



Ireby Church of England Primary School

Vision – ‘Created to do good’ – Ephesians 2:10

‘First-day-of-absence’ calling procedure

(The school’s safeguarding response to a child’s unexplained absence from school)

*NOTE: This procedure must **NOT** be confused with the procedure to follow when a child goes missing whilst under the care of school staff. (For that subject please see the school’s ‘Missing Child procedure’.)*

Approved by: ¹

Michael John
Head Teacher:

Date: 31/01/2024

Philippa Irving
Chair of Governors:

Date: 31/01/2024

Next review date: ² 30/01/2025

¹ This policy requires approval from the Full Governing Body

² This document must be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation/statutory guidance changes.
It is not a requirement for this policy to be published on the school website.

REVIEW SHEET

Each entry in the table below summarises the changes made to this document since the last review.

Version Number	Version Description	Date of Revision
01	New document	13/02/2023
02	Reviewed in light of KAHSC Sept 2023 version v5. Formatting has been changed to ensure clarity regarding when this procedure applies; policy content is unchanged.	31/01/2024

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INTRODUCTION

Nationally, there have been three recent cases which have highlighted the need for robust first-day-of-absence calling procedures and emergency contact forms. These cases emphasise that such procedures are not only important for children who the school may consider 'vulnerable' but are actually important for all children, because the child's absence from school may, in itself, be indicative that they have become vulnerable.

The cases are summarised below for context:

- A mum died from an epileptic seizure while bathing her children aged 3 and 4. The next morning the school phoned home immediately after checking registers, got no answer and so continued ringing through the contact list until they had an answer. A family member went to the house and found mum had died, but the children were safe.
- A dad died from natural causes. Mum was working away from home, and the children were 2 and 4. In the morning mum rang dad, got no answer, but assumed he was doing the school run and continued with her day. The school noted the absence of the 4 year old. They started 'first-day-of-absence calling' 2 hours after registration and rang dad only, leaving a message. They did not ring anyone else on the contact list. They repeated the call to dad at 3.40pm. Mum rang home at the end of her working day, and now worried rang another school mum. Grandmother went to the home and could not gain access because of a key in the lock inside. The Police gained entry at 8pm; the children had been alone with their deceased dad all day.
- A Mum died. School made a call to her when the child was not at school, but the contact list was not used. No further calls were made. A letter was sent to the parent 3 days later. Eventually the house was entered 5 days later. The child, age 6/7, who was non-verbal and had SEN, had also died.

FIRST-DAY-OF-ABSENCE CALLING PROCEDURE

The following procedure has been shared with school staff, and will be used to respond to a child's **unexplained** absence from school:

1. Registers saved.
2. Late children checked against registers if recorded separately.
3. Absence calls listened to/attendance emails checked.
4. First day text sent to first name on contact list within half an hour of school start time asking for response.
5. If no response to text start calling first name on contact list within 45 minutes of school start time.
6. Ring down contact list until reply is received, ensuring where possible that someone from outside of the family home has been contacted.
7. Alert Head teacher that this child is absent and no contact has been made within an hour of school start time.
8. If no reply, send second text and email to first and second contacts on list.
9. Home visit made if possible/appropriate (by school or other agency involved).
10. Contact Police (using the 101 number) and LA Children Missing from Education Officer if all other stages have been completed and there is still no contact regarding the absent child.

Notes:

- *The above procedure must **NOT** be confused with the procedure to follow when a child goes missing whilst under the care of school staff. (See the school's 'Missing Child procedure'.)*
- *The School Admission Form which Parents complete for their child includes emergency contact details, and parents are responsible for updating this information, as & when necessary.*
- *The school will retain emergency contact information on the Scholar pack system.*
- *It is imperative that schools also consider what arrangements have been made around Emergency Contacts and first-day-of-absence calling procedures, when children have been placed in Alternative Provision, In the context of a child being absent without contact from parent please consider the following:*
 - *Who is responsible for following up an absent child?*
 - *Are the Emergency Contacts shared – when/how?*
 - *Would the same first-day calling procedure be followed and by whom?*
 - *Does the school accurately record the attendance of children in Alternative Provision?*