

Procedure for Children Missing Education
St Francis' Catholic Primary School



Approved by FGB on: N/A

Committee Responsible:

Next review due by: Feb 21

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Procedure for Children Missing Education

Pupils New to the School

- Once a pupil is allocated a place (whether new intake or in-year admission) the school will take responsibility to find out where the pupil is if s/he fails to attend on the agreed start date
- Any pupil failing to attend on the agreed start date will be admitted to the school roll and must be listed on the admissions and attendance register
- The school will follow the guidelines listed below to establish the reason for absence and mark the register as an unauthorised attendance
- The school will update its SIMS systems with all new expected admissions
- The school will notify the local authority within five days of any in-year applications and the outcome of these applications
- If a child arrives in school with an unknown previous school, the Core Data Team will be contacted to enable them to carry out a DfE School to School check

Pupils on Roll

- The guidelines below will be followed from the first day of a child's unexplained absence from school
- When a parent informs the school that a pupil will be living at another address, the school will record the full name of the parent with whom the child will live, the new address and the date on which the child will start living at the address
- A pupil on roll who has no known address and is not attending school may be treated as missing from education
- A pupil who has been excluded with no new school place or provision may be treated as missing from education

Pupils Leaving the School

- Common Transfer Files will be sent to the child's new school within 15 school days of the child's last day as a registered pupil
- The name of the new school and the date on which the child is due to start attending the new school will be recorded on the admission register
- When a child leaves the school and no destination is known, a file should be generated for the pupil and the destination shown as LA number XXX and school number XXXX (DfE school2school database)
- When a child leaves the school and the destination is outside the maintained sector in England and Wales, a file should be generated for the pupil and the destination shown as LA number MMM and school number MMMM (DfE school2school database)

- The school will ask for and keep written confirmation from the parents of children who are moving abroad and will ask for contact details (personal address and telephone number and new school address etc). The school will request confirmation of the child's attendance at the new school; if this is not forthcoming within 12 weeks, the child should be treated as missing from education

Guidelines for when a child is absent from school

1. School office to call all known contacts on the first day of the child's absence as soon as is practically possible
2. School office will speak with other family members at the school
3. School office will speak to staff at siblings' schools if known
4. Senior member of school staff will visit child's home address, repeatedly if necessary and may inform the police and social services at this point
5. Within ten days of the child's first absence from school, but sooner if it is deemed for the child's safety, the school must treat the child as potentially missing from education and inform the Local Authority

Guidelines for Child Missing while in the Care of School

St Francis' Catholic Primary School takes the safety of children very seriously and will take every precaution necessary to ensure that the children do not leave a session unaccompanied. Many of our school routines and procedures are in place to contribute to the prevention of a child going missing and to ensuring the safety and security of all children at all times. In the event of a member of staff not being able to account for a child's whereabouts, the following action will be taken:

Stage One - Search systematically

- All available staff to immediately check toilets, shared areas, rooms and playground to ensure the child is not hiding or locked in anywhere
- One member of staff to immediately inform school office / Headteacher or member of staff in charge and check whether the child is legitimately off-site, has been signed out for an external appointment or has an internal appointment with a visiting professional
- Staff will ensure that all other pupils are kept safe and closely supervised throughout incident

Staff will check that no other pupils are missing.

Stage Two

- After stage one is completed without resolution (no more than 10 minutes), school office staff will contact the police and parents/carers with parental responsibility. At this point, school will support the police who will now lead the response to this incident. The

Headteacher or most senior member of staff available will liaise with emergency services and parents/carers.

Stage Three

- The Headteacher should communicate the incident to the Chair of Governors
- A written record of the incident and any action taken should be made as soon after the incident as practicable and placed in the pupil's confidential record
 - Appropriate discussions, review of the incident and any consequences to the child will be carried out in a calm manner and environment as soon as possible after the event
- The Senior Management Team should conduct an internal investigation to establish how the situation occurred, how effective was the response and whether action could be taken to ensure it does not happen again.

Procedures for children who abscond from school

The purpose of this non-statutory document is to set out the procedures for all stakeholders should a child leave the school without permission.

We actively work to provide a secure, safe environment, a school where children want to come to enjoy learning with others as part of a caring community. Although incidents of pupils absconding are rare, these procedures are in place to ensure we are ready to deal with this eventuality should it occur.

Our first aim must always be to do what we can to keep the child and other children safe and not exacerbate any difficult situations. We recognise that children who abscond are in need of our help and reassurance, and we expect vulnerable children to be treated calmly and respectfully by staff and with understanding of the potential causes of the need to abscond. Staff are not expected to put themselves at risk or in danger of potential injury or harm. Staff are not expected to physically restrain children.

To abscond is to 'leave without permission' Under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and in Common Law, schools and other education settings owe a duty of care towards their pupils. This duty of care requires that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that pupils are safe and remain within the care of the school at all times throughout the school day and during school led activities. Although some of the perimeter of the site is fenced and the main entrances have electronic release systems, we recognise that it is possible to circumvent these barriers.

The Procedure is as Follows:

1. The Headteacher, (or Deputy head in the head's absence) and the school office must be informed as soon as possible. One member of the office staff will lock the school gates and ensure phones are answered.
2. The headteacher will organise a search of the building and known places that the pupil may have gone if the pupil's whereabouts is unknown.
3. If the pupil is not found then all available staff will complete a more thorough sweep of the school and grounds. The pupil's parents will be informed no later than at this stage. Every unsuccessful attempt to make contact with the parents will be recorded alongside the time the call was made.
4. Consideration will then be given as to whether the search should be extended beyond the school buildings and grounds. This decision will be based on staff knowledge of the child and levels of risk and on what action is in the child's best interests. The most senior member of staff in the school will be responsible for this decision.
5. At this stage, serious consideration needs to be given to calling the police. This should be more pressing if the child's parents have not been contactable.
6. Once the child is back in school, the most senior member of staff will decide what action needs to be taken. This will largely depend on the individual child and his / her situation but might include consequences, discussion with parents, referral to the SENDCo or to an outside agency.

7. Procedure in the event of a decision to follow the child:

- Staff will be directed by the head teacher
- Any staff member leaving the school site will take a mobile phone with a number known to the school
- Staff are to follow the child calmly at a reasonable distance. There must be no sense of chase or panic
- If staff are directed to follow by car, they will do so at a safe distance with the utmost caution, giving priority to their own and others' safety
- Staff following the child must keep in close contact with the school office
- Members of staff approaching the child must use their professional judgement and make the safety of the child the first priority. It may be that a discussion is enough to bring the child back to school
- Once the child is back in school, the parents must be informed
- The most senior teacher will then make a decision about next steps.

Covid-19 Addendum (subject to further government guidance)

- Parents will not be penalised for choosing to keep children at home
- Registers will be taken for the children of Key Workers and for year groups included in the Wider Reopening
- Registers will be taken each morning and afternoon in accordance with government guidelines
- Children classed as vulnerable by the government will be expected to be at school
- Children considered vulnerable by the school will be strongly encouraged to attend the setting

We will assume that all children who have been invited to return to school will return on a regular basis. Parents /carers will be asked on a weekly basis to inform us if they **do not intend** to accept the invitation and a record of this will be kept by the school office. Any children expected to attend that week and then not attending school with no explanation from the family will be treated as a Child Missing in Education and the usual school protocols followed.