



Missing Student Procedure

1. Introduction

This procedure is to be used for searching for, and if necessary, reporting, any student missing from Trinity School. The procedure includes the requirement to record any incident, the actions taken to establish the whereabouts of the student and the reasons given by the student for being missing.

NB: A child going missing from school or from home is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. When dealing with a missing student incident, staff should act to identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation.

The Senior Deputy Head and Deputy Head Pastoral (Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)) or, in their absence, one of the Deputy DSLs should always be informed when a student is found to be missing. The Senior Deputy Head or DSL/DDSL will brief the Headmaster as required.

In cases where a student has gone missing on repeat occasions, or where a single instance of truancy or running away gives rise to concerns of abuse or neglect or other risk of harm, or where there is evidence of a crime, the matter will be referred to other agencies, including children's social care services and/or the police.

2. Missing Child Procedure

- The Senior Deputy Head and DSL are to be informed immediately if a student is found to be missing from School.
- The Senior Deputy Head will inform the Headmaster and keep him apprised of developments.
- If a student goes missing, his/her tutor, or another responsible teacher e.g. Head of Year (hereafter referred to as the "Responsible Person") will search the School in order to determine whether or not the student is on-site. While carrying out this search, the Responsible Person will also make every effort to contact the student by phone and get him/ her back into School.
- The Senior Deputy Head or DSL will contact the student's parents in order to inform them of our concern and to find out whether or not they know the whereabouts of their son/daughter.

- If the missing student cannot be traced within an hour of being reported missing, the Senior Deputy Head having consulted with the DSL, will make a Risk Assessment Judgement of the situation (see below) and make a decision as to:
 - whether to inform the Police immediately;
 - whether a longer timescale should be created and what the Responsible Person and any other member of staff should do during any such time extension, including key check-points for a subsequent further action & re-assessment, and a cut-off point after which the police must be contacted.
- The Responsible Person will keep the Senior Deputy Head and DSL (or, in their absence one of the Deputy DSLs) informed of the situation as it develops.
- The Senior Deputy Head will remain in contact with the student's parents and keep them apprised of developments.

3. Making the Risk Assessment Judgement

A number of contextual factors will be taken into account, including:

- Possible threat factors: time of day, darkness, weather conditions, known local concerns;
- Proximity of School timings (e.g. morning or afternoon registration) from which the student would not have been absent without good reason or which are worth waiting until before considering them to be missing.
- Individual student circumstances: age, judgement, known personal, pastoral or disciplinary issues, mood and/ or communications prior to going missing, previous instances of going missing;
- Any reassurances/ likelihood as to their whereabouts;
- Any parental indication of concern.

Specifically:

- In the case of a student about whom there are pre-existing welfare concerns then the timeframe must be compressed, and the Police must be contacted by the one hour point (see below).
- If the student is young (JBug – Year Five) and staff have received no assurance as to his whereabouts, then the Police should be contacted at the one-hour point.

All Staff should remember that:

- Early contact with the police may help to save a student's life/save them from significant harm;
- Failing to act within a reasonably responsive time frame could prove costly;

- Staff must feel confident in making sensible judgements as to the whereabouts of the student, as a normal parent would – but always err on the side of caution, and believe that 'sooner is better than later'.

4. Contacting the Police

Generally, before the Police are called, the Senior Deputy Head, DSL/Deputy DSL and the student's parents should be informed. However, where attempts to contact the Senior Deputy Head, DSL/Deputy DSL and/or the parents are unsuccessful, this should not delay making contact with the Police. When contacting the Police to report a Missing Child, call 101 in the first place but, if circumstances dictate, do not hesitate to call 999. Pass to the Police all pertinent details as they request.

Ask for their direct contact number, so that you can make swift contact should the situation change.

Where the School contacts the Police, the following information should be provided:

- the student's name
- the student's age
- if available, the student's mobile telephone number
- an up-to-date photograph if possible
- the student's height, physical description and any physical peculiarities
- any disability, learning difficulty or special educational needs that the student may have
- the student's home address and telephone number
- a description of the clothing the student is thought to be wearing
- any relevant comments made by the student such as "I'm going to run away to Edinburgh".
- any suspicion/ evidence of a crime.

The information will then be passed to the various police stations through police channels and no further notifications from the School should be necessary – except if the student turns up, when the school will notify the Police of his/ her return.

5. Record-Keeping

Depending on the incident, the DSL will keep a record of the incident. As such, as soon as possible following the conclusion of the incident, the Responsible Person should provide to the DSL a written record of:

- the student's name;
- relevant dates and times;
- the decisions and actions taken to find the student and the reasons for them;
- whether the police or social services were informed;

- outcome or resolution of the incident;
- any reason given by the student for going missing;
- any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident;
- a record of the staff involved;
- Any other salient information.

6. Follow-up to a Missing Student Incident

Once a student returns from being missing they will be provided with support and the opportunity to discuss the incident with the DSL and the School Counsellor. They may also be provided with the contact details for external support services (e.g. NSPCC).

The student's parents will also be given the opportunity to discuss the incident with the DSL, who will provide advice and support where required.

Any residual concerns about the student's welfare resulting from an incident will be acted upon and, where appropriate, Children's Social Care Services and/or the Police will be informed, in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures.

8. Missing students when educational provision is remote

In a remote learning situation, students are the direct responsibility of their parents. This said, students are still expected to register that they are working that day and turn up to their lessons. Where a student is known to be working but absent from their lessons, their classroom teacher should report the absence to absence@trinity.croydon.sch.uk or to jeb@trinity.croydon.sch.uk directly. The School Office will follow this absence up by contacting home.

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| Section | Change | Reason |
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| 8. Missing students when educational provision is remote | In a remote learning situation, students are the direct responsibility of their parents. This said, students are still expected to register | Clarity of how a student can be missing in a remote/hybrid situation and what processes would be followed. |

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