HEREWARD HOUSE SCHOOL

Missing Child Policy

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Hereward House School: Missing Child Policy

Our School's Aims

At Hereward House we aim to provide a warm, welcoming and safe atmosphere in which every child can thrive and feel comfortable. Whilst embracing the highest academic aspirations for our pupils, we strive to create a stimulating, purposeful and happy community, where every child feels valued and secure. Promoting the well-being of all pupils is at the heart of what we aim to do. For us the most important outcome is for all pupils to be kind, considerate and confident whilst looking out for every member of the school community. We aim to be a school where pupils will be encouraged and assisted to develop academically, morally, emotionally and culturally. It is our belief each pupil should enjoy their school days and reflect upon them with pride, pleasure and affection. We are preparing pupils not just for senior school, but for life.

Missing Child Policy

PART 1 - EYFS Pupils (Please see PART 2 for Years 1 and above)

Introduction

The welfare of all of our children at Hereward House school is our paramount responsibility. A child being absent from education, for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including abuse or neglect, 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 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. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child being absent in the future. Where staff have concerns that a child is absent from school for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, or missing from school, this policy should be followed.

Every member of our staff has read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026). Our staffing ratios exceed EYFS requirements and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care.

This policy complies with the EYFS Framework, which requires that children are adequately supervised at all times, including during outings, and that the school ensures children are only released into the care of individuals who have been notified to the school by the parent.

Information for parents

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are set out in a detailed policy document: 'Educational Visits Policy.' This can be provided to parents on request. We review these policies regularly (at least once a year) in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust

and effective. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of very young children and read at least Part 1 of KCSIE.

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

All new pupils (regardless of their age) 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. If a child fails to attend on the agreed date, staff must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

The School admission register, also known as the School roll, contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School along with the date of admission or re-admission to the School, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended.

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.

The School also has an attendance register which records pupil attendance. The attendance register is taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion we will record whether each registered pupil is physically present in school or, if not, the reason they are not in school by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Registers are legal records. The School will preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date of entry. Where amendments are made to the registers, the School will that ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment.

Duty to Report

The school monitors attendance of its pupils closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance.

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.

Prolonged and/or persistent absence

Where a pupil has not returned from a period of leave or has had a continuous period of absence, the School, together with the Local Authority, may need to carry out joint reasonable enquiries under regulation 9(1)(h) or (i) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to try to find out where the pupil is.

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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.

In addition the school 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.

The School also recognises that children who are absent from education particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. The School's response to persistently absent pupils supports identifying such abuse, and helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

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

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:

- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- Check with the school office who will have a record of pupils who have signed out
- Inform the Head of EYFS or the senior member of staff on duty
- 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) with a relevant activity
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the Junior School, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms etc. where a small child might hide
- Check the doors and gates for signs of entry/exit

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.

If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken without delay:

- Inform the Head of the Junior School and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- Ask the Head of Junior 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
- The DSL would immediately notify the Police
- The DSL would arrange for staff to search the rest of the School premises and grounds
- If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff may be asked to check to see if the child has gone home. They would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with the child

- The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP) who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate. The DSL will check with the LSP this has happened.
- The School would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- The School's insurers would be informed.
- 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.
- In line with KCSiE 2026, the school considers contextual safeguarding factors—such as risks posed by peers, online influences, or local community contexts—when investigating and responding to a missing child incident.

During the course of the investigation into the missing child, the school will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

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.

The School will always consider the wider circumstances around a child going missing from School and whether there are wider safeguarding concerns that may need to be addressed in line with the School's Safeguarding policy.

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
- Immediately inform the Head of the Junior School and the DSL by mobile phone
- The remaining children would be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- Ask the Head of Junior School 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 School at once
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search (where relevant)
- Immediately contact the Police
- The DSL would inform the LSP who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate
- The School would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority including children's services
- Inform the Chair of Governors without delay
- The School's insurers would be informed as soon as reasonably practicable
- 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.

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.

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 Head of the Junior School will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Head of the Junior School will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the LSP)
- Media queries should be referred to the Head
- 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.
- Consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Child Protection policy where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.

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

If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed collection time, the School will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. The School will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. If there is no answer, the Teacher will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after by the School. If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a when the premises are closing, the DSL will contact the Social Care Duty Officer on 020 7974 4444. 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. The School will make a full written report of the incident.

The School will look after the child safely throughout the time that they remain under the School's care, until such a time as they have 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. 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 child protection policy and procedures detailed in its staff behaviour and child protection policies.

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Part Two: Missing Child Policy – Year 1 and Above

Introduction

The welfare of all of our children at Hereward House school is our paramount responsibility. A child being absent from education, for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including abuse or neglect, 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 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. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child being absent in the future. Where staff have concerns that a child is absent from school for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, or missing from school, this policy should be followed.

Every member of our staff has read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). 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.

Information for parents

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are set out in a detailed policy document: 'Educational Visits Policy.' This can be provided to parents on request. We review these policies regularly (at least once a year) in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of very young children and read at least Part 1 of KCSIE.

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

All new pupils (regardless of their age) 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. If a child fails to attend on the agreed date, staff must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

The School admission register, also known as the School roll, contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School along with the date of admission or re-admission to the School, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended.

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.

The School also has an attendance register which records pupil attendance. The attendance register is taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon

session. On each occasion we will record whether each registered pupil is physically present in school or, if not, the reason they are not in school by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Registers are legal records. The School will preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date of entry. Where amendments are made to the registers, the School will that ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment.

Duty to Report

The school monitors attendance of its pupils closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance.

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.

Prolonged and persistent absence

Where a pupil has not returned from a period of leave or has had a continuous period of absence, the School, together with the Local Authority, may need to carry out joint reasonable enquiries under regulation 9(1)(h) or (i) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to try to find out where the pupil is.

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.

In addition the school 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.

The School also recognises that children who are absent from education particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. The School's response to persistently absent pupils supports identifying such abuse, and helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

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

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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:

- Check with the pupil's friends to see if they know their whereabouts
- Check with the school office who will have a record of pupils who have signed out
- Inform the senior member of staff on duty
- Call the pupil's mobile telephone if possible
- Ask all of the adults and pupils calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the pupil
- Occupy all of the other pupils in their classroom(s)
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search the school grounds
- Check the doors and gates for signs of entry/exit

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.

If the pupil is still missing, the following steps would be taken:

- Inform the Head of the Junior, Middle or Senior School and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- 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
- The DSL/Head of the Junior/Middle/Senior School would notify the Police
- The Head of the Junior/Middle/Senior School would arrange for staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds
- If the pupil's home is within walking distance, a member of staff may be asked to check if the pupil has gone home and would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her
- The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSP) who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate. The DSL will check with the LSP this has happened
- The School would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority.
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- The School's insurers would be informed
- 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.

During the course of the investigation into the missing pupil, the School will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

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.

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The School will always consider the wider circumstances around a child going missing from School and whether there are wider safeguarding concerns that may need to be addressed in line with the School's Safeguarding policy.

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 pupils were present
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity
- Inform the Head of the Junior/Middle/Senior School and the DSL by mobile phone
- The remaining pupils would be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- Ask the Head of Junior/Middle/Senior 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
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search (where relevant)
- Contact the Police immediately
- The DSL would inform the LSP who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate
- The School would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority including children's services
- Inform the Chair of Governors without delay
- The School's insurers would be informed as soon as reasonably practicable. If the child is injured, A report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE). 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.

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.

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 pupils to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
- The Head of the Junior/Middle/Senior School will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Head of the Junior School will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the LSP)
- Media queries should be referred to the Head
- 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.
- Consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Child Protection policy where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.

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

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. The School will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. If there is no answer, the Teacher will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after. If I there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers when the premises are closing, the Head will contact the Social Care Duty Officer on 0207 794 4444. 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. The School will make a full written report of the incident.

The School will look after the child safely throughout the time that they remain under our care, until such a time as the child 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. 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 child protection policy and procedures detailed in its staff behaviour and child protection policies.

Prevent Duty

Where concerns emerge during a missing child incident that suggest a child may be at risk of radicalisation or being drawn into extremism, staff will follow the Prevent Duty procedures as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy.

Related Policies

Related Policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Supervision Policy
- EYFS Framework
- School Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies