



OLD BUCKENHAM HALL

A leading co-educational preparatory school for children aged 2-13 years

Missing Child Policy

OBHP18

Policy owner: Headmaster
Date of issue: October 2018
Date last reviewed: June 2023
Next review due: August 2024

Policy for missing children

This policy also applies to Pre-Prep and EYFS pupils (see part 2).

The guidelines set out in this policy should be used in the event that a pupil, boarding or day, is found to be missing during school time¹.

Part 1

During the day, the following procedures are followed in order to check that pupils are present

- Boarding Staff supervising children rising in the morning should check that all are present in the dormitory
- Morning registration before assembly with absentees reported to Reception
- Afternoon registration at 1.45pm
- Teachers should check that all pupils are present during lessons
- Games staff should check that all pupils are present at a session
- A roll call is taken during supper each night
- In the boarding houses, a list of children out for the night is displayed in a central location
- Registers of children present are kept in both boarding houses
- Boarding staff check all children are present in a dormitory when lights are turned out
- At weekends, checks are made at breakfast, lunch, supper and during all activities.

If a pupil is discovered to be missing or otherwise reported missing:

- Ask other pupils / friends
- Check with School Reception to see whether the child has been registered as present or whether there is any other information regarding the pupil, with Matrons / Nurse in case the child is in sick bay, with the Music Department and Learning Support

If this proves unsuccessful then follow the following procedure:

First Phase – **this to take no longer than 10 minutes**

- Notify the School Office and the Headmaster or Senior Deputy Headmaster (if they are off-site or not easily contactable then notify another SMT member)

¹This includes any time of the day in which boarders are on the school premises and also to any off-site activity at any time of the year involving OBH pupils

- An initial search of school buildings will be co-ordinated to include: the Boarding Areas, Changing Rooms, Lavatories, Classrooms, Music Block, Britten Hall area, and all other outbuildings.
- All members of staff involved in the search must confirm that their tasks have been completed before the next phase.
- If the first phase is unsuccessful then the Headmaster / Senior Deputy Head must be contacted by mobile phone to be made aware of the situation if they have not already been involved.

Second Phase

- A further search including the school grounds / playing fields and nearby roads will be initiated. Members of staff living in the grounds or near to the school may be asked to assist if the disappearance is outside normal school hours. Maintenance Staff may be involved. Someone will be detailed to ensure that the main school phone (01449 740252) is manned at all times. The roads in the vicinity of the school will be searched by a member of staff in a car. All members of staff involved in this phase must have a mobile phone and must contact the school on 01449 740252 if they find the pupil. If medical / pastoral assistance is required then it will be arranged. *This phase must be concluded within a further 20 minutes of the pupil being reported missing.*
- If the second phase is unsuccessful then the pupil's parents and the police will be contacted immediately. A further search of the school premises may be undertaken but the school will follow the advice of the police in deciding what further action should be taken.
- If the pupil's parents come to the school, then support and refreshments should be made available.

Follow-up procedure

- Pastoral / Medical support will be made available where necessary.
- The Headmaster / Senior Deputy / SMT member will detail members of staff off to try to ascertain from friends, boarding staff, other teachers etc whether the pupil was unhappy, being bullied, etc.
- The Head of Boarding (where appropriate), the Senior Deputy Head, the pupil's Form Teacher and teaching staff (where appropriate), will discuss how to manage the reintegration of the pupil back into the boarding and/or class situation. The pupil's parents should be consulted at this stage.

- The pupil's Form Teacher and boarding staff will monitor and support the pupil for as long as is necessary. Any concerns should be reported immediately to the Headmaster / Senior Deputy Head. The Senior Deputy Head/ Head of Boarding or Senior Matron / Form Teacher will maintain daily contact with the pupil's parents for as long as is necessary.
- A record of the incident will be made by the Head of Boarding / Form Teacher / Senior Deputy Head on the iSAMS system.

Trips off-site

- It is vital that all members of staff who run trips off-site should take every precaution to ensure that children do not get lost. Younger children should be closely supervised at all times and no child should ever be allowed to wander around by him/herself. Regular head-counts should be taken by two adults. 'Emergency outing labels' with staff contact details are available from the Deputy Head Co-Curricular.
- In the event that a pupil goes missing for more than ten minutes the school must be contacted and the Headmaster / Senior Deputy Head / member of SMT informed immediately. They will advise the course of action and it may be appropriate to contact the local police.

Part 2

Pre-Prep and EYFS

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child was 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
- Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) by reading to them
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the Pre-Prep and Nursery Department, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms where a small child might hide
- Check the doors, gates for signs of entry/exit

If the child is still missing **after 15 minutes**, the following steps would be taken:

- Inform the Headmaster/Senior Deputy Head and the DSL
- Ask the Headmaster/Senior Deputy Head 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 would notify the Police
- The Headmaster/Senior Deputy Head would arrange for staff and Estates staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds
- The DSL would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- ISI would be informed
- The Insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE

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.

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
- The remaining children would be taken back to school
- Contact the venue Manager and arrange a search
- Contact the Police ***after 10 minutes if the child is still missing***
- Inform the Headmaster /Senior Deputy Head and the DSL by mobile phone
- Ask the Headmaster/Senior Deputy Head 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 would inform the Local Children Safeguarding Board
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- ISI would be informed
- The Insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured A report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE

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.

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 Headmaster/Senior Deputy Head (and Head of Lower School where relevant) will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Headmaster/Senior Deputy Head will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving Social Services/ Local Children Safeguarding Board)
- Media queries should be referred to the Headmaster
- 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 length of time that the child was missing and how s/he appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored on a day-to-day basis by the Head and DSL. The policy will be reviewed after an incident or when there are changes in legislation and guidance.