The Abbey

Missing Student Policy

The Abbey School, Reading

Reviewed by:	Assistant Heads Junior School Deputy Head Senior School	September 2025
Ratified by:	Whole School Leadership Committee and Governor Audit	September 2025
Next review: April 2027		

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1 Policy Statement

1.1 Through the operation of this policy we aim to:

- protect the health and safety of students at the School
- ensure that School staff know how to respond if a student goes missing.

1.2 This policy:

- applies to staff (including volunteers), students and parents at The Abbey School;
- should be read with the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy and procedures;
- is a mandatory requirement of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (Department for Education (DfE).

1.3 The procedures in this policy may be adapted as necessary. The Head of Senior School and Head of Junior School have discretion in relation to the procedures in this policy.

1.4 This policy is provided to all staff via the Information Bank. Parents may request a copy from the School or review the policy on the School website.

2 Responsibility

2.1 The Governors delegate appropriate responsibilities for the day to day management of the School to the Head. In practice, all members of staff contribute to the safety of students at the School by providing appropriate supervision in accordance with the directions of the Head and Senior Management Team. Schools are under a general duty to supervise students to the standard of a prudent or careful parent.

2.2 Any member of staff who sees a student in a place where the student should not be, has a duty to inform the relevant Form Tutor/Form Teacher/Assistant Director/Director/ JS Assistant Head without delay.

3 Procedure for student absence

3.1 Students are registered in iSAMS at the start of the school day and after lunch. Senior School teachers also keep a register at the start of each lesson.

3.2 Reception staff check absences as soon as the Register closes at the end of Registration. Absent students are checked against in-coming emails and other records, including My School Portal (MSP). If no message has been received, phone calls will be made to parents and emergency contacts. If it is not possible to make contact or if the student is reported as expected to be at school, then the procedures in this policy are followed.

3.3 In the event any absence is prolonged then staff will be in contact with families to support students and minimise any disruption to education. In line with obligations, an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of ten days or more will be reported to the local authority as this may potentially be a safeguarding issue.

4 Procedure for a student missing during the school day

4.1 If a member of staff or volunteer notes that a student is missing from class/sport practice/other activity, they should contact Reception immediately. In the Senior School this can be done by using the ALERT button in the iSAMS lesson register.

4.2 Reception will then:

- check the register to confirm if the student was recorded present in school;
- check MSP for any submission of an absence request;
- check the student's timetable for that day;
- contact the School Nurse or first aid room to check if the student has reported sick or has an appointment;
- check if the student is at a sports fixture;
- contact the Music Department to check the list of music lessons;
- contact the Library in case the student is there;
- text and ring the student's mobile phone if appropriate;
- contact the student's Form Tutor/Form Teacher/Assistant Director/Director/ JS Assistant Head or member of the leadership team as appropriate.

4.3 If the student cannot be found following the above investigation, then:

- At the Junior School - the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed if they are not already involved, or, in their absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or another member of the Leadership Team. This person will then coordinate an initial search.
- At the Senior School - the Deputy Head will be informed as the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or in their absence, a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead or other member of the Leadership team. The Form Tutor/Assistant Director/Director will conduct an initial search using assistance from Reception and other members of staff as available or required.
- When searching bathrooms/changing rooms, a female member of staff will search and announce themselves at the door of the room before entering. Male members of staff will not search these areas.
- CCTV may be reviewed if appropriate. The Head of Senior School and Head of Junior School will be kept informed.

4.4 As part of the initial search process, the student's fellow friends and classmates will be asked if they have any knowledge of the missing student's whereabouts. Older students may be asked to call their missing friend if appropriate.

4.5 If the student is found on site or in the vicinity, School staff will make a concerted effort to persuade the student to return to class or School. If the student refuses to do so, staff members at the scene will do everything possible to provide care and supervision and a senior member of staff will contact the parents.

4.6 If the student is not found after the initial search, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or other senior member of staff will ring Reception to register the student as missing together with any suggestions as to where the student might be based on information gained from speaking to staff and other students. At this point, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the student's parents. If the parents are abroad, there may be a delay in contacting them. In such cases, it may be necessary to inform any additional contacts recorded on our system. All decisions on contacting parents and on how to proceed if they are unavailable should be made by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, the Head of Junior School or Head of Senior School.

5 At this point, the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Head of Junior School or Head of Senior School will contact the Police after consultation with the parents (where

appropriate and possible) and provide the Police with the information listed in Section 6, as well as any other information reasonably requested.

5.1 A decision will be taken in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy as to whether the School should also contact children's social care in line with local procedures.

6 Procedure for students missing during a school trip

If a student is missing from a school trip the member of staff in charge will:

- attempt to contact the student, by text or call if the students have a mobile phone with them (Junior School will not have mobile phones)
- check whether there were any delays or changes to the journey;
- check with other students and ask them if they have any knowledge of the missing student's whereabouts;
- assign an adult to search the immediate vicinity;
- contact the venue or the people that the student had visited, if applicable;
- contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead or the Head, via the emergency trip contact as necessary;
- contact the Police;
- The DSL or Head will contact parents immediately.

7 Information to be provided to the Police

When the School contacts the Police, day or night, the following information should be provided:

- the student's name;
- the student's age;
- an up to date photograph if possible
- the student's approximate height, physical description and any recognisable physical characteristics;
- any disability, learning difficulty or special educational needs that the student may have;
- the student's home address and telephone number;
- a description of the clothing the student is thought to be wearing;
- any relevant comments made by the student.

8 Missing student incident log

The School must keep a full written record on CPOMS of any incident of a missing student including:

- relevant dates and times (e.g. when it was first noticed that the student was missing);
- the action taken to find the student;
- whether the Police or children's social care were involved;
- outcome or resolution of the incident;
- any reasons given by the student for being missing;
- any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident;
- a record of the staff involved.

9 Review

9.1 This policy is reviewed every year as part of the School's annual review of safeguarding, and updated as necessary.

9.2 In undertaking the review, the Designated Safeguarding Leads will take into account any incidents logged in CPOMS that indicate that there may be a problem with supervision, student support or security at the School and any issues raised by individual members of staff, parents and students.