

St Mary & St Michael's Catholic Primary School



Children who are missing throughout the day Policy

By Living our Values- We Shine!

At St Mary & St Michael's we welcome all.

- ♥ We accept and celebrate uniqueness through love, care and compassion, serving all God's family.
- ♥ We respect each other and our aspirations.
- ♥ We nurture our faith and have the courage to forgive.
- ♥ We give everyone the opportunity to shine by working together in the warmth of our school community.
- ♥ We create a love for learning to allow us to achieve our dreams.

Agreed by staff: Summer 2024

Shared with parents: Summer 2024

Governors: Summer 2024

Review Date: September 2025

This protocol refers to pupils who register at school in the morning and then go missing during the school day without a satisfactory explanation. St Mary and St Michael's Primary School has procedures for pupils who fail to register, if there are concerns about the level of attendance the Enforcement Guidance should be used.

A separate procedure exists for Children Missing Education. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a child missing education as a child who is not on a school roll and has been out of education for more than 4 school weeks. The term Children Missing from Education (CME) therefore refers to all children of compulsory school age who are neither registered at a school nor educated otherwise (i.e. home educated or privately educated.)

Missing Definition: When a pupil's whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be the subject of a crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.

Is the pupil at significant risk?

A pupil missing during schools hours incident would be prioritised as significant risk' where: · The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the child/young person is in danger through their own vulnerability.

Vulnerability characteristics may include:

Children on a plan (Early Help, Child in Need, Looked After or Child Protection Plan)

A disability and/or special educational needs

Substance misuse

Education health care plan

The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger.

There are indications that the child/young person has already come to harm (CSE, grooming, radicalisation etc.)

Other contributory factors should be taken into consideration when determining if the pupil is at significant risk, for example:

Have there been past concerns about this child and family which together with the sudden disappearance are worrying?

Is there any known history of drug or alcohol dependency within the family?

Is there any known history of domestic violence?

Is there concern about the parent/carer's ability to protect the child from harm?

Is this very sudden and unexpected behaviour?

Have there been any past concerns about the child associating with significantly older young people or adults?

Was there any significant incident prior to the child's unexplained absence?

Has the child been a victim of bullying/child on child abuse?

Are there health reasons to believe that the child is at risk? e.g. does the child need essential medication or health care?

Was the child noted to be depressed prior to the child's unexplained absence?

Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk? e.g. rites of passage, female genital mutilation or forced marriage planned for the child?

Procedure

Once a pupil is identified as missing by any member of school staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (in this school and through SSMM Children's Club it is Mrs Luena Archibald) will be informed. Staff will use professional judgement and risk assess the urgency of the situation to help inform the timeframe required in establishing the pupils' whereabouts before notifying the Police. Timelines should be on a case-by-case basis. Designated Safeguarding Lead should, together with the class teacher/play worker, assess the child's vulnerability. Staff will try to locate the pupil and try to establish the whereabouts of them. Staff will contact home.

Notifying the Police

The information required by the Police to assist in locating and returning the pupil to a safe environment is as follows:

The pupils name/s;

date of birth; status (for example looked after child); responsible authority;

Where and when they went missing;

Previous missing episodes and where they went;

Who, if anyone, they went missing with;

What the child was wearing plus any belongings they had with them such as bags

Description and recent photo;

Medical history, if relevant;

Time and location last seen;

Circumstances or events around going missing with relevant safeguarding information;

Details of family, friends and associates:

Contact details of safeguarding lead if it was after school hours.

Whilst the search is ongoing, the school will continue to liaise with the police and act in accordance with police instructions.

Option 1 – if the child returns before the police have arrived then the Police must be informed and own school procedures need to be followed.

Option 2 - if the child returns to school of their own volition, then the Police must be informed and own school procedures need to be followed.

Option 3 - if the police locate the child and bring them back to the school the Police will conduct the safe and well interview (with school staff present) and the school will follow School procedure. Where a pupil has a known risk of being missing, a risk assessment for the pupil will be written and put in to place.