occasions when a student may go missing

Staff need to be mindful that a student can go missing at any time of the day. These times and examples of the occasions providing opportunities for a student to go missing are:-

a) From an indoor lesson

This could occur when a student is allowed to leave the classroom unaccompanied by an adult and fails to return:

- to go to the toilet
- having been parked
- undertaking errands for the teacher
- leaving due to conflict with staff or other students

b) From an outdoor lesson

This could occur when outside the building with the students spread out and/or engaged in a variety of activities that make it is easy for a student to wander away unnoticed:

- during PE lessons
- during other outdoor lessons
- at the beginning or end of outdoor lessons when students are getting changed or using the toilet or drinking fountains

c) Other Times

These include:

- at the start of the school day when students are freely moving about the grounds and building
- in between lessons
- at break and lunch times
- at the end of the school day when students and parents are freely moving about

Upon Discovering a student is Missing

It is important that the person discovering a student is missing knows what to do. What action is taken depends on who discovers the student is missing. Therefore, the following action should be taken by the following personnel:

The Teacher will:

- Always complete the lesson register within the first 10 minutes of tutor time/the lesson
- Check with other students to see if they are aware of any reason for the absence.
- Inform the Reception immediately they have a concern, to see if the student has signed out or there has been an error on sims and the student is actually absent that day.
- Inform the Reception immediately should the student reappear at any point.

Any staff noticing Missing Student

Follow the 'On Call' Procedure

- Staff to contact the Reception who will contact the 'On Call' designated person on ROTA.
- Staff should state the name of the student and what he/she was last seen doing and where, and how long since they last saw the student.
- If initial enquiries confirm the student is missing, On Call or Reception staff will inform **Pastoral staff and SLT**. They will begin a wider search of the school buildings and grounds including searching public areas in other parts of the school e.g. library areas, toilet and cloakroom areas, corridors, hall and grounds.
- If this search does not discover the missing student within a reasonable time the team must inform the Principal (directly or via Reception) of the missing student and the facts surrounding the student's disappearance.

IF THE STUDENT HAS NOT BEEN LOCATED WITHIN 45 MINUTES or EARLIER IF THERE IS A CONCERN OF HARM

Reception/ On Call staff will:

- Inform the Principal of the missing student and then await further instructions.
- They will not take part in the search but will instead contact the student's parents when instructed by the Principal to do so and inform them of the situation and enquire if the student has returned home.
- They will then hand communication with the parents over to the Principal unless directed otherwise by the Principal. If the parents cannot be contacted the Reception/ Pastoral staff will, if directed to do so by the Principal, telephone the police, social services and Chairman of the school governors to inform them of the missing student and giving them such information as they may request.
- The school staff, including the Principal, will then continue the search as directed by the police and the Reception/ Pastoral staff will continue to try to contact the student's parents.

The Principal/Designated member of SLT will:

- Take charge of the situation.
- They will instruct the Reception/Pastoral staff to contact the student's parents and inform them of the situation and to enquire if the student has returned home.
- If the student is at home the parents will be informed by telephone of the known facts surrounding the student going missing.
- If the student is not at home the Principal will, in consultation with the parents, begin a search outside of the school premises.
- If the parents cannot be contacted at home the Principal (or other adults as directed by the Principal) will begin a search outside of the school's immediate premises. This may include a visit to the student's home if this is near the school.
- If the student is not found and the parents cannot be contacted the Principal (or other staff if so directed by the Principal) will inform the police and, as appropriate, the social services and the Chairman of Governors of the student's disappearance.
- Thereafter the Principal will follow the instructions of the police regarding the continuation of the search for the student.

Missing Students Seen Running Off the Premises

If, during the search, the missing student is seen leaving the premises:

- the member of staff witnessing this must inform the most senior member of staff immediately available or, if none is available, send a message to the Reception via a reliable messenger without losing sight of the student if possible.

As a general rule staff should not pursue a student beyond the school boundary. Instead they should report to SLT where they last saw the student and the direction the student was heading so that this information can be communicated to the parents or police as appropriate. The member of staff should then return to their normal duties unless directed otherwise by SLT.

In certain circumstances it may be appropriate for the member of staff to go beyond the school boundary, e.g. to retrieve a student who has accidentally wandered out of an open gate, or to follow/retrieve a student with special needs who has deliberately left the premises but in doing so does not understand the gravity of their action.

- Staff are expected to use their professional discretion in deciding whether or not it is appropriate to go beyond the school boundary in pursuance of such students.
- If a student is followed beyond the school boundary the member of staff must behave in a manner that is not threatening to the student.
- They must not run after the student as this may cause the student to run into a dangerous situation, e.g. the student might run into a road without looking out for traffic in an attempt to evade the pursuing, running adult.

In exceptional circumstances where a student is known to be liable to run off the premises, the school may prepare and enact contingency search plans involving named staff. When enacting these plans staff should be mindful not to put themselves or the student at risk.

Investigations

When a missing student has been located and safely returned to school, the student's family or the police and a designated member of SLT will conduct an investigation into the circumstances of the student going missing. This is in order to identify any factors that need to be addressed by the school or communicated to the parents to prevent a recurrence of the student going missing.

Management of policy

The King's Group Academies Trustees has overall responsibility for the maintenance and operation of this policy. They will maintain a record of concerns raised and the outcomes.

King's Group Academies policies will be reviewed regularly and will include an evaluation for impact on workload and working hours.