

## **BRUERN ABBEY SCHOOL**

# Missing Child Policy

This policy applies to all pupils in the school

The logo for Bellevue, featuring the word "bellevue" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters "bel" are blue, "lev" are purple, and "vue" are pink.

Reviewed by Gordon Francis: August 2023

To be reviewed: August 2024

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## Procedures

The welfare of pupils is paramount. The school endeavours to ensure that no child goes missing and has measures in place to minimise the likelihood of this happening and take the necessary action, should the situation arise.

- Formal registration is taken in the morning between 8-8.30am and again at lunch, and at boarding time.
- The staff maintain the appropriate high level of supervision throughout the day and are aware of the location of the children in their care at all times.
- When on excursions outside the school premises, staff implement strategies to maximise the safety and security of the children in accordance with the school's Health & Safety Policy and Educational Visits Policy.
- Staff undertake regular roll calls and head counts.

The above measures ensure that situations where a child could be lost are very limited. These are:

- Where a child wanders off on an off-site visit
- Where a child goes out of a door or gate left open on the school site
- Where a child is taken from the school site by an unapproved adult
- Where a child deliberately runs off site

The school has rigorous procedures for pursuing unexplained absences, including the aim to contact parents by 9.30am if a child has not arrived in school and the reason for absence is not known. Although the school has few pupils to whom this would apply. This should ensure that staff become aware at the earliest opportunity of any child who may have gone missing on the way to school. In these circumstances, this policy will be followed.

School policies relating to health and safety and welfare, if strictly adhered to, should prevent any of the above occurring. However, should a child become lost, the following action will be taken:

### Lost at school

#### During Day Time Hours (8.15am-6.05pm)

Any member of staff who notices a pupil is missing or sees a pupil in a place where the pupil should not be has a duty to inform the relevant Houseparent, a member of SMT and/or the school Office (as may best resolve the situation swiftly) without delay. They (or another nominated person) will then:

- check the child's timetable for that day and double check with staff
- check with the school Office / Secretary (Diary)
- contact Matron / the Medical Room to check whether the pupil has reported sick or has an appointment
- check the list of music lessons, 1:1 intervention etc...
- check the Library in case the pupil is there
- ascertain where the pupil was last seen

If the pupil cannot be found following the above investigation, the Deputy Head will be notified, or, in their absence, another member of SMT. An initial search using assistance from staff as available or required will be carried out under the direction of that person and the Headmaster will be kept informed by them. Wherever possible, staff involved will remain contactable on mobile phone or radio.

As part of the initial search process, the pupil's friends and classmates will be asked if they have any knowledge of the missing pupil's whereabouts.

If the pupil is found on site or in the vicinity, the school staff will make a concerted effort to persuade the pupil to return to the school. If the pupil refuses to do so, staff members at the scene will attempt to continue to monitor the pupil's whereabouts. Staff should consider contacting the parents in such circumstances.

If the pupil is not found after the initial search, the Deputy Head (or member of SMT) will ring the school Office to register the pupil as missing together with any suggestions as to where the pupil might be based on information gained from speaking to staff and other pupils. The situation must be reported to the SMT along with the relevant details.

Due to the nature of the school's 20 acre site and range of activities, it will take a certain amount of time to ensure all clear possibilities have been searched and followed up. If the pupil still cannot be found within fifty minutes then the police and parents must be informed. In any circumstances, all decisions on contacting parents should be made by the Deputy Head and/or Headmaster. If the parents are abroad, there may need to be a delay in contacting them. The police will be provided with the information listed in Appendix I, as well as any other information they might reasonably request.

If the search moves to this stage, the Critical Incident Policy procedure should be invoked. Meanwhile the school Office will make available a photograph of the child (from database) and their description. The search will be continued, opening up the area, keeping in touch via mobile phone.

The headteacher will consider calling a fire drill to see if the pupil who is not accounted for arrives at the roll call point.

### **During Boarding Hours (6.05pm-8.15am)**

When it is discovered that a boarder is missing after school hours or during the night, the member of staff concerned will:

Check the fire list, the front door register and office diary. (They might have been taken for an appointment, out to dinner etc.)

- report the matter to the relevant Houseparent (if not them). The Houseparent will alert the Deputy Head or Head master.
- check with other boarders (if awake) and ask them if they have any knowledge of the missing boarder's whereabouts
- conduct an initial search of the House and immediate surroundings of the House. It is important that a senior member of staff does not search but stays in the house to take control. There should always be a suitable ratio of staff:pupils in the house.
- check buildings, dormitories, bathrooms, Medical Room etc...
- ascertain where the pupil was last seen
- check with the Diary in the school Office and with Matron if possible
- contact the Headmaster to inform him that the boarder is missing
- where appropriate, contact the parents to inform them that the boarder is missing. If parents are abroad this step may need to be delayed. All decisions on contact with parents should be made by the Deputy Head (who is also DSL), in conjunction with the Head as is appropriate
- contact other available members of staff on site to conduct an initial search of the school site. At the discretion of staff, selected pupils can be used to assist with a search.
- contact the police after consultation with the parents (where possible/appropriate) and Deputy Head and provide the police with the information listed below

### **Lost whilst off-site (including on sports fixtures)**

This may depend upon the nature of the site and of the journey involved and procedures should constitute part of the risk assessment for that activity.

Unless there is reason to do otherwise, the following procedures will be followed if a child is lost on an outing:

1. The member of staff noticing the child missing should alert other members of the party and carry out a roll call/head count.
2. A member of staff (or the whole group if appropriate) should retrace their movements to the last place that the child was seen.
3. Another member of staff should alert the management/security services of the organisation being visited and the school office to let them know the situation.
4. Children on the visit should be asked for any relevant information if appropriate.
5. If the child is not found after fifteen minutes the police will be called and the school will alert the parents.
6. Staff will co-operate with the police and take any action as directed by them.

### **Pupil removed from school premises by unapproved adult**

No child is allowed to leave the school site with an adult other than a parent without permission being received from a parent either by telephone or email. In cases where a parent is legally denied access to their child, all staff must be informed in writing of the circumstances together with a photo of the child (Isams) and, if possible, the parent. If a child is seen (or believed) to be taken from the school site by an unapproved adult, the police and parents will be immediately informed.

### **Measures in place to ensure a child does not go missing include:**

- Information to staff about challenging unknown persons on the premises
- Requirement for all visitors to register on arrival with the office, present evidence of identity on their first visit and obtain a visitor's badge
- Security regularly checked by health and safety and maintenance teams.
- Supervision of children at all times
- Sufficient staff to maintain ratios appropriate to the venue and the nature of the activity being undertaken
- Collection and non-collection policy for children
- Rigorous risk assessments for trips

### **Following up an incident**

When the situation has been resolved the Headteacher and SMT will review the reasons for it happening. This will include:

- Reviewing the incident with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Assessing the effectiveness of risk assessment procedures.
- Taking written statements from and interviewing staff involved.
- Collecting information from any other relevant adult witnesses, including officials from the venue where a child has gone missing off-site.
- Discussion, as appropriate with pupils.
- Informing Bellevue Head Office to discuss the review and agree any further action.
- If the incident requires reporting to Ofsted, in respect of RIDDOR or any other official body, such action will be taken.
- The incident and effectiveness of subsequent action taken will be reviewed at the next Health and Safety Committee meeting.

SMT will issue any consequent appropriate advice to staff and pupils and implement any necessary measures to try and ensure that it does not happen again.

## **Appendix I**

### **Information to be provided to the police**

When the school contacts the police during the day or night, the following information should be provided:

- the pupil's name
- the pupil's age
- an up to date photograph if possible (isams)
- the pupil's height, physical description and any physical peculiarities
- the pupil's home address and telephone number
- a description of the clothing the pupil is thought to be wearing
- any relevant comments made by the pupil such as "I'm going to run away to Brighton".

The information will then be passed to the various police stations through police channels and no further notifications from the school should be necessary.