

OLDHAM HULME GRAMMAR SCHOOL

MISSING CHILD POLICY

This policy applies from EYFS to Sixth form

Purpose

To as quickly as possible, locate a missing child, return them to safe custody, inform the relevant parties of the situation and invoke a review of the incident.

Prevention

Every effort is made to ensure the safety of the pupils whilst they are in the school's care. To prevent a child going missing all children are registered twice a day, at the start of the school day and after lunch. The registers are completed on Schoolbase, and the appropriate member of administrative staff will follow up any absences and call parents as soon as possible.

Annually a risk assessment is completed regarding the safety and security of children on the school's premises. In the Nursery & Infants and Juniors, central to the measures in place, is the provision of nursery/ school/ after school care staff supervision of exits at the beginning and end of each session. Doors are secured and do not allow children independent access, regular reminders are given to parents of the critical role they play. In addition to the ongoing vigilance of the nursery/school/ after school care scheme staff, there are specific times when attendance is checked such as when a parent or carer arrives to collect a child.

When there is a trip away from school premises we follow the relevant adult/ child ratio, it is then the responsibility of the staff taking the trip to ensure that a regular register is taken or head count made This will depend on the nature of the trip, the mode of transport used and the location of the trip (see School Visit policy/procedures).

The children are supervised at all times, whether during lesson time, break time, lunchtime, PE lessons or in after-school care. In the Nursery & Infants and Juniors at the end of the school day or after activities, the children are only allowed to leave the school premises if their parent or an adult approved by their parents has come to collect them. If the relevant adult has not arrived to collect their child by 3.45pm the parent will be contacted and the child will be placed in after school care until they are collected.

When a child is collected from Nursery & Infants or Juniors during the School day whether due to illness or a pre-arranged appointment, they must ALWAYS be collected from the Nursery & Infants reception or Juniors office so that a note may be made in the register to record the fact that they are no longer on premises. Senior school pupils must use the relevant signing out book.

Pupils are not allowed to leave the school premises on their own during the course of the school day. It is the responsibility of the member of staff on duty whether teaching or supervising break and lunchtime to ensure that the children remain safe. Any visitors to the school are recorded arriving and leaving. Visitors without a current DBS certificate, who can be identified by an orange lanyard, are escorted by a member of staff whilst on the premises.

Parents who come to school during the school day or after the day has ended must report to Nursery & Infants reception, the Juniors Office or Senior School Reception.

Children should never be allowed to leave the premises during school time without the permission of a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or Senior School Management Team (SSMT). Parents of Senior School pupils do notify the administration team of appointments when pupils need to sign out and leave school. If the administrative team has any concerns about the authenticity of such a request they should seek further confirmation from the parent (i.e by phonecall if it is an email). If this is not confirmed they should seek guidance from a member of SLT or SSMT. However, it is possible that a child may leave the premises without the knowledge or permission of the relevant member of SLT. This policy is put in place to ensure that every action possible is taken to ensure the quick and safe return of that child.

In the event of a child becoming lost while in the care of Oldham Hulme Grammar School (OHGS), the school will put into practice the following procedures. These ensure that a systematic approach to find the child is taken and consideration is given to the levels of risk to the child.

Lost child on school visit procedure

We attempt to minimise the opportunity of lost children by ensuring they are properly supervised by a member of staff, parent or carer.

- Staff take a list of children's contact details with parent/carer details, numbers and emergency numbers, a mobile phone as well as a mini first aid pack.
- If coach travel is part of the outing, a head count will take place and will be double-checked on the coach prior to leaving.
- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing will ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One member of staff will search the immediate vicinity. If necessary, the teachers will ask all adults and children to return to a meeting point, and will dispatch staff to search for the child.
- Adults will be asked when they last saw the child and what clothes he/she was wearing. Adults may be asked to look for the child, with a member of staff remaining at the meeting point so that if the child is found, this can be reported to the party leader.
- In the event that a child cannot be located, the Principal must be informed.
- In an indoor venue, the staff will contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.
- If necessary, where possible, at the end of the visit a member of staff will remain at the venue to assist in the search, and if successful, to bring the child back. If the parents are not on the visit, the school will telephone the parents and advise them of the situation.
- In any event, and before leaving the site, the trip leader will ensure appropriate reassurance and comfort is provided to children, parents and staff, and where necessary shall seek assistance in this from a member of SLT.
- Police will be informed as appropriate.
- Staff will bring remaining children back to school.

The investigation

Following the trip in the case of a missing child, the member of staff in charge will write an incident report to include:

- the date and time of the report;
- which staff/ children were in the group or outing;
- when the child was last seen in the group/ outing and the time it is estimated that the child went missing;
- what took place in the group/outing since that time.

Child Missing or lost from school

- The member of staff discovering the loss will inform the school office and the school office will ensure that a member of SLT has been alerted. Nursery & Infants staff will inform the Head of Nursery & Infants and Juniors staff will inform the Head of Juniors.
- The relevant office will check the register to confirm that the child came in to school, and check the relevant signing out books for any record of the child leaving. The register will be checked to ensure that no other child has gone astray.
- In the Nursery & Infants doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a child could wander out.

- A member of staff will make an initial search for the child. The search will start with the school grounds. This will be undertaken as soon as possible.
- Safe staff / pupil ratios will be maintained for remaining children.
- While the initial search is made another member of staff will make enquiries of all relevant adults and the child's friends at OHGS to establish the last sighting and time and the emotional state of the child (happy, upset etc).
- If the child remains missing a member of SLT will telephone the police, report the situation and follow their advice.
- A member of SLT will also telephone the parent(s) or carer(s) and report the situation.
- A member of SLT will delegate a member of staff to follow, normally on foot, the child's route home, taking a mobile phone with them.
- If possible a parent will be asked to remain at home in case the child has managed to make their way home. The parent will be asked to telephone the relevant member of SLT as soon as the child is located.
- OHGS activities for the remaining children will continue as normal and staff not involved in the search will give the children proper attention.

In all cases, the Deputy Principal, Head of Nursery & Infants or Head of Juniors will carry out a full investigation.

- After the incident a full written report of the incident will be recorded and copies given to all relevant parties involved.
- A full review of security procedures will be carried out, guidance and procedures will be developed and implemented as required.
- The investigation will involve taking written statements from all the staff present at the time. The appropriate staff will write an incident report detailing the following as necessary:
 - the date and time of the report;
 - what staff/children were in the group/outing;
 - when the child was last seen in the group/outing;
 - what has taken place in the group/outing since then; and
 - the time it is estimated that the child went missing
 - a conclusion will be drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Social Care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a safeguarding children issue to address. If the child had suffered a qualifying injury a report would be submitted under RIDDOR.

When the child is found

- An appropriate member of staff will care for and talk with the child, bearing in mind that he/she may be unaware of having done anything wrong or, alternatively, may also have been afraid and distressed and may now be in need of comfort.
- Other adults present will take the opportunity to speak to the remaining children to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises and why.

After the incident

An appropriate member of staff will sensitively discuss with the child's parents the events surrounding the disappearance of the child. If appropriate, a short meeting will be held at the end of the session/start of the following session or a note sent home to give parents brief, accurate information about the incident, as soon as possible, for reassurance. Liability should not be discussed until the incident has been fully investigated by the school and Social Services if relevant. Staff and parents should be asked to refer any enquiries they have or any enquiries from the media, about the incident, to the Principal.

Policy for Uncollected Children

There may be an occasion when an emergency occurs and a parent is delayed and a child remains uncollected.

If a child is not collected from school within 15 minutes of the appointed time:

- The 3 emergency contact numbers will be called to find out the reason.
- The child will be placed into aftercare until he/she can be collected.
- If the parents or emergency contacts cannot be contacted after a reasonable length of time a member of SLT will be informed and if not on the premises will return to school.
- If no contact with parents has been established by 6.00pm – close of school building – Oldham's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub will be informed.

Missing Child policy reviewed: December 2022

Next Review Due: December 2023