



CITY OF LONDON SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

MISSING CHILD POLICY

Policy last reviewed by:	Susannah Gilham
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This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Parents' Handbook
- Prep Parents' Handbook
- Pupil Code of Conduct
- School Health and Safety Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- School Contingency Plan

1. Introduction

The welfare of all of the children at the school is our paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is appropriately supervised when she is in our care.

2. Procedure for dealing with a child who is missing from morning registration

- 2.1 Procedures for parents to follow in the case of pupil absence are set out in The Parents' Handbook.
- 2.2 Parents are requested to inform the school in advance of any planned absence, for example for medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged during the school holidays.
- 2.3 Parents should write to the pupil's Form Tutor in the first instance. The Form Tutor will use the appropriate code in the register on the day of the girl's absence to indicate the cause.

In the case of a planned absence that is a day or longer, permission needs to be sought from the Head of Section in the first instance. The Head of Section may in turn refer to the Deputy Head Pastoral or the Headmistress.

- 2.4 In the case of unexpected absence, most typically because of illness, parents are requested to email the Attendance Officer (attendance@clsg.org.uk) before 8.00am on the first day of the absence.
- 2.5 Morning registration takes place at 8.40am and registers are checked by the Attendance Officer who makes a list of any unexplained absences.
- 2.6 The Attendance Officer will then check the rooms in which pupils listed as missing without explanation are timetabled to be taught, in order to ensure that they are not in fact in school and have been registered as absent in error.
- 2.7 The Attendance Officer telephones the parents or guardians of those who are absent without explanation to establish whether the girl is unwell or whether there is some other explanation for her absence of which they have failed to inform the school.

- 2.8 If the Attendance Officer is not able to make contact with the parents and guardians of those who are absent without explanation, they will email the Deputy Head Pastoral, the Head of Section and the Head of Year to let them know.
- 2.9 The Deputy Head Pastoral and/or the relevant Head of Section or Head of Year investigates those absences that continue to be unexplained, for example by calling the pupil on their mobile phone, checking whether or not their friends are aware of any reason why the pupil is not in school of which their parents have failed to inform the school.
- 2.10 The Deputy Head Pastoral exercises her professional judgement on how to pursue any unresolved instances of unexplained absence, if necessary contacting the police or social services.

3. Procedures for dealing with children who missing during the school day

- 3.1 City of London School for Girls is located on a secure site. Once the school day has begun, there is only one entry and exit point via reception which is manned throughout the school day and which is covered by CCTV. Gates and fences are treated with anti-climb paint.
- 3.2 Pupils cannot leave the school site without permission and must sign in and out if they are given permission to leave the school buildings.
- 3.3 Teachers take a register at the beginning of every lesson and make a note of who is absent.
- 3.4 If a girl is absent and there is no satisfactory explanation for her absence (e.g. she is absent from school for the day, has a music lesson or is with the School Nurse) the teacher reports the absence to the Attendance Officer at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.5 Unexplained absences from lessons of those who are registered as being in school are reported to the Deputy Head Pastoral or to the relevant Head of Section, who investigates the absence, organising a search of the premises if necessary.
- 3.6 In the very unlikely event of a pupil not being found when the premises are searched, and if it is suspected that they have managed to leave the school undetected (for example if they have somehow managed to scale a fence), the school will contact the pupil's parents or guardians and the police.

4. Procedures for dealing with children who go missing during educational visits away from the school site

- 4.1 All members of staff receive training on safety on educational visits, risk assessment and dealing with emergencies.
- 4.2 All educational visits are subject to a rigorous process of planning and approval which includes giving due consideration to staffing ratios and supervision arrangements.
- 4.3 Pupils are kept under direct or remote supervision at all times and are given clear instructions of how to act if they do get lost or become detached from the party. This information includes teachers' contact mobile phone numbers and emergency rendezvous instructions.
- 4.4 If a child does get lost and cannot be contacted, the teachers in charge of the visit will contact the local police and will contact the school emergency SMT contact.
- 4.5 Staff will be deployed so that enough teachers remain with the main party to ensure their safety whilst others assist the authorities in the search for the missing child.
- 4.6 The school emergency SMT contact will activate the school's Contingency Plan in consultation with the Bursar and Headmistress.

5. Actions to be followed by staff once the child is found

- 5.1 Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child.
- 5.2 Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing.
- 5.3 The Headmistress will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
- 5.4 The Headmistress will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving Children's Services Services/ the City and Hackney Children Safeguarding Partnership).
- 5.5 Media queries should be referred to the City of London Press Office.
- 5.6 The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements.

- 5.7 The report should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened, [the purpose of the outing], the length of time that the child was missing and how she appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.

6. Procedures for dealing with unauthorised absence of frequent or prolonged absences which lack a satisfactory explanation

- 6.1 If parents request permission to take their children out of school for a purpose which does not accord with DFE regulations governing schools' ability to grant authorised leave of absence, such as a family holiday in term time, permission will be refused and parents will be warned that if they do take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised .
- 6.2 If a child repeatedly takes unauthorised absence, or if the unauthorised absence is prolonged, the school will consult the Education Welfare Consultant at the City of London Department of Community and Children's Services. and may contact Children's Services and/or the attendance service in the child's home borough.
- 6.3 The same procedure will be followed if the school considers that no satisfactory explanation of a child's absence has been received