

# Missing Student and Children who are Absent from Education Policy

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*THIS POLICY REFERS TO ALL STUDENTS INCLUDING THOSE IN EYFS*

*TO BE READ ALONGSIDE THE SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY*

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## **Policy Statement**

### **1.1 Policy aims:**

Through the operation of this policy we aim to:

- 1.1.1 Protect the health and safety of students at the School;
- 1.1.2 Ensure that School staff know how to respond if a student goes missing.

### **1.2 Scope:**

This policy:

- 1.2.1 Applies to staff (including volunteers), students and parents at Nottingham High School
- 1.2.2 Should be read with the NHS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- 1.2.3 Is a mandatory requirement of Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2023)

### **1.3 Introduction**

- 1.3.1 The welfare of all of our children at Nottingham High school is our paramount responsibility. A child who is absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including child sexual and/or criminal exploitation and county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. 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. This includes the importance of effective information sharing to ensure our children are safe and receiving suitable education. 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. Where staff have concerns that a child is missing or absent from education, this policy should be followed.
- 1.3.2 Every member of our staff who works with children has read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care.
- 1.3.3 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), Working together to improve school attendance (May 2022) and Department for Education guidance Children Missing Education (September 2016).

## 2. Responsibility

- 2.1 The Governors delegate appropriate responsibilities for the day to day management of the School to the Head. In practice, all members of staff contribute to the safety of students at the School by providing appropriate supervision in accordance with the directions of the Head and Senior Management Team. Schools are under a general duty to supervise students to the standard of a prudent or careful parent. Any member of staff who notices a student is missing or sees a student in a place where the student should not be has a duty to inform a member of SMT and Reception without delay.

## 3. Procedure for student missing during the day

Some of these procedures may run concurrently. The School will always consider the wider circumstances around a child going missing from School and whether there are wider safeguarding concerns that may need to be addressed in line with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

### Senior School

*A student may be reported missing after being present in School earlier in the day or following a phone call to parents to question a morning absence.*

- 3.1 Staff alerted to a lost child will immediately inform members of SMT and Reception. The most senior member of staff present will coordinate the search from a central position, usually Reception. Notes will be made of circumstances and times when the student went missing as information becomes available.
- 3.2 The Senior Member of staff or Student Services will notify Security immediately.
- 3.3 Student Services will then, with help from any available staff;
- Confirm with registering staff and classmates that the student was definitely absent
  - Contact the School Nurse to check whether the student has reported sick or has an appointment
  - Contact the Music Department and the Library in case the student is there
- 3.4 If the student cannot be found following the above investigation, the most senior member of staff present will notify the Deputy Head (Individuals), as the Designated Senior Person (Safeguarding lead), or, in their absence, the Assistant Head (Individuals), and will conduct an initial search using assistance from Reception and available staff. The Head will be kept informed by the most senior member of staff present.
- 3.5 As part of the initial search process, the student's friends and their classmates will be asked if they have any knowledge of the missing student's whereabouts. All relevant adults on the premises will be alerted, by the most appropriate means, of the situation (in person, by phone or via email).
- 3.6 All areas of the building will be searched by staff, coordinated by the most senior member of staff, usually from Reception.

- 3.7 If the student is found on site or in the vicinity, the School staff will make a concerted effort to persuade the student to return to the School. If the student refuses to do so, staff members at the scene will attempt to continue to monitor the student's whereabouts. Staff should consider contacting the parents in such circumstances. A DSL or DDSL should be informed.
- 3.8 If the student is not found after the initial search, a Deputy Head, or, in their absence, the Assistant Head (Individuals), will contact the student's parents at this point. All decisions on contacting parents should be made by a member of SMT.
- 3.9 If the initial search is unsuccessful, a Deputy Head, or, in their absence, the Assistant Head (Individuals), will contact the police after consultation with the parents (where appropriate) and provide the police with the information listed in Section 5, as well as any other information reasonably requested by the police. A decision will be taken in accordance with the School's child protection policy and procedures as to whether the School should also contact children's social care in line with local procedures. A full record of the events will be kept and filed securely with the safeguarding file. This record will be written by the lead member of the Senior Management Team.

### **Infant and Junior School**

- 3.10 In the Junior School, staff alerted to a lost child will initiate an immediate search of the area which should include contacting the Music Department and School Nurse.
- 3.11 Staff will call Security and a member of staff will be placed at each of the gates to ensure no one leaves.
- 3.12 Staff will call the Head or Deputy Heads to inform.
- 3.13 If the student is IJS – a member of Senior School SMT should be informed to provide assistance.
- 3.14 All adults on the premises will be alerted of the situation and a search will be organised by the most senior member of staff.
- 3.15 All areas of the building will be searched by staff.
- 3.16 A member of staff will be responsible to look after the other students and keeping the situation calm.
- 3.17 A note will be made of circumstances and times when the student went missing on the proforma.
- 3.18 Police and parents will be contacted by the most senior member of staff available.

### **Infant School**

- 3.19 In the Infant School, all available staff will initiate an immediate search of the school buildings and grounds.
- 3.20 The School caretaker will be alerted to ensure that all gates are locked and the gates to Albert Street and shut and manned.
- 3.21 Staff will call the Head or Deputy Heads to inform.

- 3.22 If the Head of Deputy is not on site, the most senior member of staff [Head of KS1 or EYFS] takes charge.
- 3.23 Staff will call Security on the main School site to alert them.
- 3.24 If necessary, a member of Senior School SMT should be informed to provide assistance.
- 3.25 All adults on the premises will be alerted of the situation and a search will be organised by the most senior member of staff.
- 3.26 All areas of the building will be searched by staff.
- 3.27 A member of staff will be responsible to look after the other students and keeping the situation calm.
- 3.28 A note will be made of circumstances and times when the students went missing on the proforma.
- 3.29 Police and parents will be contacted by the most senior member of staff available.

#### **4. Procedure for students missing during a school trip or during or following a journey**

*If a student is missing from a school trip or has not arrived at the School following a journey, the member of staff in charge will:*

##### **Senior School**

- 4.1 Make a plan with all supervising staff – have specific times to meet and review. Do not rely completely on communication via mobile phones.
- 4.2 Manage and brief the rest of the group, allocating a member of staff or more to the supervision of this group depending on its size.
- 4.3 Ensure a system for communication between staff and base.
- 4.4 Staff will alert the management of the venue (if there is one) and ensure that exit routes are manned and all venue staff are aware of the missing child.
- 4.5 If possible, staff will ask for an intercom message to be broadcast in the venue to alert the student to seek appropriate help.
- 4.6 All spare adults on the premises or with the trip, will be alerted of the situation and a search will be organised by the most senior member of staff.
- 4.7 Contact School contact – who will inform parent when appropriate following discussion with the Head or Deputy Head (if the Head is unavailable).
- 4.8 Contact local emergency services and tour operator; notify the British Embassy/Consulate if an emergency occurs abroad.
- 4.9 Manage communication by rest of group; explain why you will not allow students to phone home. Direct media to the Headmaster
- 4.10 Record in writing – nature, date and time of incident; location of incident; names of casualties and details of their injuries; names of others involved so that parents can be reassured; action taken so far; action yet to be taken (and by whom)
- 4.11 No-one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties, nor sign anything relating to accident liability without clear advice from the Headmaster.

## **Infant and Junior School**

- 4.12 All IJS students on off-site visits wear wrist bands linking them to the School.
- 4.13 Where possible, the trip leader will manage and direct the situation.
- 4.14 Staff alerted to lost child will initiate an immediate search of the area.
- 4.15 Staff will alert the management of the venue (if there is one) and ensure that exits routes are manned and all venue staff are aware of the missing child.
- 4.16 If possible, staff will ask for an intercom message to be broadcast in the venue to alert the child to seek appropriate help.
- 4.17 All spare adults on the premises or with the trip, will be alerted of the situation and a search will be organised by the most senior member of staff.
- 4.18 Staff will call the Head or Deputy Heads to inform. If the student is IJS, a senior member of staff will inform a member of Senior School SMT.
- 4.19 A member of staff will be responsible to look after the other students and keeping the situation calm.
- 4.20 A note will be made of circumstances and times when the student went missing on the proforma.
- 4.21 Police and parents will be contacted by the most senior member of staff available.
- 4.22 Staff will alert Head or Deputy Heads to update.
- 4.23 Communication will be maintained between the School and staff off-site.

## **5. Information to be provided to the Police**

- 5.1 When the School contacts the Police during the day or night, the following information should be provided:
- 5.2 the student's name
- 5.3 the student's age
- 5.4 an up to date photograph if possible
- 5.5 the student's height, physical description and any physical peculiarities
- 5.6 any disability, learning difficulty or special educational needs that the student may have
- 5.7 the student's home address and telephone number and let it be known if the parents are aware at this stage.
- 5.8 a description of the clothing the student is thought to be wearing
- 5.9 any relevant comments made by the student.
- 5.10 The information will then be passed to the various police stations through police channels and no further notifications from the School should be necessary.

## **6. Review**

- 6.1 This policy shall be reviewed every year as part of the School's annual review of safeguarding, and updated as necessary. In undertaking the review, the Deputy Head (Individuals) will consider any incidents in the Missing Student Incident Book 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.

## **7. Missing student incident record**

- 7.1 The School must keep a full written record, to be held centrally at Student Services and with the main file of any incident of a missing student including:
- 7.2 the student's name;
- 7.3 relevant dates and times (eg when it was first noticed that the student was missing);
- 7.4 the action taken to find the student;
- 7.5 whether the Police or children's social care were involved;
- 7.6 outcome or resolution of the incident;
- 7.7 any reasons given by the student for being missing;
- 7.8 any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident;
- 7.9 a record of the staff involved;
- 7.10 a full written record of the incident will be kept of the student's file.



## Children who are absent from education

These procedures apply to both the Infant and Junior School and the Senior School. Any student that arrives or leaves after the first day of the autumn term, and before the final day of the Summer term should be treated as a non-standard transition.

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

All new students are placed on the School's admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the School has agreed that the student will attend the School. If a child fails to attend on the agreed date, staff must inform Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

The School's admission register, also known as the school roll, contains specific personal details of every student in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the School, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The School also has an attendance register which records student attendance.

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.

Registers are legal records. The School will preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry.

### 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 student 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 without permission.

In addition, the School recognises its wider reporting duties following deletions from the admission register, in accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, to help identify children who are absent from education and/or otherwise at risk of harm.

The School also recognises that children who are absent from education particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. The School's response to persistently absent students supports identifying such abuse, and helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child who are absent from education in the future.

## 8. Procedure for a student arriving new into the school

Year Group	Transition Point	
R	Standard	
1	Non-standard	
2	Non-standard	
3	Non-standard	
4	Non-standard	
5	Non-standard	
6	Non-standard	
7	Standard	
8	Non-standard	
9	Non-standard	
10	Non-standard	
11	Non-standard	
12	Standard	
13	Non-standard	

- 8.1 The Data Manager will ensure a student is on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day the child is expected to start at the school.
- 8.2 If the student is joining at a non-standard transition point, the Deputy Head (Individuals) will supervise informing the LEA within 5 days of the student arriving at the school.
- 8.3 If the student is joining at a standard transition point from our own Infant and Junior School, such as into Year 7 from Year 6, the Deputy Head (Individuals) will supervise informing the LEA as soon as practicable.
- 8.4 If a new student does not turn up on the first day they are expected, staff will make reasonable enquiries as per the above *Action to be followed by staff if a child fails to attend first day of school*.

## 9. Procedure for a student leaving the school

Year Group	Transition Point
R	Non-standard
1	Non-standard
2	Non-standard
3	Non-standard
4	Non-standard
5	Non-standard
6	Standard
7	Non-standard
8	Non-standard
9	Non-standard
10	Non-standard
11	Standard

12	Non-standard*
13	Standard*

\*not required to inform Education Welfare Officer

- 9.1 The Deputy Head (Individuals) will supervise the notification of the LEA immediately if the child leaves at a non-standard transition point.
  - 9.1.1 This must occur no later than at the time the child is removed from the admissions register.
- 9.2 The LEA must be informed with the following information:
  - 9.2.1 The full name of the student
  - 9.2.2 The full name and address of any parent with whom the student normally resides
  - 9.2.3 At least one telephone number of the parent
  - 9.2.4 The student's future address and the full name of any parent with whom the student will reside, if applicable
  - 9.2.5 The date the student left the school
  - 9.2.6 The student's destination school, and the date on which the student is expected to start
  - 9.2.7 The ground in regulation 8 under which the student's name is to be removed from the admission register.
  - 9.2.8 As per local Nottingham City Council guidance, if the student is moving abroad, the LA will also be provided with the forwarding address and flight numbers where possible.
- 9.3 If a student leaves the school without notice the School will:
  - 9.3.1 Work alongside the LEA to make reasonable enquires to establish the whereabouts of the student
  - 9.3.2 Complete a CME referral to the Local Authority of the student's home address
  - 9.3.3 Collect and collate information regarding the student and their family to forward to the LA of the student's home address
    - 9.3.3.1 Nottingham County Council have previously requested the following information:
      - 9.3.3.1.1 Information regarding the move, including whether it appeared planned and reasons for moving
      - 9.3.3.1.2 Any safeguarding, attendance and engagement concerns
      - 9.3.3.1.3 Future education
      - 9.3.3.1.4 Contact details for parents
      - 9.3.3.1.5 Information regarding siblings
      - 9.3.3.1.6 Confirmation from friends who may remain in touch that the student has arrived safely and is settled.

## 10. Home-schooling

- 10.1 If a parent verbally indicates that they will remove a student to be home-schooled, staff will inform the Deputy Head (Individuals) who will determine whether the LEA needs to be informed.
- 10.2 If a parent gives written confirmation that they are removing a student to be home-schooled, the Deputy Head (Individuals) will supervise the removal of the student from the admissions register, and informing the LEA.

## **11. Extended Periods of Absence**

- 11.1 Students can be removed from the admissions register if, without the school having knowledge of the cause and following reasonable enquiries made jointly with the LA, they are either:
  - 11.1.1 Absent for 20 consecutive days
  - 11.1.2 Absent for 10 consecutive days following an authorised absence.
- 11.2 The Deputy Head (Individuals) will supervise informing the LEA if either of the above criteria are met.
  - 11.2.1 The School will work with the LEA to attempt to determine the whereabouts of the child; the student will be removed from the admissions register when one or more of the following actions has been completed either by the school alone, or jointly with the LEA. Details of the action will be recorded and maintained in the student file. This is not an exhaustive list.
  - 11.2.2 Contact parents/relatives/neighbours using known contact details
  - 11.2.3 Check with UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) and/or the Border Force
  - 11.2.4 Check with agencies known to be involved with the family
  - 11.2.5 Check with the local authority and school from which the child moved originally, if known
  - 11.2.6 Check with the LA where the child lives, if different from the LA of the school
- 11.3 In the case of Service Personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS).
- 11.4 As per local Nottingham City Council guidance, where a student is absent for an extended period of time during the school term, where possible the School will obtain:
  - 11.4.1 The address where the student will be staying
  - 11.4.2 A return date
  - 11.4.3 Outgoing and return flight numbers, where relevant
  - 11.4.4 Any email addresses used by the parent and/or student
  - 11.4.5 Any emergency contact details

## **12. Exclusion**

- 12.1 If a student is excluded for a fixed period lasting more than five days, on the sixth day, the school must arrange alternative, full-time education.

## **13. Reasons to remove a child from the admissions register:**

1	8(1)(a) - where the student is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
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2	8(1)(b) - except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the student should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he/she has been registered as a student at another school.
3	8(1)(c) - where a student is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he/she has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he/she is registered has given consent to the deletion.
4	8(1)(d) - in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he/she has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the student is receiving education otherwise than at school.
5	8(1)(e) - except in the case of a boarder, that he/she has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he/she is registered.
6	<p>8(1)(f) - in the case of a student granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that —</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the student has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted;</li> <li>(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and</li> <li>(iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the student is.</li> </ul>
7	8(1)(g) - that he/she is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
8	8(1)(h) - that he/she has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and —
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) at no time was his/her absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);</li> <li>(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and</li> </ul>

	(iii) the proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the student is.
9	8(1)(i) - that he/she is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student will return to the school at the end of that period.
10	8(1)(j) - that the student has died.
11	8(1)(k) - that the student will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and—  (i) the relevant person has indicated that the student will cease to attend the school; or  (ii) the student does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form.
12	8(1)(l) - in the case of a student at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he/she has ceased to be a student of the school.
13	8(1)(m) - that he/she has been permanently excluded from the school.
14	8(1)(n) - where the student has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he/she has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.
15	8(1)(o) where—  (i) the student is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy;  (ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the student; and  (iii) those charges remain unpaid by the student's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.

## Appendix

### Missing student incident record

- 13.1 The School must keep a full written record, to be held centrally at Reception with the safeguarding file of any incident of a missing student including:
- 13.2 the student's name;
- 13.3 relevant dates and times (eg when it was first noticed that the student was missing);
- 13.4 the action taken to find the student;
- 13.5 whether the Police or children's social care were involved;
- 13.6 outcome or resolution of the incident;
- 13.7 any reasons given by the student for being missing;
- 13.8 any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident;
- 13.9 a record of the staff involved;
- 13.10 a full written record of the incident will be kept of the student's file.

Date of record	
Person making record	
The student's name;	
Relevant dates and times (eg when it was first noticed that the student was missing);	
The action taken to find the student;	
Whether the Police or children's social care were involved;	
Outcome or resolution of the incident;	

Any reasons given by the student for being missing;	
Any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident;	
A record of the staff involved;	
A full written record of the incident will be kept of the student's file. Is this on file?	