

# MORE HOUSE SCHOOL

## POLICY

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### MISSING CHILDREN

#### Rationale:

All members of staff have a duty of care for all children placed in the school. We must know where all children are at all times. Arrangement and carrying out of supervision duties is part of the 24 hour curriculum. This policy adheres to guidance and requirements specified by the Department for Education Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care (January 2014), and the Surrey Safeguarding Children's Partnership Procedures Manual for children missing from home or care available on the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership website at <https://surreyscb.procedures.org.uk/hkpho/procedures-for-specific-circumstances/children-missing><https://surreyscb.procedures.org.uk/hkpho/procedures-for-specific-circumstances/children-missing-from-care-and-home-under-review>[from-care-and-home-under-review#s1354](https://surreyscb.procedures.org.uk/hkpho/procedures-for-specific-circumstances/children-missing-from-care-and-home-under-review#s1354).

#### Broad Guidelines:

1. If any adult believes that a boy is missing from an activity or a lesson in which they are expected to be present, he or she must immediately inform the school office using internal telephone number 8888 if during normal working hours, or the senior member of staff on duty if during residential time (see telephone chain details at end of document). This contact must be made by telephone or in person. If the child subsequently re-appears the reporting member of staff must again inform the school office or senior member of staff on duty.
2. On receiving information that a child is missing, the school-office staff will inform a senior member of the teaching or residential staff who will take steps to locate the boy. If it is believed by any person that the boy is likely to be missing from the school site, the school office staff or senior member of staff on duty will immediately inform the Headmaster, his Deputy (Pastoral Care), or the Deputy Head (Head of Residential) depending on the time of day. Wherever possible the Headmaster must be kept informed.
3. Depending on the age of the child, the time of day and other circumstances, the Headmaster, his Deputy or the Head of Residential will assume the role of senior member of staff coordinating the investigation, and will initiate the following process.

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- a) Begin to maintain a written record of action relating to the investigation, including timings, to be shared with parents and the Police if necessary, and to be passed to the Deputy Head or Head of Residential for the central record, at the conclusion of the investigation.
- b) Investigate briefly the circumstances of the child's disappearance and especially seek information from the child's peer group; in particular the child's known friends.
- c) Organise a search of buildings and grounds via the On-Call Duty Staff and other available adults.
- d) If it is believed the child is in possession of a mobile telephone, and the number can be quickly obtained, the child's mobile telephone will be contacted by a member of staff designated by the senior member of staff coordinating the investigation.
- e) If it is likely that the child has left the school premises the Headmaster, his Deputy or Head of Residential will initiate a search by car of the immediate vicinity of the school using such members of the staff as are available.
- f) If, after these searches have taken place, the child is still missing, the Police and the child's parents will be informed. Appendix B provides a list of the details required by the Police at the time of reporting a child missing. The time-limit for contacting the Police for a younger boy, up to and including Year Eight, is one hour; and three hours for Year 9 upward. However, depending on time of day and other environmental factors such as temperature, weather and natural light, these time-limits should be brought forward as deemed appropriate by the senior member of staff coordinating the investigation.
- g) The Headmaster, his Deputy or Head of Residential must remain near a telephone until such time as the child returns, and the Police and the child's parents must be kept fully informed should any further information come to light.
- h) On his safe return, the student will receive personal support to ascertain the reason for his absconding, so as to prevent further occurrence.
- i) His physical health will be assessed and checked and where necessary he will be seen by the school nurse.
- j) Reintroduction to class or boarding. Referral for additional support, e.g. through the Pastoral Plus programme may be appropriate.
- k) A detailed account of the incident, including timings and staff action, will be kept on the MIS system in the Daybook and maintained by the Deputy Head (Head of Residential).

It is recognised that any incidence of a child deliberately absconding from school or from any place in which he is under the supervision of the school's staff, is likely to be an indication of unhappiness. Appropriate support should therefore be determined and put into place for the child.

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Guidance suggests that repeated instances of a child deliberately absconding could be an indication that the child is a victim of bullying or any form of abuse, including grooming, peer on peer abuse trafficking, radicalisation and sexual harassment or sexual exploitation. Any instance of repeated absconding must therefore be referred to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will investigate and take appropriate action to involve external support agencies.

Where a potential of being missing from school is identified through risk-assessment for any individual pupil, the DSL, or Head of Residential (in the case of a residential pupil) will share relevant information with the police in advance of such an instance of going missing. This information will include the pupil's profile, including name, age and special educational needs, and relevant risk assessment information. The purpose of this action is to effect a more effective response if such an instance of being missing should arise. Where such information is shared, the parents of the pupil will always be informed.

#### **Conclusion:**

The safety of all our children is the primary duty of care placed on all members of the staff.

#### **Appendix A: Telephone Chain**

##### **During the School Day**

School Office:	01252 792 303
Headmaster Mobile:	07736 776 157
Deputy Head (Pastoral) Mobile:	07387 026 044

##### **Outside of normal school teaching hours, and at the weekend**

Deputy Head (Head of Residential) Mobile:	07900 698 783
Headmaster Mobile:	07736 776 157

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#### **Appendix B: Information required by the Police when reporting a missing child**

The following information must be available when reporting a child or young person as missing or absent in order for the Police to make an accurate assessment of the risk, and locate the individual.

- Personal details of the individual (e.g. Name, Date of Birth, Sex, Nationality);
- Relationship of caller;
- Where they are missing/absent from;
- Details of when and where they were last seen and by whom;
- When they are / were due back;
- Idea of where the individual may be;
- Are they with anyone else (if yes, names and addresses/contact details of those people);
- Description of the child / young person including their clothing;
- Specific concerns on this occasion;\*
- What enquiries have been carried out by the informant to locate the individual;
- Is this out of character / are they a regular missing person / regular absences;
- Have they been, or are likely to be subject of crime?\*
- Is there a risk of harm to themselves or others?\*
- Any medication required? When this is due, and the effects of not taking it?
- Does the individual have access to vehicles (registration / description if known);
- Their usual method of transport;
- Language spoken / accent;
- Contact details of the individual (mobile phone number and provider, social media sites);
- Do they have any money or other means of payment?
- Places frequented by the child / young person;
- Details of known associates;
- Mental Health Act details;
- Social services or court order details.

\* Please note that informants will be asked for the information which justifies these concerns and will need this at the time of the call.

If the child / young person is categorised as missing, the informant will be asked to provide a recent photograph.

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#### Appendix C: External Support Telephone Contacts

- Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA): 0300 470 9100
- Surrey Police Missing Persons Unit: 01483 639674
- Surrey Safeguarding Children Unit: 01372 833314
- Surrey Emergency Duty Team: 01483 517898
- Surrey Children's Services: 0300 200 1006