



QUORN HALL  
SCHOOL

# Absence/Running away and/or Missing Policy

**Person Responsible:** Headteacher

**Last reviewed on:** 6th January 2022

**Next review due by:** 6th January 2023

**Created:** May 2018 (Gryphon School)

**Revisions:** May 2019, May 2020, October 2021, January 22,

Quorn Hall School is owned and operated by Cavendish Education.

This policy is one of a series of school policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the school's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its pupils and of the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this. Accordingly, this policy should be read alongside these policies. In particular it should be read in conjunction with the policies covering equality and diversity, Health and Safety, safeguarding and child protection.

All of these policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole school is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values:

- **'Levelling up'** - We want our children to be able to meet appropriate milestones and age related expectations, socially, emotionally and academically.
- **Thrive not survive** - We want our children to thrive in school and society, not just survive their adverse childhood experiences.
- **Confidence** - Develop confidence in their abilities and self image/esteem as learners and members of society.
- **Creativity** - Foster individuality and celebrate differences and create a compassionate and accepting environment. Provide tools that give pupils options, voice, and choice in order to enable them to be creative.
- **Competence** - In their ability to self-regulate and interact with different types of people and overcome the challenges and traumas from the past.
- **Character** - Develop resilience so they see failures or negative situations as a learning opportunity by implementing growth mindset approach.
- **Compassion** - For pupils and the challenging circumstances they have encountered in both their personal and educational lives.
- **Care** - To overtly demonstrate to pupils that adults do care about them and their futures - every day is a fresh start.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in Quorn Hall School documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

Within the school's policies, unless the specific context requires otherwise, the word "parent" is used in terms of Section 576 of the [Education Act 1996](#), which states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a biological parent but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child. Department for Education guidance [Understanding and dealing with issues relating to parental responsibility](#) considers a 'parent' to include:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person – this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative

- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

The school employs the services of the following consulting companies to ensure regulatory compliance and the implementation of best practice:

- Peninsula BrightHR (HR)
- Peninsula BusinessSafe (Health and Safety)
- Due Diligence Checking (DBS)
- Educare (online CPD)
- National College (online CPD)
- School Pro (Data Protection)
- Neotas (Online searches / Social Media checks)

Quorn Hall School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at Quorn Hall School.

The policy documents of Quorn Hall School are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions a significant revision, although promulgated in school separately, may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents. Care should therefore be taken to ensure, by consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, that the details of any policy document are still effectively current at a particular moment.

We will ensure the entitlement of each pupil to access a variety of opportunities to promote academic, social, emotional and physical development.

We will use strategies in line with the Quorn Hall School Behaviour Policy to support pupils' social and emotional well-being and as well as neuro-diverse presentations to promote pupil learning and personal development. In particular we must be aware of our children with attachment disorders and developmental disorders.

We will provide choices and challenges in order to maximise potential and build up strengths and interests.

All the members of the School community are valued equally and work in partnership with parents, carers and the wider community.

We will work within a supportive School framework to promote and celebrate individual success, integration into the wider community and prepare pupils for life after School.

## **Aims**

This Policy is written to guide Staff in the event of a pupil going missing on the premises, going missing outside of the School, or having run away.

Quorn Hall School has safety measures in place where reasonably practical to prevent pupils from leaving the site without permission, getting lost whilst on outings or abducted. A lot of emphasis is placed on the pupils making positive choices and choosing not to leave the school site without permission. Quorn Hall School does recognise that some pupils will still choose to leave the school site on occasions. As part of the assessment process for each pupil, consideration must be given to the risk of the pupil becoming 'Absent (missing)'. If there is a risk of the pupil becoming 'Absent (missing)', further consideration must be given to the risk posed to the pupil or others as a result. Details regarding risk and actions to be taken are to be included in the pupil Wellbeing plans and risk assessments. This will include when the police may be called and will depend on the level of risk to each individual pupil. This Policy takes into consideration the Statutory Guidance on children who run away and go missing from home or care and the RMFHC (Runaway and Missing from Home and Care) protocols. The RMFHC protocols will be followed alongside Leicestershire Inclusion Service as a Child Missing Education (CME). and other Placing Authorities from where the pupils come from.

## **Definition**

**Absent:** A person is not in a place where they are expected or required to be but where carers

or police do not feel the need to start a full 'Missing' investigation at that stage.

**Missing:** Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be the subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or others.

We will report any pupil under the age of 12, automatically as 'Missing' rather than 'Absent' due to the levels of risk. We may also report any other pupil older than 12 years as 'Missing' should it be deemed necessary due to their diagnosis and their vulnerability in society.

## **TO PREVENT A PUPIL FROM BECOMING 'ABSENT' / 'MISSING'**

In the first instance, it is important to do everything possible to prevent a pupil from becoming absent without authorisation and placing themselves or others at risk. Some of the ways to do this are:

- Staff building positive and trusting relationships with the pupils ensuring they are made to feel safe with staff and within their environment.
- Staff ensure that, as part of the 24 hour curriculum, advice and guidance is given on 'Keeping Safe', how to use a phone, how to contact the police, understanding of strangers, road safety etc.
- Staff adequately supervise the pupils in line with their agreed staffing ratio and expectation required of them.

## **On the School premises**

A register of pupils will be completed each morning and afternoon.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher, Head of School or senior leaders on site to be able to account for the whereabouts of every pupil unless they have deliberately absconded from the site.

## **PROCEDURE TO FOLLOW SHOULD A STUDENT BECOME 'ABSENT'/' MISSING**

- Staff are to follow the pupil and encourage the pupil to talk about why they want to leave and ensure their safety is paramount where possible.
- Staff to take note of what the pupil is wearing.
- If the pupil's whereabouts is known, staff will decide what actions are necessary to return the pupil to school or home. Staff are to maintain contact with the pupil, where possible.
- If the pupil is located and appears to be at risk or vulnerable (due to the environment), staff are to remain close to the pupil and supervise them as much as possible, seeking further advice and guidance from the police and Senior Leadership Team.

- If the pupil has not been seen leaving or staff are unaware of the pupil's location, staff are to thoroughly search the grounds of the school the local parks and village or area they were last seen, and any other location that the pupil is likely to have gone

Upon discovering a pupil is missing on site, an immediate search is to be made of the School buildings with all available Staff. This search should not exceed 20 minutes. All the usual haunts for that pupil should be searched. If the pupil is a known absconder this should have been recorded in their Behaviour Plan and Risk Assessment and should include any known regular hiding places for that pupil. Staff should then regroup and extend the search to include the School grounds. The Police respond currently to children who are particularly vulnerable, or at risk, or if it is known they have absconded with an unknown person.

If at this stage the pupil has not been located, the Headteacher and/or Head of School should be informed.

1. In the event of a pupil that is high risk in terms of suicide or self-harm or a pupil has indicated such that day then a phone call to emergency services (999) should be made giving a clear description of the pupil and clothing worn.
2. Organise all available Staff to search the immediate local community. Staff must take potential dangers into account and not put themselves at risk. Any Staff member leaving School premises must have a working mobile phone with them and all Staff must have relevant contact numbers.
3. Contact the police for a missing person
  - a. For a KS1/2 this should be immediately the pupil is known to be missing outside of the immediate school environment
  - b. For KS3 a call must be made after 20 minutes
  - c. For KS4 a call must be made after 30 minutes
  - d. The pupils' risk assessment plans supersede these times where pupils are identified with increased vulnerability
  - e. Parents/Carers of the pupil who is missing should also be informed

These times indicate the minutes from the last positive sighting by an adult of the child.

One member of staff should remain on site to coordinate the search, answer phone calls and provide photos and information to the emergency services.

Ensure there are adequate Staff left in the building to deal with other contingencies. When searching the local community on foot, remember that Staff may be vulnerable (they should use a car whenever possible).

Staff will be aware of pupils' Behaviour Plan and Risk Assessments to mitigate against potential risks and to support in the most appropriate manner.

## ONCE A PUPIL HAS BEEN FOUND OR RETURNED

- Staff are to collect the pupil if safe to do so. If it is deemed not safe to collect and return the pupil for any reason, staff are to request support from the police to return the pupil to school.
- Advise Reception so pupils and staff are registered as being on the premises again.
- Once the pupil is back in the care of the staff, staff are to ask the pupil how they are feeling, ask if they require any medical assistance or if they wish to talk to someone for further support. Staff are to offer the pupil the opportunity to talk about their reasons for leaving.
- The pupil is to be welcomed back and informed that they were missed and staff were very worried about them.
- Staff are to offer the pupil food and drink where appropriate.
- If the pupil was due medication during their absence and the time has passed or staff are concerned that the pupil may be under the influence of drugs, alcohol or appear to be unwell, staff are to seek immediate advice from either the pupil's GP or the Emergency Out of Hours medical services prior to administering any medication. These concerns and advice given will need to be recorded in the pupil file, or schoolbase chronology log/MYCONCERN or SCHOOL POD.
- Staff are to monitor and observe the pupil on return from being 'Absent' or 'Missing' to ensure their overall welfare and needs are being met.
- Once the pupil has been returned to the care of the staff, staff are to contact all relevant persons (police, parents, social worker, senior leadership team etc.) to make them aware of the pupil's return and share any relevant information or concerns. It will need to be recorded that all the above (where applicable) have been informed.
- The police may visit the pupil to complete a 'Safe and Well Check'.
- Staff are to complete all paperwork (incident report) relating to the pupil being absent. ● Senior Leadership are to monitor the incident reports regularly to identify any patterns to the Absences and put strategies in place to minimise the Absences where possible.
- The pupil's Individual Behaviour Plan and Risk Assessment will need to be reviewed and amended if necessary.
- All staff involved during the pupil's absence are to receive a debrief and will be offered support as necessary.
- If any issue was raised regarding the welfare or safety of the pupil – this must be reported immediately to the Senior Leadership Team who will then arrange to contact the Safeguarding Team if necessary.
- Follow up calls will be made to parents and professionals involved with the pupil.

A professionals meeting will be organised to review the circumstances of the incident and the effectiveness of the current procedures.

## **Off School premises**

Pupils involved in an outing or educational visit are entered into “off-site Fire Register” sheets in Reception. When going off-site, Staff should take ID badges and wear them for the duration of the outing.

All Staff on visits out should ensure they have a fully charged mobile phone with them – School telephones are kept in Reception.

A ‘head count’ of the pupils should be made at regular intervals and always before the transport leaves the venue. If a pupil is discovered to be missing, then a search (not exceeding 20 minutes) of the immediate area is to be undertaken by all available members of Staff, ensuring that all other pupils continue to be appropriately supervised.

If the missing pupil is not located, then:

A Staff member should notify the Headteacher and/or Head of School at the School and act on any instructions given.

The Headteacher and/or Head of School will notify the Police and provide them with as precise a description of the pupil as possible, the last known whereabouts of the pupil, and any other details they may require.

A Staff member should notify, if appropriate, the venue that is being visited and ask them to initiate their “lost child protocols”.

The Headteacher and/or Head of School will notify the pupil’s Parents/Carers and keep them updated as necessary.

The member of Staff initiating the search should remain in situ until the Police or assistance from School arrives in case the missing pupil should return or be found.

## **INDEPENDENT RETURN INTERVIEWS**

When a child is found, they must be offered an independent return interview. Independent return interviews provide an opportunity to uncover information that can help protect children from the risk of going missing again, from risks they may have been exposed to while missing or from risk factors in their home. The interview should be carried out within 72 hours of the child returning to their home or care setting. This should be an in-depth interview and is normally best carried out by an independent person (ie, someone not involved in caring for the child) who is trained to carry out these interviews and is able to follow-up any actions that emerge. Children sometimes need to build up trust with a person before they will discuss in depth the reasons why they ran away. The interview and actions that follow from it should: identify and deal with any harm the child has suffered – including harm that might not have



already been disclosed as part of the 'safe and well check' – either before they ran away or whilst missing:

understand and try to address the reasons why the child ran away; help the child feel safe and understand that they have options to prevent repeat instances of them running away;

provide them with information on how to stay safe if they choose to run away again, including helpline numbers. The interview should be held in a neutral place where the child feels safe. The interview provides an opportunity to hear from the child about why they went missing and to understand the risks and issues faced by the child while missing. This could include exploring issues where a child:

- has been reported missing on two or more occasions;
- is frequently away from placement (or their home) without authorisation; has been hurt or harmed while they have been missing; is at known or suspected risk of sexual exploitation or trafficking;
- is at known or suspected risk of involvement in criminal activity or drugs;
- has contact with people posing risk to children; and/or
- has been engaged (or is believed to have engaged) in criminal activities while missing. The assessment of whether a child might run away again should be based on information about:
  - their individual circumstances, including family circumstances;
  - their motivation for running away;
  - their potential destinations and associates;
  - their recent pattern of absences;
- the circumstances in which the child was found or returned; and their individual characteristics and risk factors such as whether a child has learning difficulties, mental health issues, depression and other vulnerabilities.

## **GRAB BAG DETAILS**

In the case of a pupil being 'missing' from Quorn Hall School, where possible please follow this procedure and ensure that you have the correct additional information with you when leaving the site, including all items that are in the grab bag/folder.

- Take a note of what the pupil is wearing.
- If the pupil's whereabouts is known, staff will decide what actions are necessary to return the pupil to school or home. Staff are to maintain contact with the pupil, where possible.

- If the pupil is 12 years or younger the police will be called if the pupil is not in sight.
- If the pupil is over 12 years old staff will contact 101 unless the pupil is deemed vulnerable in which case 999 will be called. Ensure you have printed a copy of the pupil's Identity sheet to issue description to the police.
- If the pupil is located and appears to be at risk or vulnerable (due to the environment), staff are to remain close to the pupil and supervise them as much as possible, seeking further advice and guidance from the police and Senior Leadership Team.
- If the pupil has not been seen leaving or staff are unaware of the pupil's location, staff are to thoroughly search the grounds of the school and boarding accommodation, the local parks and village or area they were last seen, and any other location that the pupil is likely to have gone to.
- Parents will be called and kept updated by Admin staff or lead staff members.
- When leaving the premises to look for a pupil take the following with you – a copy of the pupil's identity sheet, either a school mobile phone or your own and a First Aid kit.
- Keep in contact with the school at regular intervals to allow for updates (a minimum of 10 minute intervals).
- Do not contact the police or parents yourself, allow the lead contact at school to do this, unless otherwise instructed.

### **Associated Policies:**

- Positive Relationship Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

### **INFORMATION FOR – pupils:**

#### **What is meant by missing?**

You will be considered missing if members of Staff do not know where you are or have not been seen by a member of staff or peers for the allocated time stated within this policy

#### **What is meant by running away?**

You have run away if you deliberately go away from where you should be without telling a member of Staff or without a member of Staff giving you permission.

#### **What will happen if you go missing?**

The people looking after you have a responsibility to know where you are and to make sure you are safe. If you are 'missing' they will speak to your friends, teachers and family to see if they can help. If there is concern for your safety then Staff will need to search for clues as to where you are. The Police may be informed that you are missing and they and the School Staff will look for you.

## **What happens if you can't be found?**

A meeting will be held between the School and the Police to plan how to search for you. Your name, description and a photograph will be given to the Police in order to help them with their search.

## **What happens when you are found?**

You will be returned to a safe place and will be asked about the reasons for going missing. This is to try and find out if anything is troubling you and to see if anyone can help. You do not have to run away to talk to someone. If you want to talk to someone outside of the School, this can be arranged.

You may also be visited by a Police Officer who will check that you are back. This is called a "Safe and Well Check". You will be able to speak to the Police Officer without any member of Staff present if you wish to do so.

## **Will anything else happen?**

If you are injured or unwell then you will be checked by a Doctor or Nurse. Your Headteacher will want to talk to you about going missing. If you have deliberately run away then the people responsible for your safety will meet to discuss ways in which such incidents can be prevented by looking at the reasons for your actions.

Remember, you have the right to use a telephone in private. If you are worried about something or just want to talk, the National Child Line number is 0800 1111.

To be reviewed by Student Council every 12 months

Last Review: \_\_\_\_\_

Next Review: \_\_\_\_\_