



HOE BRIDGE SCHOOL

Missing Child

Statement

Hoe Bridge School aims to take all possible measures to ensure that pupils do not go missing whilst on school premises or on school trips. Formal registers are taken twice a day, before morning and afternoon lessons, and any absences are followed up promptly. During the school day, teachers are also expected to be aware of any students missing from their lessons and to follow up any concerns they might have about a pupil's absence from a lesson. Hoe Bridge School understands a "missing" pupil to be a pupil not present without authorisation or explanation.

Hoe Bridge School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures outlined below, which have been written with due regard for *Children Missing Education (2016)* and *Advice on School Attendance (2014)*. The school is committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory, in accordance with the *UK Equality Act (2010)*.

The policy applies to all members of our school community, including those in our EYFS setting and should read in conjunction with:

- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Educational Visits Policy
- Fire Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

The policy is reviewed annually by the Assistant Head (Pastoral) or as legislation changes and events require. The next date for review is April 2018.

Procedures

Hoe Bridge School understands missing pupils to belong to two distinct categories:

- (i) pupils who are present on any given day on the school site but then go missing at some point during the day without authorisation or explanation
- (ii) pupils who are absent from school without authorisation or explanation and who have not been marked present in the attendance register i.e. they have not disappeared from the school premises; rather they are missing from school

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altogether. In the case of such pupils, Hoe Bridge School follows the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006) (*with 2016 amendment*). This means that it has important statutory reporting responsibilities to the local authority. This is because pupils who are missing from education must be treated as potentially vulnerable.

Prevention

- Registration takes place at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- The secretaries check the register and phone for information regarding absences if no notes or calls have been sent in within ten minutes of registration closing.
- Children arriving late or being collected early are noted by the parent or secretary in the Late Book.
- Pre-Prep Music and PE staff are informed of the number of children in the class group on arrival for their lesson.
- Children in Year 2 going for games with the Prep staff are given a highlighted class list showing absences to give to the member of staff.
- Children are escorted to music, (Art, DT and ICT in Prep only) by their teacher or TA up to Year 3.
- A daily board of total numbers present on each day and any note of children leaving early is displayed in the Nursery.
- Year 2 children are counted going over to and returning from lunch.
- On trips, accompanying adults have a list of the children in their care which they check regularly.
- Pre-Prep children on trips wear identifiable wrist bands with the school's name and contact details.
- In the Pre-Prep children are forbidden to open doors to the outside and all gates are bolted.
- Access doors are locked with a key pad entry system known only to staff in the Pre-Prep. Prep pupils move freely around the Prep site and use the door codes independently.

Pupil missing during the school day (Category i)

If a child appears to be missing the procedures on the Major Incident Flow Chart (See appendix 1) should be followed specifically –

Pre –Prep and EYFS – children aged 3 to 7 years

- Ring a bell for all children to stop playing
- Children gathered or lined up with their class teacher and head counted
- Teacher to stay with remaining class and take back to classroom, reassure children
- TA to search, sweep the area with TA from another class
- Remaining class to join partner class so class teacher available if needed
- Office/Head to be alerted
- Secretary to access child's file with photo and contact details
- Head to assess situation and organise wider search with ground staff
- If not found on site proceed as below

Prep School – children aged 7 to 13 years

- Inform Head

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- Secretary to access child's photo and age details
- Question when child last seen, where and with whom
- Search – all available staff to conduct search of immediate surroundings – ground staff to search road, river

If not found on site

- Within **10 minutes** inform parents and police
- All available ground staff to drive round local area
- Senior staff member to drive to child's home if in walking distance

If still not found follow the procedures on the Major Incident Flow Chart. (See Appendix 1)

Pupil missing from school (Category ii)

Pupils whose absence from school gives rise to concern are potentially a Child Protection concern. Unauthorised absences of longer than ten days must be reported to the local authority. In practice, the Head must be kept informed sooner than this if there are concerns about a pupil's attendance.

The school would have concerns about a pupil who was absent from school without explanation or authorisation and where school office or teaching staff had been unable to contact the parents/guardians for an explanation. The procedure, as outlined in the Attendance Policy, is for school office to contact parents to ascertain the reason for any unexplained absences. Usually, such matters are resolved promptly when the parent responds.

School office staff must pass on the names of any pupils whose absence is still unexplained to the Head, Deputy Head, Assistant Head (Pastoral) in the Prep School and the Head of the Pre-Prep or her Deputy.

Should a pupil be missing from school without authorisation or explanation for more than two days, a senior pastoral member of staff would call parents/guardians the following day if the pupil was still missing without explanation.

If they are unable to make contact, unless inappropriate to do so, the pupils' friends should be asked whether they have heard from the pupil and if so they should ask their friend to make contact with the school.

If after 48 hours, there has been no contact from parents or the pupil and the school is unable to ascertain the pupil's whereabouts through additional emergency contacts listed on the school's database, the Head must be informed and a decision will be taken at that point about how to proceed. Legally the school must take action within 10 days and inform the local authority (2 days in the case of a pupil on a child protection plan) but in practice, it is very unusual for a pupil to be absent from Hoe Bridge School without any explanation for any length of time, and so the school would give consideration to contacting external services before the ten day period had expired.