



Merchant Taylors' Schools, Crosby

Missing Pupil Policy

Policy Owner	Assistant Heads [Pastoral]
Last reviewed by Date	Assistant Head (Pastoral) January 2025
Last approved by <u>Date</u>	Executive Management Team February 2025
Frequency of review	Annually
Next policy review by owner	At least once in a three-year period
Next policy approved by Board of Governors (if applicable)	After next review by Exec
Circulation:	All Staff & Governors Inspection Portal School Website Parent Portal Senior & Sixth Pupils
Related Policies:	Safeguarding Policy; Behaviour Policy; Educational Visits Policy; Attendance Policy
Regulatory Body (if applicable)	Department for Education / Independent Schools Inspectorate
Relevant legislation/guidelines	Equality Act 2010 DfE guidance The Equality Act 2010 and schools (2014).

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1. Aim

To ensure the quickest and safest completion of locating any pupil missing or suspected of being missing.

Merchant Taylors' Schools commit in this policy to observing the principles of the Equality Act [2010] and does not discriminate on any grounds.

2. Policy Statement

The welfare of all of the pupils at Merchant Taylors' Schools is of paramount importance. Every adult who works or volunteers at the School is aware that they have a responsibility for helping to keep all our pupils safe at all times.

3. Relationship to Guidelines, Procedures, other Policies, and Legal Requirements

Every possible action will be taken where concern is caused over the fact that a pupil is or may be missing.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education [2024]
- Working Together to Safeguard Children [2024]

4. Registration

Registration is the formal mechanism by which the Schools identify and confirm the presence of all pupils.

Registration is taken by Form teachers at 8:45am and again at afternoon registration (time dependent on age group). This is recorded using the school iSAMS system.

Tutors / Class Teachers will only mark as present pupils who are actually in the room at am or pm registration.

Reception will amend the register to record the presence of those who are late or who have been attending a school activity.

Parents are asked to notify Reception and the form tutor / class teacher when their child is absent as appropriate. Any absences which have not been reported are first checked to see if the pupil is in school. If not, reception will contact home via SMS/email to find out the reason for absence; if no response is received, attempts will be made to telephone parents/guardians. If further attempts to contact the parents are unsuccessful, friends will be asked if they know where the child is.

All absences must be followed up to ensure that we have an explanation, and the correct code should be entered in the register by the Class Teacher, Form Tutor, Head of House or Receptionist and will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department for Education. *See separate Attendance Policy for more detail.

In line with DfE requirements and the Schools' Attendance Policy, all attendance is recorded and monitored routinely.

5. Unauthorised absence

An unauthorised absence code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given and where the School is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence or delayed attendance meaning that the code for "unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance" is not appropriate.

Examples include:

- holiday has not been authorised by the School or is in excess of the period determined by the Head;
- the reason for absence has not been provided;
- a pupil is absent from school without authorisation;
- a pupil has arrived in school after registration has closed and without reasonable explanation.

Further details are contained in the Attendance Policy.

5. Contact Details

On admission to the Schools, contact details are recorded for all pupils, including emergency and secondary contacts. Contact details are recorded in iSAMs with two sets of contact details are stored for each child wherever this is possible. Parents are able to update their contact details directly using the iSAMS App and/or parent portal.

6. Procedures

A pupil may be identified as missing in several scenarios, including:

- Failure to attend registration;
- Failure to attend a lesson or other commitment without permission;
- Reporting by other pupils that 'X' has disappeared from the site or an off-site excursion.

In the last point, it may well be appropriate to contact the Police immediately if you consider the pupil to be at risk or if the other pupils are alarmed about the circumstances. In making such a decision, aspects such as the age and vulnerability of the pupil should be taken into account.

Whenever possible, concerned staff/individuals should speak with the relevant Assistant Head [Pastoral] or member of the Senior Leadership Team for guidance.

6.1 Missing Pupils During the School Day

A pupil who has been registered as present at School but is subsequently found to be absent for no known reason is deemed to be a missing pupil. Once it has been ascertained that a pupil is missing, the procedure below should be followed with the Assistant Head [Pastoral] identified as the lead member of staff.

- 1) Staff should let the Assistant Head Pastoral know as soon as possible that there is a
- 2) missing pupil. [S]he will then coordinate the search. The Assistant Head Pastoral will then contact teachers and pupils who have
- 3) been with the missing pupil prior to the disappearance to determine at what point in the day the pupil was last seen.
- 4) If this initial search fails to locate the pupil the Assistant Head will arrange for a larger team of adults to search the immediate area/grounds.
- 5) Attempts will be made to contact the pupil via Teams (Senior only).
- 6) If the pupil is not found within 30 minutes, the Headteacher will be informed and a fire
- 7) drill/whole-school evacuation will be considered to identify if the pupil is on site. If the pupil is still not located, the Assistant Head Pastoral will contact the pupil's parents to explain what has happened and the procedure that has been followed.
- 8) Following this, the School may contact the Police at which point Police procedure will be followed. If the pupil's home is within walking distance, the Assistant Head [Pastoral] will consider sending a member of staff to walk the route.
- 9) The Deputy Head Pastoral will contact the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership and will cooperate fully with any safeguarding investigation by Social Care.
- 10) If stage 8 has been reached, and the pupil is subsequently located, this will be communicated to teaching and support staff by email or telephone.
- 11) Others who may need to be informed depending on the outcome of searches are the Chair of Governors, ISI and the School Insurers.
- 12) If the pupil is located but has been injured, a report will be made, under RIDDOR, to the HSE if required.
- 13) A full report will be completed with a review of all actions taken, and shared with the relevant Safeguarding governors.

6.2 Procedure to be Followed if a Pupil Goes Missing on a Trip or Visit

During a trip/visit, risk assessment provides guidance on ensuring the location and safeguarding of pupils at all times, including staff responsibility for this. If a pupil is found to be missing during a school trip or visit, the following procedure should be followed:

- 1) An immediate head count should be carried out in order to ensure that all other pupils are present.
- 2) Confirm with the members of the group when and where the missing pupil was last seen.
- 3) Attempt to contact the pupil by mobile phone (if they have been allowed it) or Teams (senior school only); friends may have a different contact number or social media connection to the one in school records.
- 4) A member of staff will search the immediate vicinity.
- 5) The SLT link should be informed by telephone.
- 6) The remaining pupils should be taken back to transport or, on a residential trip, the accommodation. If the trip is local, pupils should be taken back to school, whilst a member of staff remains 'on location'.
- 7) If the trip is to an enclosed area, the venue manager should be contacted to arrange a search.
- 8) The Assistant Head Pastoral will inform the Headteacher, and then will contact the pupil's parents as soon as possible and explain what has happened and the procedures that have been followed. Following this the Assistant Head Pastoral will contact the Police, and the School will act in accordance with Police advice.

- 9) The Assistant Head Pastoral will inform the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- 10) The School will co-operate with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care.
- 11) Others who may need to be informed depending on the outcome of searches are the Chair of Governors, ISI and the School Insurers. If the pupil is located but has been injured, a report will be made, under RIDDOR, to the HSE if required.
- 12) A full report will be completed with a review of all actions taken, and shared with the relevant Safeguarding governors.

7. Records and Review

Full records of any missing pupil incident will be kept on CPOMS and, following the incident, the Assistant Head Pastoral will conduct a review of the effectiveness of procedures. Where appropriate, statements from individuals involved in a missing pupil incident will be stored with details of the incident on CPOMS.

8. Children Missing from Education

8.1 Children who are unexplainably and/or persistently absent from education.

A child who is absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. All staff should be aware that children who are absent from education, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse, neglect and exploitation, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of FGM or forced marriage.

There are many circumstances where a child may become absent from education, but some children are particularly at risk. These include children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Come from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

Our attendance procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. The Schools will ensure that they work together with Sefton Council, Schools and Families, alongside other partners, to track any pupils believed to be out of school for any reason until they are registered in a new school or other education provision by following the guidelines set out in the DfE document: Children Missing Education (September 2016) and KCSIE (September 2024).

The Schools will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the Schools' permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the Schools and the Local Authority.

Our schools will hold at least two contact numbers for every child. These will be used as part of the First Day Calling process. We also ask parents for additional options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education, is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

8.2 Notifying the Local Authority

Our schools notify the Local Authority of any child who fails to attend school regularly after making reasonable enquiries or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. The schools (regardless of designation) must also notify the Local Authority of any child who is to be deleted from the admission register. Our schools will demonstrate that we have taken reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of children that would be considered missing from education. Where a child leaves the school without a destination or another school is not identified, our schools follow Sefton Council Children Missing Education Procedures and they can be found at: <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/schools-learning/attendance-and-children-missing-education/>

Oversight

This policy is overseen by the Education & Safeguarding Committee of the Governing Body. It will be reviewed at least once in every three-year period, and also is a missing pupil occurs and prompts an extraordinary review.