

## PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH MISSING PUPILS

*'All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education other than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.'* Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 'Children Missing Education' September 2016

This new legislation refers to the following-

- Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (added by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- Education Act 1996 (section 7, 8, 14 and 19)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 4 and 38)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016

Maintained schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their pupils.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and such children are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation. Beechwood staff should follow procedures for unauthorised absence and for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future. Staff should report to the DSL and use the Safeguarding Policy. Beechwood has in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. Further information about children at risk of missing education can be found in the [Children Missing Education](#) guidance.

### **Schools**

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers. Beechwood places pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, Beechwood will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity to prevent the child from going missing from education.

It is important that the admission register is accurate and kept up to date. Beechwood regularly encourages parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur. This can assist the school and local authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education. Beechwood monitors attendance and addresses it when it is poor or irregular.

**All schools must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.**

Where a parent notifies Beechwood that a pupil will live at another address, Beechwood, like **all** schools is required to record in the admission register:

- the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- the new address; and
- the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent of a pupil notifies Beechwood that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, schools must record in the admission register:

- the name of the new school; and
- the date on which the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

Schools are required to notify the local authority **within five days** when a pupil's name is added to the admission register. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply to pupils who are registered at the start of the school's youngest year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.

Schools must also notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register **under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for deletion is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register.** This duty does not apply where the pupil has completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.

A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraph (f)(iii) or (h)(iii) if the school and the local authority have failed to establish the pupil's whereabouts after jointly making reasonable enquiries. Advice on carrying out reasonable enquiries can be found in the [Children Missing Education](#) guidance.

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of the parent with whom the pupil lives;
- the full name and address of the parent with whom the pupil is going to live, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- the name of pupil's destination school and the pupil's expected start date there, if applicable; and
- the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Schools and local authorities should work together to agree on methods of making returns. **When making returns, Beechwood should highlight to the local authority where they have been unable to obtain the necessary information from the parent, for example in cases where the child's destination school or address is unknown.** Beechwood should also consider whether it is appropriate to highlight any contextual information of a vulnerable child who is missing education, such as any safeguarding concerns.

**It is essential that schools comply with these duties, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who**

**might be at risk of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of being harmed, exploited or radicalised.**

The department provides a secure internet system – school2school – to allow schools to transfer pupil information to another school when the child moves. All local authority maintained schools are required, when a pupil ceases to be registered at their school and becomes a registered pupil at another school in England or Wales, to send a Common Transfer File (CTF) to the new school. At Beechwood we have access to school2school to receive CTF files and provide copies of pupil files to destination schools.

The school2school website also contains a searchable area, commonly referred to as the ‘Lost Pupil Database’, where schools can upload CTFs of pupils who have left but their destination or next school is unknown or the child has moved abroad or transferred to a non-maintained school. If a pupil arrives in a school and the previous school is unknown, schools should contact their local authority who will be able to search the database.

## **PUPILS MISSING WITHIN THE SCHOOL DAY**

When a pupil appears to be missing the following routine is carried out:

- The member of staff involved checks with the School Office in the first instance on 3Sys and in the signing in/out registers to ensure that the pupil is expected to be in School or has been in School prior to the lesson.
- The member of staff involved (or the School Office) checks that the missing pupil is not with the School Nurse or in Learning Development or in an extra-curricular lesson, e.g., Music Lesson or, for a boarding pupil out of teaching hours, with residential staff or at a medical appointment.
- The Head and Deputy Head or Head of Prep, or Head of Boarding, as appropriate, are informed.
- For a Day Pupil, parents are contacted to ensure that the pupil has not returned home. (Contacting the pupil via their mobile phone is an option to be utilised in this instance.)
- A thorough search of the School is conducted. If, after the search of the School the pupil has still not been found, for a Senior School pupil a two-minute bell is rung. *This means that the whole Senior School, pupils, staff and Headmaster assemble in the Auditorium.* \* For a Preparatory School pupil, the emergency hand bell is rung in Regina Mundi and Junior House. *This means that the whole Preparatory School, pupils, staff, Head of Prep and Headmaster assemble in the Paddock.* Having gathered the necessary checks can be made. If the pupil is still missing the next step is followed.
- If the pupil is still missing and nobody is aware of his/her whereabouts, the following actions are taken:
  - Day Pupil                      Parents are informed
  - UK Boarder                    Parents and Police should be informed if the pupil is not found within the hour.
  - Overseas Boarder          Police are informed if the pupil is not found within the hour. Then the guardian is informed.

The Head will inform the Police when necessary.

\* The Two Minute Bell Protocol applies to the Boarding House in the evenings and at the Weekends.

- Should a pupil (day or boarder) be reported as missing, the requirement to record any incident, the action taken and the reasons given by the pupil for being missing is to be undertaken. This responsibility rests with the DHM or the Head of Prep as appropriate.
- This policy should also be cross reference with the School's Disaster Plan policy which contains useful contact and other procedural information.

Reviewed by DHM: September 2019

Date of next review: September 2020