



6-14 Missing Pupil Policy and Procedure

Policy

Guildford High 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. Guildford High School understands a "missing" pupil to be a pupil not present without authorisation or explanation.

This policy applies to all pupils in the school including EYFS pupils. Guildford High School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). The school seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document. This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Fire Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Educational Visits Policy

This policy will be reviewed in June 2017 by the Deputy Head (Pastoral). It is reviewed annually or as legislation or events require.

Guildford High School understands missing pupils to belong to two distinct categories:

- (i) pupils are who 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 altogether. In the case of such pupils, Guildford High 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.

Procedure for pupils missing during the school day or from school activities off-site (Category (i))

- Registers must be taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon teaching session, at the beginning of each activity at the sports centre, at the beginning of each out of hours extra-curricular activity and regularly during every off site activity. If for any reason the tutor does not turn up for registration, after 5 minutes, a member of the form should get the nearest available teacher and ask them to register the form. This can be done on a paper register which is then passed on to Reception, who will complete in iSAMS.



- In the event that a pupil is recorded as present in the morning or afternoon register but is not present or accounted for in her lessons and her absence cannot be explained (e.g. she has not signed out, she has not been sent home by the Nurse, nor had a music lesson), staff must inform a member of Senior Management Team without delay. In the Senior School this will be the Headmistress or one of the Deputy Heads. In the Junior School, the Head and Deputy Heads of the Junior School must be informed.
- **To alert Senior Management to the fact that a pupil is missing, staff can send an e-mail to all relevant members of the SMT (Senior or Junior) saying URGENT – MISSING PUPIL. The e-mail should state the pupil’s name and year group and any other relevant details. Alternatively, staff should call Senior or Junior Reception to ask them to e-mail on their behalf, or else find a member of the relevant SMT.** A dedicated email address has been set up: guildford-missingpupil@guildfordhigh.co.uk
- The exact point and time of when and where the pupil was last seen and by which adult must be ascertained. The adult last responsible for the child must be questioned as to the whereabouts of the pupil.
- In the event that the pupil’s absence cannot be explained and accounted for, a search of the building and area will be organised by the Senior Management Team, and the Headmistress must be informed. The search party will normally comprise of a member of Senior Management, the Head of Year and/or tutor (if available), and an appropriate number of teaching staff. In the Junior School, the Head and/or Deputy Heads and form teacher would usually be involved, and an appropriate number of teaching staff if necessary. If the pupil is believed to be off site, a search party will be sent to possible locations where the pupil might be. Members of the search party may wish to obtain relevant information from the missing pupil’s friend e.g. mobile telephone number.
- Administrative staff will be required to maintain the central point, the reception area. All parties involved in searching for the pupil must liaise with and return to an agreed point to discuss progress.
- In the event that the pupil is not found the Facilities Manager may be asked by a member of the search party (at the request of SMT) to ring the fire bell. The search party will continue to search the premises whilst the rest of the school evacuates the building. If the evacuation fails to locate the missing pupil, the police will be called using 999 by administrative staff or by a member of the search party. The missing pupil’s parents will be called by a senior member of staff.
- In the event that a pupil’s absence cannot be explained or accounted for in any off-site activity, the search is organised and led by the activity leader, the organisation responsible for the area used, and the police are called using 999 if, after an appropriate time, the search proves unsuccessful. The Headmistress (or the member of SMT on call, who will liaise with the Headmistress) should be contacted as soon as the police have been informed.
- At whichever point the pupil is found she must be reassured and all adults involved in her care must be convinced of her wellbeing and safety. In the event of any concerns the child protection liaison officer or social services must be informed. It is important that the pupil



understands the impact of her going missing – staff time, possibly police time, parental anxieties.

- In the case of an incident involving a pupil from our EYFS setting going missing, Ofsted must be informed within 14 days.
- Incidents involving missing pupils should be reviewed so that processes can be improved. An incident report should be written up and given to the Headmistress.

Pupils who repeatedly go missing from Guildford High School premises or activities

Pupils who repeatedly go missing from school premises or activities will require special procedures. Teaching staff will be informed to keep a close eye on the pupil and to alert SMT and HoY the moment they have any cause for concern about the pupil's whereabouts. Staff may be told to inform Reception as soon as they notice a particular pupil missing from their lesson.

Pupils who repeatedly go missing may well trigger a Child protection concern as going missing can be a sign of considerable emotional distress. The reasons for the pupil going missing will be explored by pastoral staff and the Designated Safeguarding Leads kept informed if there is cause for concern.

There may also be sanctions for pupils who repeatedly go missing because of the staff time involved in finding them, and possibly also police time. Guildford High School has several exits and it is impossible to police them all. Guildford High School may in serious cases resort to the Exclusions and Expulsions procedure if a pupil is unable to reliably stay in school during the school day.

Procedures to prevent pupils going missing on school activities off-site

- Pupils must always be in groups of at least three
- Pupils should be given a clear rendez-vous location and time and telephone number to call a member of staff on if they are given any unsupervised time
- Only pupils of sufficient maturity should be given any unsupervised time. If staff have concerns about any individual pupil they should insist that the pupil stay with them. The duration of any unsupervised time and its location should also be appropriate to the maturity of the pupils. Staff taking mixed age groups on foreign tours should give careful consideration to what is appropriate for pupils of different ages. Younger pupils may need to be steered towards particular locations.
- The risk assessment should address the issue of unsupervised time if this is being given to pupils

Procedures for pupils 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 Headmistress 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 Reception or teaching staff had been unable to contact the parents/guardians for an explanation. The procedure, as outlined in the Attendance Policy, is for Reception to contact parents by Clarion or telephone to ascertain the reason for any unexplained absences. Usually, such matters are resolved promptly when the parent responds.

Reception staff must pass on the names of any pupils whose absence is still unexplained to the Pastoral Deputy Head in the Senior School and the Head of the Junior School or his 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 Headmistress 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 Guildford High 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.