

# Abberley Hall

## Missing Child Policy

Reviewed by Mar 2018

Next Review Mar 2019

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### 1. Introduction

This is a Whole School Policy but some Procedures may differ between the Prep, Pre-Prep and EYFS. These differences will be highlighted in the Policy.

### 2. How do we know a child is missing?

Staff must ensure that all children are accounted for at all times of the day. This applies for:

- **Registration** (Morning and Afternoon)
- **Lessons** (including Music and Learning Support)
- **Games**
- **Activities and Extras** in the afternoon and evening
- **Meal times**
- **Play times**
- **Reading times**
- **Bedtimes** (in the case of boarders)

Absences must be followed up and checks must be made as follows:

- **Other Children** may have information but evidence must be sort to corroborate.
- **On-line Registration Notices** (PASS)
- **Matron's Off Games and Away List** (Games Noticeboard, Lower Resources Rooms.)
- **Office and Diary**
- **Parents' Signing Out Book** in the Front Hall (for boarders) **Head of Prep-Prep** (for pre-prep pupils)

- **School Home Book** (for pre-prep pupils: a vital parent/school link)
- **Palace Tick List** (for day pupils)

### 3. **What do we do if we believe a child is missing?**

If the whereabouts of the child cannot be ascertained within 10 minutes then a co-ordinated search must take place as follows:

- **Inform the Senior Member of Staff** with any details which may assist in the search e.g. whereabouts when last seen.
- **The Senior Member of Staff will become the Search Co-ordinator.** He/she will co-ordinate the search with the help of 8 other members of staff and in some cases senior children.
- **The Search Co-ordinator will organise a search** of all areas in and around School, according to available information and knowledge of the particular child in question.
- **The Search Co-ordinator will:**
  - Inform staff searching who they are looking for
  - State time for search to start and finish
  - Arrange meeting place for end of search

#### **Areas of Search** for a missing child in the Prep, Pre-Prep and EYFS:

- Front Hall, Office, Dining Rooms, Boys' Dormitories, Washrooms and Toilets, Sick Bay
- Day Room, Toilets, IT rooms, Library, Art & DT, Ashton Hall, Remove corridor, and The Palace
- Marshall Block, Modern Languages Block, Science Labs and classrooms in Michael Haggard Block
- Swimming Pool, Changing Rooms, Sports Hall, Bike Shed, Music School
- Pavilions, Games Pitches, Astro, Woods beyond Games Pitches and Back Drive, Woods below South Terrace up to Riding Stables
- Front Lawn, Clock Tower Bank, Riding Stables, Front Drive and Woods above, the Worcestershire Way from Pre-Prep playground to the A443 Main Road
- The Pre-Prep classrooms and toilets, Playground, Girls Boarding House (to be done by female member of staff)
- Outside the School: This search should be made by car. There must be 2 members of staff in the car with a mobile phone. Do not rush. Take care.
  - Turn left out of the Front Gates onto the A443 towards Abberley Village.
  - Stop to enquire at **Abberley Stores**.
  - Turn right into the village and right again, back onto the A443.
  - Drive past the Front Gates towards Great Witley.
  - Stop to enquire at the **Garage, Post Office (check Car Park)**.

- Turn around and head on the A451 towards Stourport, turn right at the end of the village onto the B road and right again onto the A443 heading back towards School.
- At the Garage turn left onto the B4197 (Stanford Road) towards the Back Gates of the School.
- Then return to School. (Study accompanying map.)

**\*Pre-Prep and EYFS search will centre on Pre-Prep and EYFS classrooms and play areas.**

As all Classes are escorted to different venues (to and from the Sports Hall for example) and are looked after closely by their Class Teacher an absence will be quickly identified. There is a roll call at the end of 'Bank Time' before going back into the classrooms after morning play time. There are two staff members of duty during 'Bank Time' and they have a mobile phone in case of emergencies. The main outside search areas would be the Clock Tower bank and Front Drive.

**After approximately 60 minutes those searching will report back** to the Search Co-ordinator at the designated meeting point.

**If the missing child has not been located** the Search Co-ordinator will report to the Headmaster, or his Deputy in his absence.

**The Headmaster will inform the Police** with full details of the missing child including the last reported sighting. (999 emergency; 0300 303 3000 non-emergency).

**The Parents will also be informed** at this stage with full details.

**The details of the search will be recorded** on the appropriate sheet in the **Missing Persons File** which is in the Headmaster's study.

#### **4. Supporting the Child who has been Found**

Support for the child is vital. If he/she has run away it will be for a reason and he/she may be emotional. There may be a need for some 'time-out' in a quiet area under gentle, nurturing supervision. The Sick Bay may be appropriate where Boarding Staff are around.

For a day child, home will be the main support unless that has been a reason for the child running away. Depending on the reasons for the child absconding, it may be necessary to monitor the child's behaviour in the days/weeks afterwards. This can be done by alerting the 1:1 Tutor, Duty Staff, Boarding Staff and having an action plan in place.

The child may have been mischievous and run away as an act of defiance. In this situation it may be necessary to punish the child but also to counsel him/her to explain the consequences of their rash behaviour.

Further detailed policies and procedures to cover the event of a child going missing in the Pre-Prep or EYFS and to cover the possibility of this event during 'After School Care' and during 'Holiday Club' are added to this **Whole School Policy**.

The Board of Governors will be monitoring compliance with this policy.

**Signed:** ..... **Date:**  
**Governor (Safeguarding)**  
**Catharine Hope**

**Signed:** ..... **Date:**  
**Headmaster**  
**Mr Will Lockett**

An all School Policy including the Prep, Pre-Prep, EYFS, After School Care and  
Holiday Club

**Appendix A**

**Missing Persons Incident and Search Report Form**

Form to be completed by Search Co-ordinator: .....

Name: .....

Date of incident: .....

Time missing person reported: .....

Name of person who reported the person missing: .....

Was the missing person found during the 60 min search within the school grounds?  
Yes/No

If yes, state time, location and the person who found them: .....

If no, was the person found in the search outside the school grounds? Yes/No

If yes, state time, location and the person who found them: .....

.....

Police informed: Yes / No

Parents / next of kin or guardians informed: Yes / No

Comments:

## Appendix B

### Suggested Action Plans for Supporting a Child who has been Found

These actions are dependent upon the age and character of the child. Also if they are a boarder or day child there will be different actions. The reason for their running away will also be a factor. The child may be very 'homesick', there may have been an upset between friends or a more traumatic event such as the death of a family member or even a pet. Other home issues could include imminent separation/divorce of parents. The child may be acting in this way as a 'cry for help' or it may be for more selfish reasons.

1. Get the child back into school life as soon as appropriate. In this way they will be busy on tasks and be able to fit in with what's going on and feel alienated or excluded. Ensure the child is accompanied to and from classrooms/changing rooms/games fields and any other place they may need to be. It may be necessary to organise a 'buddy' system: a known friend/or friends who will keep a 'nurturing eye' on the child in question and who will inform staff if the child goes missing again or appears upset and emotional.
2. Inform 1:1 Tutor, Class Teachers and Duty staff who will observe behaviour and be supportive. It may be necessary for the supervising staff to 'check' the presence of the child during free time. This should be done in an appropriately subtle manner.
3. Inform Boarding staff in the case of a boarder. Ensure that the child is with others, is interacting, and is engaged to some extent in social activities e.g. chatting with friends, playing a game. It may be that the child just wishes to be among peers without necessarily interacting directly. Again the 'buddy' system may be helpful.
4. It may be necessary for the child to talk to an adult in order to explain or come to terms with their actions. This adult may be of the child's choice, however the Headmaster will need to know reasons for their behaviour in order to assess the child's state of mind and to be able to plan ahead in order to meet any needs of the child which may become apparent.
5. For a child who has deliberately run away to cause mischief, it may be necessary to assign staff to be 'minders' to ensure the child behaves appropriately. If the action of running away was an act of defiance it will be necessary to talk with the child, point out the consequences of their actions, enable them to understand what they have done and possibly to put certain sanctions in place: early bedtimes, loss of free time, not going on a School outing. Any such sanctions will be administered by the Headmaster.
6. In the case of day children it may be necessary for the parents to meet the Headmaster and the child in order to discuss reasons for the behaviour and possible strategies or sanctions.