



MISSING CHILD & UNCOLLECTED PUPILS POLICY 2025-2026

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The welfare of all of our children at Copthorne Prep School is our paramount responsibility.
- 1.2 A child going missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including sexual exploitation, so called 'honour based' violence or involvement in serious violent crime.
- 1.3 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.
- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 Every member of our staff who works with children has read Part one and Annex A of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and they are aware of what indicators to look out for.
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 This policy was drawn up having had regard to the Independent School Regulatory Requirements (paragraph 7 and 15), Early Years Statutory Framework (paragraph 3.73) and Department for Education guidance Children Missing Education (September 2016).

2 Information for Parents

2.1 EYFS

- 2.2 The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are set out in a detailed policy document: 'Educational Visits for EYFS Children'.
- 2.3 Both documents are on our website and can be provided to parents on request.
- 2.4 We review these policies regularly in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective.
- 2.5 All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of very young children and read Part 1 of the DfE's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023' guidance.

3 Action to be followed by staff if a child fails to attend first day of school

- 3.1 All new pupils are placed on the School's admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the School has agreed that the pupil will attend the School.
- 3.2 If a child fails to attend on the agreed date, staff must inform the Head/Head of Pre-Prep without delay.
- 3.3 The Head/Head of Pre-Prep will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.4 Where there are changes affecting the child (including a change of address or school), these will be reflected in the admission register.
- 3.5 This will assist the School and external agencies when making enquiries to locate any missing children.

4 Duty to Report

- 4.1 The school monitors attendance closely and will act to address poor or irregular attendance.
- 4.2 The school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more without permission.
- 4.3 Where a pupil has been continuously absent without authorisation for a period of not less than 20 school days (and there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil is unwell or unable to attend because of any unavoidable cause), and the school and local authority have failed, following reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is, the school may delete the pupil's name from the admission register.
- 4.4 The school will inform the local authority of such deletion no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register.
- 4.5 The school also recognises its wider reporting duties following deletions from the admission register, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, to help identify children who are missing education and/or otherwise at risk of harm.

5 Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing from the School

- 5.1 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 without delay:
- 5.2 Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- 5.3 Check with Pre-Prep Office
- 5.4 Inform the senior member of staff on duty
- 5.5 Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child
 - 5.6 Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) with a relevant activity
 - 5.7 At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the Nursery/Pre-Prep Department, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms etc. where a small child might hide
- 5.8 Check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit
- 5.9 If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken without delay:
- 5.10 Inform the Head and the Deputy Head (Designated Safeguarding Lead)
- 5.11 Ask the Head, or Head of Pre-Prep School 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
- 5.12 The Head would immediately notify the Police
- 5.13 The Head would arrange for staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds
- 5.14 If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her

- 5.15 The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSCB) and the school's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- 5.16 The school would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
- 5.17 Inform the Chair of Governors
- 5.18 The school's insurers would be informed
- 5.19 (If the child is injured) A report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)
- 5.20 During the course of the investigation into the missing child, the school, in consultation with the LADO, will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.
- 5.21 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.

6 Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing on an outing:

- 6.1 An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- 6.2 An adult would search the immediate vicinity
- 6.3 Immediately inform the Head by mobile phone
- 6.4 The remaining children would be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- 6.5 Ask the Head of Pre-Prep (or Head) to ring the child's parents as soon as reasonably practicable to explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the venue/ the school at once
- 6.6 Contact the venue manager and arrange a search
- 6.7 Immediately contact the Police
- 6.8 The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSCB) and the school's LADO without delay
- 6.9 The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- 6.10 Inform the Chairman of Governors without delay
- 6.11 The school's insurers would be informed as soon as reasonably practicable
- 6.12 If the child is injured and is taken directly from the scene of the accident to hospital for treatment a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 15 days of the accident.
- 6.13 A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. The school will review its procedures and, if appropriate, these would be adjusted.

7 Actions to be followed by staff once the child is found

- 7.1 Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child
- 7.2 Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
- 7.3 The Head of the Pre-Prep will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident (having discussed this beforehand with the LADO if necessary)
- 7.4 The Head of the Pre-Prep will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSCB))
- 7.5 Media queries should be referred to the Head (after discussion with the LADO if appropriate)

- 7.6 The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements
- 7.7 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.

8 Procedures to be followed by staff when a child is not collected on time

- 8.1 If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed collection time, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers.
- 8.2 If there is no answer, the Head/Head of Pre-Prep/Duty Staff will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after.
- 8.3 If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a one- hour period, the Head of Pre-Prep will contact the Social Care Duty Officer 01483 517898.
- 8.4 Social Care 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.
- 8.5 We will make a full written report of the incident.
- 8.6 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 Social Care and/or the Police in order to prioritise the child's safety.
- 8.7 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.
- 8.8 If any concerns about the child's safety and welfare result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the school's child protection policy and procedures detailed in its staff behaviour and child protection policy.

9 Non EYFS Pupils

- 9.1 Information to Parents
 - Our pupil supervision policy describes:
- 9.2 The arrangements for children arriving at school and leaving the premises at the end of the day
- 9.3 The qualifications of our staff and the arrangements for supervising the children whilst they are in school
- 9.4 The arrangements for registering the children in both morning and afternoon.
- 9.5 We take a register of pupils at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- 9.6 Parents are responsible for notifying the school if their child is absent for any reason.
- 9.7 The school will always contact the parent if the child fails to arrive at school without an explanation.
- 9.8 The physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to or exit from the building
- 9.9 The supervision of the playground and the physical barriers that separate it from the rest of the school
- 9.10 The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our pupils are set out in a detailed policy document: 'Educational Visits for Pupils'. This document is on our website and can be provided to parents on request. We review all our policies regularly in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective.

- 9.11 All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of pupils and read Part 1 of the DfE's 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance and was drawn up having had regard to the Independent School Regulatory Requirements (paragraph 7 and 15), and Department for Education guidance Children Missing Education (September 2016).

10 Action to be followed by staff if a child fails to attend first day of School

- 10.1 All new pupils are placed on the School's admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the School has agreed that the pupil will attend the School.
- 10.2 If a child fails to attend on the agreed date, staff must inform the Head without delay.
- 10.3 The Head will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.
- 10.4 Where there are changes affecting the child (including a change of address or school), these will be reflected in the admission register.
- 10.5 This will assist the School and external agencies when making enquiries to locate any missing children.

11 Duty to Report

- 11.1 The school monitors attendance closely and will act to address poor or irregular attendance.
- 11.2 The school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more without permission.
- 11.3 Where a pupil has been continuously absent without authorisation for a period of not less than 20 school days (and there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil is unwell or unable to attend because of any unavoidable cause), and the school and local authority have failed, following reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is, the school may delete the pupil's name from the admission register. The school will inform the local authority of such deletion no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register.
- 11.4 The school also recognises its wider reporting duties following deletions from the admission register, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, to help identify children who are missing education and/or otherwise at risk of harm.
- 11.5 Action to be followed by staff if a child goes missing from School
- 11.6 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 during the working day:

- 11.7 Check with the pupil's friends to see if they know their whereabouts
- 11.8 Check with matron
- 11.9 Check with office who will check the signing out/in book
- 11.10 Inform the senior member of staff on duty
- 11.11 Ask all of the adults and pupils calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the pupil
- 11.12 Occupy all of the other pupils in their classroom(s)
- 11.13 At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search the school grounds
- 11.14 Check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit
- 11.15 A record is kept by the school of any instances in which a pupil is missing from school without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the pupil's explanation.
- 11.16 If the pupil is still missing, the following steps would be taken:
- 11.17 Inform the Head, DSL and Matron

- 11.18 Ask the Head of School to ring the pupil's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the school at once
- 11.19 The DSL/Head would notify the Police
- 11.20 The Head would arrange for staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds
- 11.21 If the pupil's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her
- 11.22 The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSCB) and the school's Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- 11.23 The school would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
- 11.24 Inform the Chairman of Governors
- 11.25 The school's insurers would be informed
- 11.26 If the pupil is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)
- 11.27 During the course of the investigation into the missing pupil, the school, in consultation with the LADO, will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.
- 11.28 A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the pupil was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

12 Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing on an Outing

- 12.1 An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other pupils were present
- 12.2 An adult would search the immediate vicinity
- 12.3 Inform the Head and the DSL by mobile phone
- 12.4 The remaining pupils would be taken back to school
- 12.5 Ask the 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 venue/ the school at once
- 12.6 Contact the venue manager and arrange a search
- 12.7 Contact the Police
- 12.8 The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSCB) and the school's LADO
- 12.9 The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- 12.10 Inform the Chair of Governors
- 12.11 The school's insurers would be informed
- 12.12 If the child is injured a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)
- 12.13 A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. The school will review its procedures and, if appropriate, these would be adjusted.

13 Actions to be followed by staff once the child is found

- 13.1 Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child
- 13.2 Speak to the other pupils to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
- 13.3 The Head will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident (having discussed this beforehand with the LADO if necessary)

- 13.4 The Head will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the Local safeguarding Partnership (LSCB))
- 13.5 Media queries should be referred to the Head (after discussion with the LADO if appropriate)
- 13.6 The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements
- 13.7 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.

14 Procedures to be followed by staff when a child is not collected on time

- 14.1 If a child is not collected within half an hour of the end of the school day, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers.
- 14.2 If there is no answer, the Duty member of staff will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after.
- 14.3 If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a one- hour period or when the premises are closing, the Head will contact the Social Care Duty Officer on 01483 517898.
- 14.4 The child will be offered boarding facilities for the night whilst Social Care 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.
- 14.5 We will make a full written report of the incident.
- 14.6 **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 car arrangements have been made with Social Care and/or the Police in order to prioritise the child's safety.**
- 14.7 **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.
- 14.8 If any concerns about the child's safety and welfare result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the school's child protection policy and procedures detailed in its staff behaviour and child protection policy.

15 Children Missing Education

- 15.1 All children are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and

Any SEND they may have

15.2 The school recognises that children missing education, can be a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. They are also at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse and harm, exploitation, radicalisation, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) later in life.

Where possible the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each child.

The school will ensure that there is a record of joiners and leavers as defined in [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) 2006 \(amended 2016\)](#).

When removing a child's name, the school will notify the Surrey County Council/West Sussex of: (a) the full name of the child, (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the child normally resides, (c) at least one telephone number of the parent, (d) the child's future address and destination school, if applicable, and (e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the child's name is to be removed from the school register.

The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a child jointly with the Local Authority, before deleting the child's name from the school register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f) (iii) and (h) (iii) of [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) 2006 \(amended 2016\)](#).

The school will:

- Enter children on the admissions register on the first day on which the school has agreed, or has been notified, that the child will attend the school.
- Notify Surrey County Council/West Sussex within five days of adding a child's name to the admission register. The notification must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new child.
- Monitor each child's attendance through their daily register and follow Surrey County Council/West Sussex procedure in cases of unauthorised absence.
- Remove a child's name from the admissions register on the date that the child leaves the school.
- The school will notify Surrey County Council/West Sussex when they are about to remove a child's name from the school register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations, no later than the date that the child's name is due to be removed.

Where parents/carers notify the school, in writing, of their intention to Electively Home Educate (EHE) the school will forward a copy of the letter to the Surrey County Council Inclusion Team.

Where parents/carers orally indicate that they intend to withdraw their child to EHE and no letter has been received, the school will not remove the child from roll and will notify the Inclusion Team at the earliest opportunity.

16 Pupils Missing Out on Education (PMOOE)

Most children engage positively with school and attend regularly. However, to flourish, some children require an alternative education provision or may require a modified timetable to support a return to full time education provision. It is recognised that children accessing alternative provision, or a reduced/modified timetable may have additional vulnerabilities. Ofsted refer to these as PMOOE because they are not accessing their education in school in the 'usual way'.

The school will gain consent (if required in statute) from parents/carers to put in place alternative provision and/or a reduced or modified timetable

The school will ensure that parents/carers (and the Local Authority where the child has an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) are given clear information about alternative provision placements and reduced/modified timetables: why, when, where, and how they will be reviewed.

The school will keep the placement and timetable under review and involve parents/carers in the review. Reviews will be frequent enough to provide assurance that the off-site education and/or modified timetable is achieving its objectives and that the child is benefitting from it.

The school will monitor and track children attending alternative provision to ensure that the provision meets the needs of the child. The school continues to be responsible for the safeguarding of that pupil. The school will obtain written confirmation from the alternative provision provider that appropriate safeguarding checks have been carried out on individuals working at the establishment,

The school will comply with regular data returns requested by the Surrey County Council/West Sussex, regarding all children, of statutory school age, attending alternative provision and/or on a reduced/modified timetable.

The school leadership will report to Governors information regarding the use and effectiveness of alternative provision and modified/reduced timetables. The school will also report to Governors/Proprietors/Management Committee any formal direction of a child to alternative provision to improve behaviour.

This policy will be reviewed annually by Governors

