



# Gosfield School

## Missing Student Policy

Whole School Policy, including EYFS

The welfare of students is paramount. The school endeavours to ensure that no child goes missing and has measures in place to minimise the likelihood of this happening and take the necessary action, should the situation arise. This Policy applies to all students (including EYFS). The welfare of all students at Gosfield school 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 they have 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 at least Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (KCSIE). Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is safe when they are in school. This policy was drawn up having had regard to the Independent School Regulatory Requirements and DFE Children Missing Education (CME) August 2024

### Aims of this policy

- To ensure that robust procedures are in place to minimise the risk of a student going missing from/ or absent from school or a school activity.
- To establish safeguards so that a student's absence from school (or school activity) is quickly identified.
- To outline a procedure for staff to follow in the event of a student being or going missing, including the notification of parents and outside agencies. Other School policies that should be read in conjunction with this policy include:
  - Staff Handbook
  - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (a missing child may be a sign of abuse);
  - Educational Visits Policy DFE Working together to improve school attendance August 2024

### Definition

For this policy, a CME is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by an LA, and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere, including where parents have elected to home educate. This definition also includes children who are receiving an education, but one that is not suitable; this could include children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

## **Registration**

Formal registration in the senior school is taken in the morning at 8.30am and at 2.10pm. In the Prep School, formal registration is taken at 8:30am and 1:20pm. The staff maintain the appropriate high level of supervision throughout the day and are always aware of the location of the children in their care. When on excursions outside the school premises, staff implement strategies to maximise the safety and security of the children in accordance with the school's Health & Safety Policy and Educational Visits Policy.

## **PROCEDURE FOR MISSING STUDENTS: NURSERY AND RECEPTION (EYFS) AND YEARS 1, and 2**

A register is taken in the morning following the child being handed over to their teacher by their parent/carer and the staff maintain a high level of supervision throughout the day and are always aware of the location of the children in their care. However, in the unlikely event that it is suspected that a child has gone missing, the following procedure is put into action:

- Staff will maintain the safety and wellbeing of other children.
- A roll call will be taken.
- The Head of Prep and one other member of staff will search the immediate vicinity.
- If the child is not found after 10 minutes, the Principal will be notified and the police will be contacted.
- The Head of Prep will contact the parents of the missing child.
- Once police arrive all relevant information about the child will be given. The police will then take over the search.

If off-site:

- The class teacher will remain with the police to comfort the child when found and to maintain regular contact with the School.
- The remaining staff will return to the School.

If the child is not located within 10 minutes, parents and the Police will be informed.

Once the incident is resolved, a full written account of the incident must be produced by the Head of Prep on the same day and sent to the Principal. Once the incident is resolved, the Principal and the Senior Leadership Team will review relevant policies, procedures and risk assessments and implement any necessary changes.

## **PROCEDURE FOR MISSING STUDENTS: YEARS 3 TO 6**

All students and staff should report all unexplained absences of any student to the main office in the first instance, followed by the missing student's class teacher or in their absence, the Head of Prep.

An unexplained absence may arise when a student does not attend lessons or meals, or when the student's friends or classmates are unexpectedly unable to locate the student. As soon as a class teacher or Head of Prep becomes aware of an unexplained absence the following procedure will be followed:

Main office staff will contact all staff via email to ask if anyone knows the whereabouts of the missing student. If the student is not located:

- Internal enquiries will be carried out. The class teacher or Head of Prep will speak to the student's friends and other members of staff to build a picture of the student's recent movements to help locate the student, it may be the child has a 1:1 peripatetic music lesson, an academy coaching session, or a dance/ LAMDA lesson, as these vary weekly to not impact lessons repeatedly this should be considered. Guidance on appropriate



questions to ask is set out below. If appropriate, the class teacher or Head of Prep will arrange a search of the premises.

- If the student cannot be located within **30 minutes**, the class teacher or Head of Prep will report the absence to the Principal. They will decide whether or not the parents should be informed immediately.
- If the student cannot be located within a **further 30 minutes**, the Head of Prep or Principal will contact the Police to identify if the Police have any information on the student's location (for example, if the student has been involved in an accident). Local hospitals should be contacted to find out if the student has been admitted.
- If these enquiries do not yield additional information about the student, the Police should be officially informed that the student is missing.
- If the student's parents have not been previously contacted, they should be informed that the student is missing. The School should discuss any further steps taken with them.
- If the Police take over responsibility for the search for the student, all relevant information about the student will be passed to them.

If the Principal is not on site, she should be advised that the student is missing and kept updated.

Once the incident is resolved, a full written account of the incident must be produced by the Head of Prep on the same day and sent to the Principal.

Once the incident is resolved, the Principal and the Senior Leadership Team will review relevant policies, procedures and risk assessments and implement any necessary changes.

#### **PROCEDURE FOR MISSING STUDENTS: YEARS 7 TO 13**

All students and staff should report all unexplained absences of any student to the main office in the first instance, followed by the missing student's tutor or in their absence, the Head of Pastoral.

An unexplained absence may arise when a student does not attend lessons or meals, or when the student's friends or classmates are unexpectedly unable to locate the student. As soon as a tutor or Head of Pastoral becomes aware of an unexplained absence the following procedure will be followed:

Main office staff will contact all staff via email to ask if anyone knows the whereabouts of the missing student. If the student is not located:

- Internal enquiries will be carried out. The Tutor or Assistant Principal Pastoral with the Heads of Section will speak to the student's friends and other members of staff to build a picture of the student's recent movements to help locate the student, it may be the child has a 1:1 peripatetic music lesson, an academy coaching session, or a dance/ LAMDA lesson, as these vary weekly to not impact lessons repeatedly this should be considered. Guidance on appropriate questions to ask is set out below. If appropriate, the Assistant Principal Pastoral or Vice Principal will arrange a search of the premises.
- If the student cannot be located within **60 minutes**, the Vice Principal / Assistant Principal Pastoral will report the absence to the Principal. They will decide whether the parents should be informed immediately.
- If the student cannot be located within a **further 60 minutes**, the Vice Principal/ Assistant Principal Pastoral or Principal will contact the Police to identify if the Police have any information on the student's location (for example, if the student has been involved in an accident). Local hospitals should be contacted to find out if the student has been admitted.
- If these enquiries do not yield additional information about the student, the Police should be officially informed that the student is missing.

- If the student's parents have not been previously contacted, they should be informed that the student is missing. The school should discuss any further steps taken with them.
- If the Police take over responsibility for the search for the student, all relevant information about the student will be passed to them.

If the Principal is not on site, they should be advised that the student is missing and kept updated.

Once the incident is resolved, a full written account of the incident must be produced by the Vice Principal or the Assistant Principal Pastoral on the same day and sent to the Principal.

Once the incident is resolved, the Principal and the Senior Leadership Team will review relevant policies, procedures and risk assessments and implement any necessary changes.

### **After school clubs**

Gosfield School runs a comprehensive timetable of clubs after school and those who use the school buses are required to attend, for all other students this is optional. A list of students per activity is provided to staff and they have a duty of care to register students at the start of the activity. If the student does not attend the activities coordinator with support locates the student. Students who are on the register must inform staff if they are not attending, if students do not attend as per the register this will be investigated and may result in the privilege of after school activities being withdrawn, this will always be discussed with parents prior to any decision.

- Register of students with contact numbers and details of how the students are to go home and who is collecting them.
- If a parent/carer does not come to collect their child staff must report to a senior member of staff and the school office. Attempts to contact/ locate the parent or carer will be made. Should there be a need to remain onsite with the student until the parent/ carer can get to school the Principal should be informed, if due to unforeseen circumstances the collection is considerably late the Principal will supervise them as they live onsite.

### **QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IN ALL CASES INVOLVING A MISSING STUDENT**

- When was the student last seen?
- Does the student have bespoke lessons, for example, dance, music, singing, LAMDA or academy coaching sessions?
- Who was the student with?
- Where might the student have gone?
- Have they signed out?
- Is there a school activity where the student might be participating?
- Has the student been ill or injured and gone to seek first aid assistance?
- What emotional state did the student appear to be in?
- Has anything upset the student recently?
- Did the student speak to anyone about leaving?
- Who are the student's main friends at School?
- Does the student have a mobile phone and what is the number?
- Does the student have a special friend?
- Is there any reason to believe the student might have been abducted? (for example family custody dispute, very wealthy or prominent parents)

### **OTHER ACTION TO CONSIDER TAKING**

- Check that the student is not in the first aid room.
- Check that the student is not on a fixture or in a peripatetic music lesson, or Lamda Lesson

- Ring the student's mobile.

### **POLICE RESPONSE**

The Police treat all missing person reports as serious. Each risk is assessed, and the following are trigger factors to be considered:

- Student in an emotional or depressed state of mind.
- Unusual behaviour prior to disappearance.
- Student needs essential medicine or treatment.
- Suspicion of abduction.
- Suspicion of self-harm/suicide.
- Involvement in a violent confrontation prior to disappearance.
- Previously disappeared and suffered or was exposed to harm whilst missing.
- Suspicion of involvement with crime/ county lines.

### **RECORD KEEPING**

The School will keep a full written record of any incident including:

- The student's name.
- Relevant dates and times, for example, when it was first noticed that the student was missing.
- The action taken to find the student.
- Whether the Police or Social Services were involved.
- Outcome or resolution of the incident.
- Any reasons given by the student for being missing.
- Any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident.
- A record of the staff involved.

A full written record of the incident will be kept on the student's file.

### **REVIEW**

This policy shall be reviewed every two years by the Principal and updates will be made as necessary, considering any incidents that have occurred that indicate that there may be a problem with supervision, student support or security at the School and any issues raised by individual members of staff, parents and students.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Mr Rod Jackson, Principal

Date \_\_\_\_\_

4/9/25

Date of next review: September 2026

