Lost Child and Missing Child Procedure
(Including Early Years Foundation Stage)

Introduction

The welfare of all of our children at The Granville School is our paramount responsibility. A child going missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including sexual exploitation and 'honour based' violence. 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. 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. 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 regard to the Independent School Regulatory Requirements, Early Years Statutory Framework and Department for Education guidance *Children Missing Education (September 2025).*

Aim

To ensure the safety of our children throughout the time they are on the school premises.

In the event that a child is lost during school hours, we will ensure that a search is made for the child as soon as possible. The parents and authorities will be notified at the appropriate stage.
A high level of care for the other children at the school will be maintained while procedures are followed.

Situations

There are a limited number of situations where a child could be lost or missing education and these are:

- Where a child escapes from the school grounds.
- Where a child wanders off on an outing.
- Unaccounted on the premises e.g. In a cloakroom.
- Unaccounted in an emergency e.g. Fire.
- Non-attendance of school without authorisation.

Action to be Followed by Staff if a Child Fails to Attend First Day of School

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

Children moving between schools can sometimes lead to a child becoming 'lost' in the system and consequently missing education. Where a child has moved schools, schools should share information in order to ascertain where a child has moved to and to ensure a smooth transition. If the new school of the child is not established, the relevant local authority will be informed.

If a child leaves the school at a non-standard transition point

The local authority will be notified when a child's name is added (5 days from the addition) or removed (as soon as grounds for the deletion are met) from the school's register at non-standard transition.

Monitoring absence within the school:

In August 2024, the DfE set out new guidance in their document: Working together to improve school attendence.

This document states that: "*All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community. As set out in chapter 1, attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils including their safeguarding and welfare and should therefore be seen as everyone's responsibility in school. That starts with the senior attendance champion on the school's leadership team, but includes all school staff.*"

The Granville School's Senior Attendance Champion is the Deputy Headteacher. The Deputy Headteacher will set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff and have a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school. It is an ongoing responsibility, and the Senior Attendance Champion is also expected to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes. Attendance data will also be presented to governors.

If a child is absent without authorisation, the following procedures will be undertaken.

- The office will ask the class teacher if the child has arrived.
- If absent, the office will ring the child's home, then other contact numbers if appropriate. A message will be left where possible and the situation will be monitored.
- If no answer is obtained, the office will inform the Deputy Headteacher.
- The Deputy Headteacher will follow up the absence according to family circumstances and history and will liaise with the Headmistress.
- The school will continue to follow up until contact is made with the family.

- The Headmistress will notify the local authority if a pupil fails to attend school regularly or is absent for more than 10 continuous days.

Procedure on Lost Children

The following action will be taken in the event that a child goes missing:

- The member of staff in charge of the class will be alerted.
- The Headmistress will be informed.
- Relevant enquiries will be made into where and when the child was last seen.
- The safety and supervision of other children will be ensured.
- The school office will be asked to check the signing in/out book.
- Members of staff will be given a description of the child and told where she/he was last seen and then search the premises immediately.
- The office will be notified and a whole school alert will be made to search all the premises and grounds.
- If the child cannot be found after a thorough search the Headmistress will notify and liaise with the parents accordingly. We aim to do this no later than 15 minutes from the alert being given.
- A search of a wider area will be undertaken.
- If the child is still missing after 30 minutes the police, the local Education Safeguarding Team and the Chair of Governors will be informed.

If a child is lost on an outing, the following procedure will be undertaken.

- The rest of the children will be counted to confirm who is present and taken to the meeting point.
- Adults will be asked when and where the child was last seen and a description taken.
- Some staff will be dispatched to search the area whilst others will remain with the rest of the children.
- The venue will be alerted and their advice taken.
- The Headmistress will be informed and liaised with.
- Parents, police, the local Education Safeguarding Team and the Chair of Governors will be alerted at the appropriate stage.
- If the child is not found before the end of the trip, a member of staff will stay behind to help the search and once found bring the child back.

Actions to be Followed Once the Child has Been Found

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child
- Speak to the other pupils 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 Education Safeguarding Team (EST)
- The Headmistress will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the EST)

- Media queries should be referred to the Head (after discussion with the EST 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 s/he appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future.
- Preventative measures will be taken to prevent future occurrences.

Procedures to be Followed by Staff When a Child is Not Collected on Time.

If a child is not collected within 20 minutes of the agreed collection time, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, the office will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after and the Headmistress will be informed. If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers and the premises are closing, the Headmistress will contact the EST, who 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. We will make a full written report of the incident.

We undertake to look after the child safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care, until such a time as s/he has been collected by a parent, guardian or carer, or until appropriate, alternative care arrangements have been made with EST 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 Safeguarding Policy.

Linked Policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy