

## Missing Pupil

<b>Contents:</b>	<b>Pages</b>
Policy statement	1 - 2
Procedure for pupils missing during the school day or from school activities off-site	2 - 3
Pupils who repeatedly go missing	3 - 4
Procedures to prevent pupils going missing on school activities off-site	4
Procedures for pupils missing from school	4 - 5

### Policy Statement

Banstead Prep School aims to take all possible measures to ensure that pupils do not go missing whilst on school premises or on school trips. Formal registers are taken twice a day, before morning and afternoon lessons, and any absences are followed up promptly. During the school day, teachers are also expected to be aware of any students missing from their lessons and to follow up any concerns they might have about a pupil's absence from a lesson. Banstead Prep School understands a "missing" pupil to be a pupil not present without authorisation or explanation.

This policy applies to all pupils in the school including EYFS pupils. Banstead Prep School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). The school seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document. This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Fire Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Educational Visits Policy

***This policy was reviewed in September 2021 by the Headteacher and the next review is September 2022. It is reviewed annually or as legislation or events require.***

Banstead Prep School understands missing pupils to belong to two distinct categories:

- (i) pupils who are present on any given day on the school site but then go missing at some point during the day without authorisation or explanation
- (ii) pupils who are absent from school without authorisation or explanation and who have not been marked present in the attendance register i.e. they have not disappeared from the school premises; rather they are missing from school altogether. In the case of such pupils, Banstead Prep



School follows the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006) (*with 2016 amendment*). This means that it has important statutory reporting responsibilities to the local authority. This is because pupils who are missing from education must be treated as potentially vulnerable.

### **Procedure for pupils missing during the school day or from school activities off-site (Category (i))**

- Registers must be taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon teaching session, at the beginning of Games and Forest School, at the beginning of each out of hours extra-curricular activity and regularly during every off site activity. If for any reason the Form Teacher does not turn up for registration, after 5 minutes, a member of the form should get the nearest available teacher and ask them to register the form. This can be done digitally or on a paper register which is then passed on to the School Office, who will complete it in iSAMS.
- In the event that a pupil is recorded as present in the morning or afternoon register but is not present or accounted for in his/her lessons and his/her absence cannot be explained (e.g. he/she has not signed out, he/she has not been sent home by the School Office, nor had a music lesson), staff must inform a member of Senior Leadership Team without delay and the Headteacher must be informed.
- **To alert Senior Leadership to the fact that a pupil is missing, staff can call where possible or send an e-mail to all relevant members of the SLT saying URGENT – MISSING PUPIL. The e-mail should state the pupil's name and year group and any other relevant details. Alternatively, staff should call the School Office to ask them to e-mail on their behalf, or else find a member of the relevant SLT.**
- The exact point and time of when and where the pupil was last seen and by which adult must be ascertained. The adult last responsible for the child must be questioned as to the whereabouts of the pupil.
- In the event that the pupil's absence cannot be explained and accounted for, a search of the building and area will be organised by the Senior Leadership Team, and the Headteacher must be informed. The search party will normally comprise of a member of Senior Leadership, the Form Teacher would usually be involved, and an appropriate number of teaching staff if necessary. If the pupil is believed to be off site, a search party will be sent to possible locations where the pupil might be. Members of the search party may wish to obtain relevant information from the missing pupil's friend e.g. mobile telephone number.
- Administrative staff will be required to maintain the central point, the School Office. All parties involved in searching for the pupil must liaise with and return to an agreed point to discuss progress.

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- In the event that the pupil is not found the Site Manager may be asked by a member of the search party (at the request of SLT) to ring the fire bell. The search party will continue to search the premises whilst the rest of the school evacuates the building. If the evacuation fails to locate the missing pupil, the police will be called using 999 by administrative staff or by a member of the search party, we anticipate this would be within 30 minutes. The missing pupil's parents will be called by a senior member of staff.
- In the event that a pupil's absence cannot be explained or accounted for in any off-site activity, the search is organised and led by the activity leader, the organisation responsible for the area used, and the police are called using 999 immediately if the initial search proves unsuccessful. The Headteacher (or the member of SLT on call, who will liaise with the Headteacher) should be contacted as soon as the police have been informed.
- At whichever point the pupil is found he/she must be reassured and all adults involved in his/her care must be convinced of his/her wellbeing and safety. In the event of any concerns the child protection liaison officer or social services must be informed. It is important that the pupil understands the impact of his/her going missing – staff time, possibly police time, parental anxieties.
- In the case of an incident involving a pupil from our EYFS setting going missing, **ISI must be informed within 14 days.**
- Incidents involving missing pupils should be reviewed so that processes can be improved. An incident report should be written up and given to the Headteacher.

### **Pupils who repeatedly go missing from Banstead Prep School premises or activities**

Pupils who repeatedly go missing from school premises or activities will require special procedures. Teaching staff will be informed to keep a close eye on the pupil and to alert SLT the moment they have any cause for concern about the pupil's whereabouts. Staff may be told to inform the School Office as soon as they notice a particular pupil missing from their lesson.

Pupils who repeatedly go missing may well trigger a Child Protection concern as going missing can be a sign of considerable emotional distress. The reasons for the pupil going missing will be explored by the Assistant Head – Wellbeing and the Designated Safeguarding Leads kept informed if there is cause for concern.

There may also be sanctions for pupils who repeatedly go missing because of the staff time involved in finding them, and possibly also police time. Banstead Prep School has several exits and it is impossible to police them all. Banstead Prep School may in serious cases resort to the Exclusions and Expulsions procedure if a pupil is unable to reliably stay in school during the school day.



## **Procedures to prevent pupils going missing during school activities off-site**

- Pupils must always be supervised by an adult
- Pupils should be given a clear rendez-vous location in the event of them being separated from the group
- Risk assessments for educational visits and off-site activities should take supervision into account

## **Procedures for pupils missing from school (Category (ii))**

Pupils whose absence from school gives rise to concern are potentially a Child Protection concern. Unauthorised absences of longer than ten days must be reported to the local authority. In practice, the Headteacher must be kept informed sooner than this if there are concerns about a pupil's attendance.

The school would have concerns about a pupil who was absent from school without explanation or authorisation and where the School Office or teaching staff had been unable to contact the parents/guardians for an explanation. The procedure, as outlined in the Attendance Policy, is for the School Office to contact parents via iSAMs or telephone to ascertain the reason for any unexplained absences. Usually, such matters are resolved promptly when the parent responds.

The School Office staff must pass on the names of any pupils whose absence is still unexplained to the Assistant Head – Wellbeing, Deputy Head or Headteacher.

Should a pupil be missing from school without authorisation or explanation for more than two days, the Assistant Head – Wellbeing or Deputy Head would call parents/guardians the following day if the pupil was still missing without explanation.

If they are unable to make contact, unless inappropriate to do so, the pupils' friends should be asked whether they have heard from the pupil and if so they should ask their friend to make contact with the school.

If after 48 hours, there has been no contact from parents or the pupil and the school is unable to ascertain the pupil's whereabouts through additional emergency contacts listed on the school's database, the Headteacher must be informed and a decision will be taken at that point about how to proceed. Legally the school must take action within 10 days and inform the local authority (2 days in the case of a pupil on a child protection plan) but in practice, it is very unusual for a pupil to be absent from Banstead Prep School without any explanation for any length of time, and so the school would give consideration to contacting external services before the ten-day period had expired.

Next review Sept 2022

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