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Responsibility: SMT (JD)

DAME ALLAN'S SCHOOLS

MISSING OR UNCOLLECTED CHILD POLICY

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PART ONE: MISSING CHILD POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The welfare of all of our children at Dame Allan's Schools is our paramount responsibility. A child being absent from education, for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including abuse or neglect, child sexual and/or criminal exploitation and county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that they have a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. This includes the importance of effective information sharing to ensure our children are safe and receiving suitable education. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child being absent in the future. Where staff have concerns that a child is absent from school for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, or missing from school, this policy should be followed. For the purpose of this policy, the term MISSING refers to a pupil being not present without authorisation or explanation.

Every member of our staff who works with children has read Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE). Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised appropriately while they are in our care, given their age or the nature of the activity.

ACTION TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD FAILS TO ATTEND FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

All new pupils (regardless of their age) are placed on the School's admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the School has agreed that the pupil will attend the School. If a child fails to attend on the agreed date, staff must inform the Head of School without delay, who, in conjunction with the Head of Admissions, will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

The School admission register, also known as the School roll, contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School along with the date of admission or readmission to the School, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The School also has an attendance register which records pupil attendance.

Where there are changes affecting the child (including a change of address or school), these will be reflected in the admission register. This will assist the School and external agencies when making enquiries to locate any missing children.

Registers are legal records: the Schools will preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry.

Duty to Report

The School monitors attendance of its pupils closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance. All parents are sent a copy of the School's attendance policy at the start of each academic year.

The School will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more without permission.

Where a pupil has been continuously absent without authorisation for a period of not less than 20 school days (and there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil is unwell or unable to attend because of any unavoidable cause), and the School and local authority have failed, following reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is, the School may delete the pupil's name from the admission register. The School will inform the local authority of such deletion no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register.

In addition, the School recognises its wider reporting duties following deletions from the admission register, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, to help identify children who are missing education and/or otherwise at risk of harm.

The School also recognises that children who are absent from education particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. The School's response to persistently absent pupils supports identifying such abuse, and helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM THE SCHOOL

Junior School and Nursery

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions without delay:

- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- Phone the school office staff who will check the signing out/in book
- Inform the Head of the Early Years (Nursery and Reception) / Head of Junior School or the senior member of staff on duty

- Ask all of the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child
- Consider whether a child might be at a music lesson, receiving support or intervention, or in the medical room
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) with a relevant activity
- The Head of the Junior School would arrange for staff to carefully search the rest of the School premises and grounds both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms etc. where a small child might hide
- Doors and gates checked for signs of entry/exit.

If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken without delay:

- The Head of Junior School will ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the School at once.
- The DSL/Head of the Junior School would immediately notify the Police
- If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff may be asked to check to see if the child has gone home. They would set out on foot to attempt to catch up with the child
- The DSL would inform the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate. The DSL will check with the LSCB this has happened
- The School would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority
- Inform the Chair of Governors
- The School's insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).

During the course of the investigation into the missing child, the school will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

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

The School will always consider the wider circumstances around a child going missing from School and whether there are wider safeguarding concerns that may need to be addressed in line with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Senior School

All pupils are registered prior to the first lesson in the morning. Registration is taken again after lunch. Lesson registration is taken each period in the Senior School on iSAMS. A list of absentees is held in the

Senior School offices and is available on iSAMS. On occasions when a staff member identifies a pupil as missing from their expected location, immediate action is required as outlined in the procedures below. A pupil may be identified as missing:

● After an absence at morning registration is not confirmed by the office staff's contact with home

● By comparing pupils in a class with the day's absence list (on iSAMS)/ lesson registration

● On reconciliation with the afternoon registration

● By a report of a missing child by a fellow pupil

Any member of staff discovering a discrepancy should immediately try to ascertain a pupil's whereabouts by asking other class members if they know where the pupil is and checking trip/fixture information. If there is any degree of uncertainty a member of staff will notify the relevant School office who will:

- Contact and check with staff such as the form teacher or head of year to assess whether the absence is expected
- Check with the school nurse to check the sick bay, the Snug and Snuglet, counselling appointments or medical emergencies
- Check the drama and music departments for a scheduled LAMDA or music lesson.
- Check the toilets, the library, all changing rooms, pastoral offices, the archive room, sixth form common rooms and pods and OLED rooms.
- Check there are no public transport difficulties
- Re-check all lists of trips out of school and the signing-out book at reception.

If the pupil is still found to be missing, the school office will immediately:

• Inform the VP (Pastoral) and/or the Director of Pupil Wellbeing/Heads of Schools

• A search of the premises will be organised including the toilets, the library, all changing rooms, pastoral offices, the archive room, sixth form common rooms and pods and OLED rooms.

• If the pupil is not found by these means, we will obtain a senior school pupil's mobile phone number from a peer and attempt to contact them in this way.

• The child's parents will be contacted at the same time in order to determine whether the child has been collected for an out of school appointment.

• If following these actions the child is still missing, the police will be contacted in consultation with the parents.

If a child appears to be lost during after school provision and has not been signed out of school the following actions will be taken:

One of the supervisors will inform a member of the management team who will search the premises along with the supervisor and efforts will be made to contact the child using their mobile phone or home phone number.

If the child is not found by these means, the parent(s) will be contacted to determine whether the parent has collected the child without signing the child out. If these means do not determine the child's whereabouts, the police will be contacted.

In both circumstances, the Schools are aware that contacting parents in such circumstances can cause great anxiety, but the overriding concern is the pupil's safety and wellbeing. If the pupil is found, or the incident is otherwise resolved, those involved in the incident will be directly informed by the School office. The police will be informed if they have been involved.

If the incident is considered serious, with a risk of harm to the pupil, the circumstances will be discussed at a senior level and a review of policy and procedure will be undertaken. A senior member of staff involved will discuss with the pupil and the pupil's parents the events surrounding the disappearance and support or sanction will be considered as appropriate.

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING ON AN OUTING FROM SCHOOL

Head counts are carried out frequently during outings from school. If a child was found to be missing:

- Keep the rest of the group/party together: take a register to check if anyone else is missing.
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search (where relevant)
- Immediately inform the Head of the Junior School/ DCC of the Seniors (or named contact) and the DSL by mobile phone
- Ask the Head of Junior School/ DCC of the Seniors (or named contact) to ring the child's parents as soon as reasonably practicable to explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion.
- Immediately contact the Police
- The remaining children would be taken back to school as soon as reasonably practicable
- The DSL would inform the LSCB who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate
- The School would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by the local authority including children's services
- Inform the Chair of Governors without delay
- The School's insurers would be informed as soon as reasonably practicable
- If the child is injured and is taken directly from the scene of the accident to hospital for treatment a report would be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) as soon as reasonably practicable and no later than 15 days of the accident.

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

Actions to be followed by staff once the child is found

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
- The Head of the Junior School/ DCC Seniors will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Head of the Junior School/ DCC Seniors will oversee a full investigation (if appropriate involving the LSCB)
- Media queries should be referred to the Head/ Principal
- The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements
- 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 the child appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future.
- Consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.

PART TWO: PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED ON TIME

Formal childcare provision ends at 5.45pm every day. If any child remains uncollected at this point, the following procedure will be implemented:

Any children still in school at 5.45pm will be escorted to the foyer/reception area by the supervisor, who will then inform a member of the management team of the situation and likely length of delay. If necessary, the ASC Supervisor/duty SMT member will contact parents/guardians to establish the reason why the child has not been collected. (Contact details on iSAMS or in red folder in Medical Room for DAJS)

If the reason is a delay (traffic, etc), at the Juniors, the supervisor will advise whoever is on their way to collect the child that they will need to be collected from the school foyer/reception area. At the Seniors the pupil will go to meet their parent/ guardian at the gate once they have arrived.

Senior management will ensure the child is not left alone on the premises until the school cleaners lock and alarm the building at 6.30pm. BEYOND THIS TIME THE CHILD CANNOT REMAIN ON THE PREMISES.

If the child has not been collected by the time the building is locked, they will be taken to the school gates to await collection. A member of teaching/support staff will stay with them until they are collected by their parent/guardian.

If contact cannot be made with parents or an alternative emergency contact, social services will be contacted. (After hours contact number: Newcastle City Council 0191 278 7878)

NB. Under no circumstances will a member of staff take responsibility for transporting a child home.

If any child is not collected by 5.45pm twice in the course of a half-term, the Schools will inform the parents/guardians that the after school service is likely to be withdrawn following any further infringement.

The lead after school care supervisor will inform a member of the senior management team of the name of any pupil falling into this category so that a letter can be sent home.

The Schools reserve the right to withdraw the after school care facility from any parent/guardian who persistently fails to collect their child(ren) and may also need to contact Social Services in such circumstances. If any parent/guardian is aware of problems they face which may lead to non-collection, they should inform the Schools at the earliest opportunity and alert the school to a possible problem.

FLOWCHART FOR MANAGING UNCOLLECTED CHILDREN

