

NORTHEASE MANOR SCHOOL

MISSING CHILD POLICY

Date of review: September 2019

Date of next review: September 2020

Reviewer: Designated Safeguarding Lead

Rationale.

All members of staff have a duty of care to all of the school's students. We must know where all of the students are, all of the time. When a child goes missing or runs away they are at risk. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse or child sexual exploitation.

Children Missing From Education.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor unauthorised absence, and any incidents of students going missing from School, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

Staff must be alert to the signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as traveling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage. (**See Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy, Extremism & Radicalisation Policy in the School Safeguarding Pack and KCSIE Annexe A**)

The School has a duty to inform the local authority of any student who is going to be deleted from its admissions register and attendance register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education; ^[L]_[SEP]
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered; ^[L]_[SEP]
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age; ^[L]_[SEP]
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or, ^[L]_[SEP]
- have been permanently excluded. ^[L]_[SEP]

The School must notify the local authority as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the student's name from the registers.

The School must inform the local authority of any student 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, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State)

When a student is missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, the Governing Body will put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risk of the student going missing in future.

This policy adheres to the Runaway and Missing From Home and Care protocols specified by East Sussex Local Safeguarding Children's Board in "Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual " which is available online at <http://pansussexscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm> . These protocols apply to all students placed by East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove Council.

Missing Child from School Site.

Northeast Manor School is an open site and leads directly onto a busy road, and to fields and a farm on the other side. As such we recognise that it is possible for a student to leave the site during the school day, or at night if they are a boarder, and takes measures for prevention and intervention in the event of a child leaving or attempting to leave the school site.

The school takes preventative measures including:

- a Positive Behaviour Policy to promote a culture of support and challenge in a productive and empowering way for all students
- a Protective Behaviours approach to resolving anger, conflicts, issues and personal problems before they escalate
- a Restorative Practice approach to resolving conflicts in a timely manner between students, or students and staff, after an event or incident
- Safeguarding checks during the admissions process should identify whether a child is a known flight risk and this will be risk assessed before a school or a boarding place will be decided upon.
- Communication with local police force(s) when a student is deemed a flight risk
- Risk assessments are reviewed regularly
- Students are encouraged to speak to a member of staff if they have any urges to leave the site for any reason
- PSHE lessons cover the rules and the risks of absconding
- Police liaison officer speaks to the students
- Residential external doors are alarmed
- School registers are taken morning and afternoon
- Fire registers are taken every evening
- Use of modern technology in place to 'track' one vulnerable student, in collaboration with his parents

If a child runs away, East Sussex's protocol must be followed as it is the authority in which the school is situated, in addition to complying with other procedures specified by the child's placing authority. Procedures for placing authorities other than East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove Council are noted on the individual

student's file. It is possible that the child will return to the area of his/her placing authority so it is essential that liaison between police and professionals is well coordinated.

Risk Assessments.

A risk assessment should be conducted in advance of any child who is judged to be likely to go missing.

In these circumstances there will be a planning meeting. The school, police and children's social care team will discuss the associated risks of the child absencing themselves. The discussion will be recorded in writing and risk assessment drawn up.

In assessing the significance of a child's absence either before the event or once it has happened the following should be borne in mind:

- The age and level of understanding of the child;
- The legal status of the child;
- Previous behaviour patterns;
- The emotional needs of the child e.g. whether there has been any variation in their mood or whether they have expressed any intention to harm themselves or others;
- Behaviour of the child as influenced by peer groups or others;
- Whether the child is perceived as running to someone/something or running from a situation/someone;
- The risk of offending;
- The risk of the child being targeted for sexual exploitation;
- The legal implications of the child breaking any court order by absconding;
- The child's view.

If it is appropriate the child should have this policy explained to them so that they understand what actions will be taken if they absent themselves without permission.

Push and Pull Factors.

There may be a number of factors in relation to reasons for going missing.

"Push factors" may include:

- Conflict with carers, feeling powerless, bullying, being unhappy at school or at home;
- Wanting attention by provoking a reaction to demonstrate that someone cares about them;
- A sense of boredom and a wish to 'have fun';
- Testing boundaries;
- Being a victim of abuse
- Exposure to extremism and radicalisation.

"Pull factors" identified may include:

- Wanting to be with family or friends;
- Peer pressure to conform to established patterns of behaviour;
- The attractions of street life or people who may present a risk.

Procedure.

When a child or young person is missing from the school, the priority must be to ensure the immediate safety of the child by finding them and returning them to the school. We always take into account and acknowledge the vulnerability of children being targeted by adults who pose a risk of using children for the purpose of sexual or other forms of sexual exploitation.

1. If a member of staff believes that a child is missing from a lesson or activity, they must immediately inform the school office, On-Call and the Head of Pastoral during normal working hours or the Houseparent and Head of Boarding if during boarding time
2. During residential hours the police and parents/carers will be immediately called and staff will remain on site with the other students, unless the Head of Boarding is able to intervene and bring the student back on site without further risks to the student, themselves or the staff
3. If the child reappears, the reporting member of staff must again inform the school office or the Head of Pastoral in the school day or the Houseparent and Head of Boarding in residential time and the police and parents/carers will be updated
4. A dynamic risk assessment will be carried out by the DSL / SLT and /or Head of Boarding and a decision made as to whether the student is safe to remain on site

In the event a student does not reappear immediately

5. Depending on the time of day, the Headteacher, Head of Pastoral and/or DSL / Head of Boarding will take the following action:
 - investigate the circumstances of the child's disappearance.
 - organise a search of the buildings and grounds
 - Instruct the office to use the tracker if it is that particular student who has gone missing
 - If it is likely that the child has left the school premises during the school day, the Headteacher, SL or other member of SLT will initiate a search by car of the immediate vicinity of the school.
 - If after these searches the child is still missing the police must be contacted via 999 and the child's parents/carers must be informed. If the child is a child looked after, the Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the LA Children's Social Care Department responsible for the child or the responsible out-of-hours service.
 - The police will need to have the following information:
 - (a) Child's personal details -name and date of birth
 - (b) A description of the child and their clothing
 - (c) Details of when and where the child was last seen and with whom
 - (d) Circumstances of the child going missing
 - (e) Any relevant medical information
 - (f) The nature of the child's disability or learning difficulties and how this impacts on the child
 - (g) Any previous history of absconding/absenteeism
 - (h) A recent photograph of the child
 - (i) Family contact details and address
 - (j) Known associates and address frequented.

The Headteacher, DSL or another member of SLT must remain near a telephone until such time as the child returns and the police and parents must be kept informed if any other information comes to light. The Headteacher, DSL, SLT or Head of Boarding (after school hours) must keep a full record of all actions taken and messages received.

The police are responsible for advising the media regarding children missing from home. Decisions to publicise will always be made in consultation with the parents or carers.

6. When the child returns they should be given the opportunity to talk to someone independent about their absence. This may be organised by the placing authority's children's services, and should be carried out within 72 hours of the child returning to school. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with the relevant placing authority according to its protocols to ensure that the interview is conducted within the timescale, and by a trained, independent person. This may include using the East Sussex Service, Missing People. Where an allegation of physical or sexual abuse is made or becomes evident, child protection procedures must be implemented and contact made immediately with the police child protection team or a referral made to children's social care.
7. Anyone who was informed of the child's absence must be contacted and advised of the child's return without delay.
8. The child should receive personal support to understand and try to address the reasons why the child ran away and to help the child feel safe and understand that they have options to prevent repeat instances of them running away and to make the return to class or boarding.
9. A risk assessment should be carried out by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. The risk assessment should be shared with the local police and with local authority social care.
10. A detailed account of the incident, including timings and staff action will be kept in the Missing records file maintained by the DSL and or Head of Pastoral.

The Governing Body will put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to any students who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

CONCLUSION.

The safety of all our students is the prime duty of care for all our staff.

Signed :.....

Date:.....

Contact Details:

Out of Hours Social Care Services. Children's Services. 01273 335905/6

Disability Duty Team 01323 466050

Missing People :

Shaun Polley Senior Service Coordinator 07538 650823

Erica Thornton Local Services & Development Manager 07968 917584.

Documents Considered in the Preparation of this Policy.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2018)

Working Together to Safeguard Children (July 2018)

Children Who Run Away From Home or Go Missing From Home or Care (2014)

Pan Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures Manual

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Staff Safeguarding Handbook

Attendance Policy

Extremism and Radicalisation

Children Missing Education

Risk Assessment Policy

Health and Safety Policy