

## **H6 Missing Student Policy**

### **Aim**

The welfare of students at Purcell School is our paramount responsibility. All adults who work at the school are aware that they have a responsibility for helping to keep students safe at all times. It is therefore the responsibility of all staff to search actively for students who are missing, including working with the police where appropriate.

All The Purcell School students are required to register before school starts each morning in their designated House. Registration is taken again, by house, at lunchtime, for all students; and in each lesson or activity throughout the day.

Further registrations, for boarding students, take place at 6pm and by 10pm latest.

A list of absentees is held in the school office.

The school has a unified absence email address, monitored by the school office which propagates an authorised absence list, which is sent around to staff via email.

Therefore, for the purpose of this policy, the term 'missing' refers to a student being not present without authorisation or explanation. On occasions when a staff member identifies a student as missing from their expected location, immediate action is required as outlined in the procedures below.

Communications with parents and the appropriate services (particularly the police) are an integral part of the procedure and all instances of a missing student must be reported to the Principal or the Vice-Principal during the day and the Director of Boarding after office hours, following procedures as outlined below, whereupon the appropriate investigations will be made. At all stages, consideration will be given as to whether children's social care should be contacted in line with local procedures and the School's Child Protection Policy.

This policy applies to all members of our school community; The Purcell School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

The Purcell School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document. This document is available to all interested parties on our website and on request from the main school office and should be read in conjunction with the following document: Child Protection Policy, and Attendance Policy. This documentation also complies with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding (2022), Standard 20: Staffing and Supervision.

### **Missing Day Students (between 8.00am and 6.00pm)**

A student may be identified as missing:

- If they are absent from morning registration and their absence is not or cannot be confirmed by contact between house staff and home
- If they are missing from a class or activity, but not identified on the day's absence list or instrumental timetable
- On reconciliation with the afternoon registration

- If they are reported as missing by a fellow student.

Any member of staff discovering a discrepancy must immediately notify the House/School Office who will:

- Attempt to contact the student via their mobile phone (if appropriate) to establish their whereabouts
- Contact and make the necessary check such as the tutor/teacher to assess whether the absence is expected, the Health Centre to check for any known medical emergency
- Check all lists of trips out of School and check the signing out system.

If the student is still found to be missing, the House/ School Office will immediately inform the Vice-Principal/ SLT members who will;

- Initiate and oversee a search of the site
- Coordinate and make the necessary search over the School grounds
- Advise all teachers due to teach the student later that day that they must immediately inform the office if the student appears
- Contact will be made with parents to ascertain whereabouts
- Consider the options of a whole school roll call via setting off the school fire alarm.

If the site search and fire alarm fail:

- The Principal and parents (if not contacted prior to this point) will be informed
- If appropriate a search of local roads will be made on foot, or by car, by available staff and parents
- On completion of this and any subsequent searches made over the day parents will continue to be informed of progress
- On a discretionary basis SLT will arrange for the police to be informed
- The Principal will notify the Chair of Governors.

If the student is found, or the incident is otherwise resolved:

- The Principal, SLT and parents and Police (if involved) will be directly informed by the School Office
- The Principal/Vice-Principal will initiate a full review and provide a written report. Appropriate sanctions/support will be applied. This report and the incident log will be kept on the student's file.

### **Missing Boarders (between 6.00pm and 8.00am)**

During the school day, the procedure is the same as that for a missing day student.

A Boarder may be identified as missing if they fail to check-in in person at the appropriate times, and if their whereabouts cannot be established from information provided by the student with regard to their movements, via the sign-out book or house log.

In the first instance a member of staff on duty should try to establish direct contact with the student via mobile phone.

If this fails, the duty staff member should:

- Notify the Boarding Houseparent(s) of the relevant house, and/or other duty boarding staff members
- Attempt to ascertain whereabouts from friends
- Arrange a search of the boarding house
- With SLT support, arrange a check of the School grounds
- Contact staff who might previously have taught/supervised the student that day
- Check the list of trips and activities out of School.

If a site and house search fails the SLT will:

- Contact back-up duty staff and request assistance as appropriate
- Consider the option of a whole school rollcall via setting off the school fire alarm
- Contact their parents/guardians (with due regard for time zones)
- If appropriate a search of local roads, shops, potential haunts etc. should be made on foot or by car.

On completion of this and any subsequent searches made, the Principal and parents/guardians will continue to be informed of progress. The SLT will arrange for the Police to be informed. The Principal will notify the Chair of Governors.

If the student is found, or the incident is otherwise resolved:

- The Principal, Parents/guardians, Vice-Principal and Police (if involved) will be directly informed by the Boarding Staff
- The Principal or Director of Boarding, along with the Houseparent(s) of the relevant House will initiate a full review, and provide a written report. Appropriate sanctions/support will be applied. This report and the incident log will be kept on the student's file.

### **Students missing during a school trip or following a journey**

As soon as it is noticed that a student is missing, the member of staff in charge will:

- Attempt to contact the student where appropriate by mobile phone
- 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
- Contact the student's accommodation, if applicable
- Contact the venue or the people that the student had visited, if applicable.

If the student is still missing, the member of staff in charge will contact the Principal, or in his absence the Vice-Principal, who will then arrange for the parents to be contacted together with relevant hospitals and the Police.

### **After The Incident (all stages)**

- The senior member of staff involved will discuss with the student's parents the events surrounding the disappearance of the child

- The Principal or the appropriate member of SLT will carry out a full review taking written statements from all the staff present at the time
- The incident report will detail:
  - The date and time of the incident
  - Staff / students involved
  - Point of last contact / last seen
  - Any relevant CCTV captures
  - Any other relevant information
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the incident happened, lessons learned and, if appropriate, procedures (including risk assessments and training) may be updated.

### **Review**

This policy shall be reviewed every year as part of the School's annual review of safeguarding, and updated as necessary. In undertaking the review, the appropriate member of SLT will take into account any incidents of missing students 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.

<i>Policy author / reviewer:</i>	<i>Policy date / review date:</i>	<i>Next review due:</i>
SLT	Sept 2021	Sept 2022
SLT	Nov 2022	Nov 2023
SLT	September 2023	September 2024