



IPSWICH SCHOOL

POLICY ON DEALING WITH MISSING PUPILS (Including EYFS)

SECTION 1: DISAPPEARANCE OF A DAY PUPIL FROM THE SENIOR SCHOOL

If there is a suspicion that a pupil has gone missing from School during the normal School day the Tutor, Head of House and Head of Section should be informed immediately. Initial investigation should establish (via contact with the pupil's Tutor and checking the current calendar of events on the network) that the pupil is not on an out-of-school commitment such as sport, music, drama, theatre trip, external lecture, university visit, medical appointment, DoE expedition etc. In establishing the cause of the absence, e-mails, Common Room notices, Sports Notice board, School Office and the pupil's friends should be checked and mobile phone contact made if possible.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Matron should be contacted to see if there is any cause for concern with the pupil(s) which may lead to emotional difficulties. If no satisfactory cause for absence can be established then the Deputy Head Pastoral must be informed and the incident should be documented, including the date and time, the pupil(s) involved, the member of staff initially reporting the incident, the action taken and any subsequent reasons given by pupils for their absence. Staff must take care to fully document the incident.

The Head of Section should contact the parent or guardian of the pupil to investigate the incident and/or follow up any leads from friends of the pupil. If the pupil cannot be located by staff or parents then the Head should be informed to initiate a wider search procedure including contacting the police. The School will then act in accordance with police advice and advise the Chair of Governors that a pupil is missing.

Such an incident, with no justifiable reason for absence, will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

SECTION 2: DISAPPEARANCE OF A DAY PUPIL FROM THE PREP - EYFS

The member of staff will take a register in order to check the group in which concern has arisen. The member of staff will inform the Lower Prep Phase Leader (with EYFS), Form Teacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (the latter of whom will inform the Head of Prep). The member of staff will ask adults and pupils for details of the most recent known whereabouts of the pupil.

The member of staff will occupy the other pupils, if possible in the area in which they would usually be occupied. As quickly as possible, the member of staff will arrange for one or more adults to search everywhere within the EYFS facilities and the Prep buildings (or Senior School in the case of disappearance from swimming/use of Senior School facilities), both inside and out, carefully checking all areas. The member of staff will check the doors and gates.

If the pupil cannot be located by staff within 15 minutes, then the Head of Prep should be informed to initiate a wider search procedure, contact the parents and the police. The School will then act in accordance with police advice and advise the Head and Chair of Governors that a pupil is missing.

The incident should be documented by the Deputy Head, including the date and time, the pupil(s) involved, the member of staff initially reporting the incident, the action taken and any subsequent reasons given by pupils for their absence. Staff must take care to fully document the incident.

When the Child Is Found

- Two members of staff will care for and talk with the child
- When the situation has been resolved the members of staff should review the reasons for it happening and implement measures to ensure that it does not happen again
- An incident form will be completed and signed by the parents and the Head and the Prep Committee (of the Board of Governors) will be informed
- Records of incidents will be filed securely by the Head as a major incident.

SECTION 3: DISAPPEARANCE OF A DAY PUPIL FROM THE PREP – YEARS 1-6

If there is a suspicion that a pupil has gone missing from Prep School during the normal School day the Form Tutor, Upper Prep Phase Leader and Deputy Head should be informed immediately. Initial investigation should establish (via contact with the pupil's Form Tutor and checking the current calendar of events on the network) that the pupil is not on an out-of-school commitment such as sport, music, drama, theatre trip, medical appointment, etc. or has dropped in to see Matron without asking permission. In establishing the cause of the absence, e-mails, staff room notices, School Office and the pupil's friends should be checked.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead for the Prep and Matron should be contacted to see if there is any cause for concern with the pupil(s) which may lead to emotional difficulties and follow up any leads from friends of the pupil.

If the pupil cannot be located by staff within 15 minutes, then the Head of Prep should be informed to initiate a wider search procedure, contact the parents and contact the police. The School will then act in accordance with police advice and advise the Head and Chair of Governors that a pupil is missing.

The incident should be documented by the Deputy Head, including the date and time, the pupil(s) involved, the member of staff initially reporting the incident, the action taken and any subsequent reasons given by pupils for their absence. Staff must take care to fully document the incident.

Such an incident, with no justifiable reason for absence, will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

When the Child Is Found

- Two members of staff will care for and talk with the child
- When the situation has been resolved the members of staff should review the reasons for it happening and implement measures to ensure that it does not happen again
- An incident form will be completed and signed by the parents and the Head and the Board of Governors Prep Committee will be informed
- Records of incidents will be filed securely by the Head as a major incident.

SECTION 4: DISAPPEARANCE OF A DAY PUPIL FROM THE PREP ON AN OUTING - EYFS - YEAR 6

As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff on the outing will ask children to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray.

At any venue, the staff will contact the venue's security who will handle the search and contact the police if the child is not found.

One designated staff member will search the immediate vicinity whilst the other adults will supervise the remaining children.

The Head or Deputy will be informed as appropriate, if they are not present on the outing. The Head or Deputy Head will contact the child's parents or carer and report the child missing to the police.

The Head or Deputy will make their way to the venue to aid the search if possible and be the point of contact for the police as well as support staff. Staff will take the remaining children back to the school.

The incident should be documented by the Head or Deputy Head, including the date and time, the pupil(s) involved, the member of staff initially reporting the incident, the action taken and any subsequent reasons given by pupils for their absence. Staff must take care to fully document the incident.

When the Child Is Found

- Two members of staff will care for and talk with the child
- When the situation has been resolved the members of staff should review the reasons for it happening and implement measures to ensure that it does not happen again
- An incident form will be completed and signed by the parents and the Head and the Board of Governors Prep Committee will be informed
- Records of incidents will be filed securely by the Head as a major incident.

SECTION 5: DISAPPEARANCE OF A BOARDING PUPIL

Ipswich School occupies a large (split) site and there are many different activities that take place every day. If a pupil is not where they are expected to be at a given time, there could be a valid reason for this so it is important not to panic. In the event of a pupil missing from the Boarding House, the following procedure should be followed:

- If a pupil is missing from roll call or from the Boarding House in the evening, the duty member of the House team should check if the pupil has an evening commitment. Check with the Daily Record Sheet and signing out book. If these do not identify the pupil's whereabouts:
 - Check the Boarding House to ensure the pupil is not in any rooms, with Matron, in toilet facilities etc
 - Check the immediate area around the Boarding House and check with Matron in case the pupil is ill
 - Attempt to contact the pupil by mobile phone
 - Talk to the pupil's peers in an attempt to build up a pattern of recent movements.

- If these actions do not lead to the location of the pupil within an hour, the Head of Boarding must be informed. It will be the decision of the Head of Boarding to inform the Head (and, on advice from the Head the parents and police).
- The member of staff carrying out the search process should make a note of search procedures undertaken (and any information gained).

Below is a list of useful questions to ask peers:

- When was he/she last seen?
- Who was he/she with?
- Where might he/she have gone?
- Has he/she signed out?
- Is there a School activity that he/she might be on?
- Has he/she been ill or injured and gone to Matron or the Surgery?
- What emotional state did he/she appear to be in?
- Has anything upset him/her recently?
- Did he/she speak to anyone about leaving?
- Who are his/her main friends at School?
- Does he/she have a mobile phone and what is the number?
- Does he/she have a special friend?
- Is there any reason to believe he/she might have been abducted? (for example, family custody dispute, very wealthy/prominent parents).

When the pupil has been located, and returned to the House, a full report of the incident should be written and kept on file.

Reviewed June 2025