

## Missing Child Policy and Procedures

### Guiding Principles

The safety and welfare of all of our students at the Stephen Perse Foundation (the **Foundation**) is our highest priority. The Foundation will follow the procedures laid down by our own Local Authority (**LA**) (which is Cambridgeshire for all schools in the Foundation apart from Dame Bradbury's where Essex is the LA) together with the guidance contained in [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021](#) (**KCSIE 2021**).

This Missing Child Policy and Procedures applies to all of the schools of the Foundation. It is applicable to all students including those children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (**EYFS**) and boarding students.

### Student Supervision

Our Supervision of Pupils Policy, Trips and Visits Policy and Security Policy and CCTV Policy collectively cover:

- The arrangements for children arriving at school and leaving the premises at the end of the day.
- The arrangements for supervising the children whilst they are in school.
- The arrangements for registering the children in both the morning and afternoon. We take a register of students at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. Parents are responsible for notifying the school if their child is absent for any reason via phone to the relevant school office or email to [studentabsence@stephenperse.com](mailto:studentabsence@stephenperse.com). The school will always contact the parent if the child fails to arrive at school without an explanation.
- The physical security measures which prevent unsupervised access to, or exit from, the building.
- The supervision of the playground.
- The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are very clear and we have strict ratios to enable safe off site experiences to occur.

Please refer to the Foundation's Supervision of Pupils Policy, Trips and Visits Policy and Security Policy and CCTV Policy for further information.

## Procedures

We review these procedures regularly (at least once a year) in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of very young children and read Part 1 and Annex A of KCSIE 2021.

### Students going missing in school, including before and after compulsory hours in school

It is incumbent on the member of staff who is responsible for the supervision of students to initiate these procedures should a student be missing without authorisation. Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing student is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a student was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions:

1. The supervising member of staff should take a register in order to ensure that all the other students in that class or activity are present.
2. The supervising member of staff should alert the Office Staff within 10 minutes of the scheduled start of the session who will immediately check the register and InVentry system, where appropriate. In the Sixth Form the office staff may also attempt to contact the student directly.
3. 1-11: Check the first aid room and toilets. Contact staff who might previously have taught the student that day.  
11-18+: Contact staff who might previously taught or tutored the student that day, contact the Pastoral Leader, check all lists of trips out of school.
4. Immediately after the first sweep of the vicinity as above, the office staff will inform the relevant Head of School, the senior member of staff on duty, and the Head of Boarding if the student boards.
5. The relevant senior member of staff will ask adults and students in most recent or neighbouring classes, and in the boarding house where applicable, calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the student. A 'Missing' notice will be distributed via email, with the name of the student, and the date and time of the first notified absence.
6. Call the student's mobile if the number is available if not already done so.
7. Occupy all of the other students in their classroom(s) with a relevant activity supervised by a qualified member of staff.
8. At the same time, the senior member of staff will arrange for one or more adults to search obvious areas within the school, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, basements, bathrooms, stairwells, peri or speech rooms etc. where a student might hide.
9. Check the doors, gates and, where relevant, direct the office staff to submit a request to review the CCTV for signs of entry/exit.

If the student is still missing after the sweep above, the following steps would be taken:

10. Inform the Head of the School and Head of Boarding if applicable, that the student is still missing; who will inform the Vice Principal and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (**DSL**) or, in their absence, any one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (**DDSLs**) within the

- Foundation. This will be immediate for all students other than for the Sixth Form where the Head of School will assess the situation to determine the likelihood of risk in the early stages.
11. It is accepted that there is a difference to the speed of the next response depending on the age of the student and a dynamic risk assessment will be completed by the Head of School; for example a Sixth Form student who is permitted to be off site outside of lessons may be given more time before the next steps are taken depending on any concerns for the individual or whether acting unusually or dependent on the time of the day.
  12. The Head of School/Head of Boarding, or their Deputy, will ring the student's parents or other named emergency contact and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. The parents would be asked to come to the school at once. In boarding, due regard to be given to a possible time zone difference and that the parents may not be able to attend the school. 11-18+: The parents can be asked for the student's telephone number for the school to contact the student directly or for confirmation that the parents will contact the student directly.
  13. Advise all teachers who are due to teach the student later that day and boarding staff that they must immediately inform the office if the student appears.
  14. The Head of the School/Head of Boarding, or their Deputy, will arrange for staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds and for a search of local roads to be initiated, if appropriate.
  15. If the student's home is within walking distance, a member of staff will set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her.
  16. The DSL/Head of the School/Head of Boarding would, at their discretion, in consultation with the parents where possible (usually not later than two hours of a search commencing) arrange for the police and Children's Social Care to be informed. The Foundation will co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the Local Authority.
  17. Inform the Principal who will decide at what point it is appropriate to inform the Chair of Governors.
  18. The Foundation's insurers will be informed.
  19. During the course of the investigation into the missing student, the Foundation will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other students and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

For students who board, please also refer to the additional relevant section below for boarding students.

If the student in question is known to be at higher risk, due to individual circumstances, parents will be informed sooner. Staff will continue the search in the areas surrounding the school premises and the Head of Senior School/Pastoral Leader will inform the Vice Principal.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the student was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

### **Students going missing in school hours when off site**

1. An immediate register will be carried out in order to ensure that all the other students on the visit are present.
2. An adult will search the immediate vicinity while the other students remain in a secure location and in the care of the remaining supervisor(s).
3. Inform the relevant Head of School (Senior Leadership Team (**SLT**) contact), the Head of Boarding, where applicable, the Vice Principal and the Foundation's DSL/school's DDSL, using a mobile phone.
4. Following discussion with the SLT contact, the Foundation's DSL/school's DDSL safeguarding lead and the Group Leader would decide whether the remaining students should stay in the secure location or be taken back to school.
5. Ask adults and students calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the student.
6. Call the student's mobile if the number is available.
7. Ask the Head of School/Head of Boarding to contact the student's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the venue or the school, as appropriate, at once. In boarding, due regard will be given to the fact that parents may not be able to attend the venue/school.
8. If possible and appropriate, contact the venue manager and arrange a search.
9. The DSL/Head of the School would at their discretion, in consultation with the parents where possible (usually not later than two hours of a search commencing) arrange for the police and Children's Social Care to be informed. The Foundation would co-operate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the Local Authority.
10. Inform the Principal and the Principal will decide at what point it is appropriate to inform the Chair of Governors.
11. The Foundation's insurers will be informed.
12. During the course of the investigation into the missing student, the Foundation will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other students and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the student was found will be made for the incident report. The school will review its procedures and, if appropriate, these will be adjusted.

### **When the child is found**

1. Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the student.
2. Speak to the other students to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing.
3. The Head of School/Head of Boarding will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident (having discussed this beforehand with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if necessary).
4. The Head of School/Head of Boarding will promise a full investigation (if appropriate involving the MASH).

5. Media queries should be referred to the Marketing team in consultation with the Vice Principal (after discussion with the LADO if appropriate).
6. The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements.
7. The report should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the student was last seen, what appeared to have happened, the purpose of the outing, the length of time that the child was missing and how they appeared to have gone missing, as well as any lessons learned for the future.

### **Procedures for boarding and other residential situations such as trips**

#### Procedure if a student is not spoken to /seen during the welfare checks:

Students are unable to enter or leave the boarding houses between the last welfare check in the evening and the first welfare check in the morning due to restrictions on their ID cards. For further details on the timing of welfare checks, please see the Supervision of Pupils Policy.

- Boarding house staff/expedition staff will check the boarding house/accommodation (other student rooms, bathrooms and common areas), continue to phone the student's mobile/send a text and check with other students particularly those students who are known to be a friend of the missing student.
- Boarding house staff/expedition staff will phone the other boarding house/expedition staff to ask them to check their house and also ask the students.
- If the student has not answered their phone or has not returned to the accommodation the Head of Boarding/SLT contact will assess the situation and contact the Vice Principal/Principal for advice and a decision made as to contacting the police/social care.

#### Procedure if a student does not arrive back for evening curfew in boarding or on a trip:

The boarding house staff or trip leader will contact any student who is not in the house 30 minutes before the curfew to find out where they are and remind them about the curfew. If a student does not arrive for the curfew then:

- Boarding house staff/trip leaders will check the boarding house/accommodation (other student rooms, bathrooms and common areas), phone the student's mobile every 10 minutes/send a text and check with other students particularly those students who are known to be friends of the missing student.
- If the student is not back 30 minutes after curfew, boarding house staff/the trip leader will telephone the Head of Boarding/SLT contact.
- The Head of Boarding/SLT contact in the case of trips and visits will contact the parent/guardian not more than 1 hour after curfew.
- If the student has still not returned an hour after curfew and parent/guardian is unable to contact the student, the Head of Boarding/SLT contact will reassess the situation and seek advice from the Vice Principal or Principal and a decision made as to contact the police and/or social care.

Procedure if a student does not return after an overnight stay including holidays (boarding only):

The boarding house staff check the return date/time for each student and will make contact with the student:

- If they are returning from overseas within an hour of scheduled arrival in the UK boarding staff will contact the student. If no reply they will check for delays.
- If a student does not arrive in the house within 1 hour after they are due to return, boarding house staff will ring the Head of Boarding who will contact the parents/guardians.
- If the student has still not returned 2 hours after they were due to return and contact hasn't been made by boarding house staff or parent/guardian, boarding house staff will call the Head of Boarding again who will reassess the situation and seek advice from the Vice Principal.
- If concerns continue the Head of Boarding/Vice Principal will contact the police for advice.

**Related Policies**

- Children Missing in Education Policy
- Code of Conduct for All Staff Working With Young People
- Non-collection of Child Policy
- Staff Induction Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Supervision of Pupils Policy and Procedures
- Trips and Visits Policy and Procedures

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