



# ST MARY'S SCHOOL HAMPSTEAD

**Missing Children POLICY**

**September 2023**

Reviewed September 2023  
Next Review Date: September 2024

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

St Mary's School seeks to provide an education firmly founded on Christ and the Catholic Faith.

Spiritual and moral principles are nurtured in a way that is reflected in daily life.

Within a happy and caring environment and based on the recognition of the dignity and worth of each child, high standards are expected and pursued. Intellectual development is emphasised and fostered along with the pursuit of academic excellence.

St Mary's values the unique contribution of every child within the school community.

St Mary's aims to encourage an active partnership between home, school, parish and the wider community.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The welfare of all of our children at St Mary's School, Hampstead is our paramount responsibility. A child going missing 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 from school, this policy should be followed.

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.

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).

## EYFS

### **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are set out as part of the School's Health and Safety Policy which is on our website and can be provided to parents on request. We review this policy regularly (at least once a year) 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 at least Part 1 of KCSIE, or at least Annex A of KCSIE, if their role does not require them to work directly with children.

### **ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM THE 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 were found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- Check the sick bay
- Check with the School Secretary who will check the signing out/in book
- Inform the Headmistress or the Deputy Head in the absence of the Headmistress
- Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child
- Check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) with a relevant activity
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the EYFS Department, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms etc. where a small child might hide

A record is kept by the School of any instances in which a pupil is missing from school without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the pupil's explanation.

If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken without delay:

- Inform the Headmistress and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Ask the Headmistress 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
- The DSL/Headmistress would immediately notify the Police
- The Headmistress would arrange for staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds
- If the child's home is within walking distance, may be asked to check to see if the child has gone home. They would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with the child
- The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the school's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- The School would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- Inform the Chair of Governors and Chair of Trustees
- The School's insurers would be informed
- 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 LADO, will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

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.

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 Child Protection policy.

#### **ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING ON AN OUTING**

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity
- Immediately inform the Headmistress and the DSL by mobile phone
- The remaining children would be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- Ask the Headmistress to ring the child's parents and explain what has happened as soon as reasonably practicable to explain what has happened and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the venue/ the school at once
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search (where relevant)
- Contact the Police
- The DSL would inform the LSCB and the school's LADO without delay
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- Inform the Chair of Governors and Chair of Trustees without delay
- The school's insurers would be informed as soon as reasonably practicable
- If the child is injured and is taken directly from the scene of the accident to hospital for treatment a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 15 days of the accident.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. The school will review its procedures and, if appropriate, these would be adjusted.

#### **ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF ONCE THE CHILD IS FOUND**

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
- The Headmistress will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident (having discussed this beforehand with the LADO if necessary)
- The Headmistress will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the LSCB)
- Media queries should be referred to the Chair of Trustees (after discussion with the LADO if appropriate)
- The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements
- 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 purpose of the outing, the length of time that the child was missing and how she appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future.

- Consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Child Protection policy where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.
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## **PART TWO: PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED ON TIME**

If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed collection time, the School will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. Where reasonably possible the School will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. If there is no answer, the Headmistress / member of SLT/SMT will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after by the School.

If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers by 7pm, the Headmistress will contact the Social Care Duty Officer (Tel 020 7974 4444). Social Care 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. The School will make a full written report of the incident.

The School will look after the child safely throughout the time that she remains under our care, until such a time as she 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 Child Protection policy and procedures detailed in its Staff Behaviour and Child Protection policies.

Collection procedures are on display on parents' noticeboards outside which are located each EYFS classroom.

## YEARS 1 TO 6

### **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

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### **ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM THE 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 were found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions without delay:

- Check with the pupil's friends to see if they know their whereabouts
- Check the sick room
- Check with the School Secretary who will check the signing out/in book
- Inform the senior member of staff on duty
- Ask all of the adults and pupils calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the pupil
- Occupy all of the other pupils in their classroom(s)
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search the school grounds
- Check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit

A record is kept by the school of any instances in which a pupil is missing from school without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the pupil's explanation.

If the pupil is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Inform the Headmistress and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Ask the Headmistress to ring the pupil's parents and explain what has happened and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the school at once
- The DSL/Headmistress would notify the Police
- The Headmistress would arrange for staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds
- If the pupil's home is within walking distance, a member of staff may be asked to check if the pupil has gone home and would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with her
- The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the school's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- The school would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
- Inform the Chair of Governors and Chair of Trustees
- The school's insurers would be informed
- If the pupil is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

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

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the pupil was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

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- Ask the Headmistress ring the child's parents and explain what has happened and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the venue/ the School at once
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search (where relevant)
- Contact the Police immediately
- The DSL would inform the LSCB and the school's LADO
- The School would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- Inform the Chair of Governors and Chair of Trustees
- The school's insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured and is taken directly from the scene of the accident to hospital for treatment a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 15 days of the accident.

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- Consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Child Protection policy where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.

### **SCHOOL PROCEDURES WHEN TRAVELLING BY TUBE**

Pupils occasionally travel by tube accompanied by teachers. All children are made aware of the procedure which they must follow if they become separated from the teachers or remainder of the party for any reason.

1. If any pupil is left alone on the platform at a tube station because they have not boarded the train with the remainder of the party for any reason, they should wait on the platform. A teacher will get off at the next stop and return immediately to collect them.
2. If a pupil boards a train at a tube station for any reason without a member of staff, the pupil should get off at the next stop and wait on the platform. A member of staff will come on the next tube to meet them.

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