



## THOMAS'S BATTERSEA LOST CHILD POLICY

### AIMS

We aim at all times to keep pupils safe and secure whether on school premises or in our charge off site. We take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of the pupils. In the event that a pupil goes missing from school or when on a visit or off site activity, there are procedures in place below.

### PROCEDURES

#### 1. Registration

This takes place twice each day:

- morning registration is taken from 0825 and must be completed by 0910.
- afternoon registers are completed between 1340 and 1410.

Electronic registers are checked in the Front Office for absences. Where an email, letter or note via the pupil planner has been received requesting absence for medical appointments, school visits etc., no further action is taken. In cases where no information regarding absence has been received parents are contacted directly by telephone. The outcome is shared with the relevant staff.

#### 2. Dismissal

- Lower School, Middle School, and Year 6 are dismissed from the playground to parents or carers. In wet weather, pupils may be dismissed from form rooms.
- Pupils taking school transport home are signed up every day by form teachers on bus sheets and these are managed by the Transport Department. A common meeting place is assigned for pupils, who are then escorted to their bus or coach.
- In Upper School a list is generated daily to identify those pupils:
  - i. Being picked up directly by a parent or carer
  - ii. staying for school for clubs, practices or after school lessons or clinics
  - iii. supervised prep
  - iv. travelling home alone
  - v. at a School activity off site (fixture etc.)
- Going home alone is only allowed for Upper School pupils when a letter submitted by the parent or carer to the Head of Upper School, who then sanctions and records it.
- Parents must also inform the Head of Upper School if older pupils are going to take younger siblings home.

- After school Club Leaders keep registers and are responsible for pupils until they are handed over to parents and carers at the designated time and meeting point.

### **3. Visits and off site activities**

- Every visit or off site Risk Assessment should include an identified meeting point shared with all pupils and staff, and procedure specific to the venue in case a pupil is presumed lost.
- For all regular timetabled off site activities and clubs, risk assessments are completed and signed off before the start of the academic year.
- For any non-timetabled visit or off site activity an EV1 and risk assessment is to be completed by the Visit or Activity Leader.
- When pupils are leaving school for visits or off site activities, the Visit or Activity Leader takes a group register and confirms any absences with the Front Office before leaving school so that every pupil is accounted for.
- For every visit or off site activity each pupil is allocated an adult who takes a group register and is responsible for the pupils for the duration of the visit or activity.
- Registers and head counts are taken at regular intervals, particularly when getting on and off transport, and when leaving venues.
- Day visits are recorded in a School Visits record file by the relevant Head of School, and Residential visits are recorded by the Educational Visits Coordinator.
- In the event of a presumed lost child the Visit or Activity Leader should follow the procedure outlined in section 6 or section 7.

### **4. Measures to prevent pupils leaving the school building unsupervised**

- Pupils are expected to arrive to lessons on time. Teachers take a register at the start of the lesson to verify attendance.
- Pupils are not allowed to leave school unsupervised during the school day.
- Lower School pupils are not to be left unsupervised during the school day and should be collected and returned to their form room by co-curricular and peripatetic staff.
- Members of staff are expected to be vigilant and check that exit doors are secured on their entry and exit from the building.

### **5. Risk of kidnapping / abduction**

Security is constantly under review. Procedures include the following:

- The Front Office is manned by administrative staff and the Security Team, and access to the buildings is restricted throughout the school day.
- Staff sign in and out each day, wear name badges or can be identified by Thomas's clothing (PE kit, Catering or Transport uniform)
- Visitors sign in, wear red or green lanyards, and a designated staff contact is responsible for them.
- Any person on site who is not recognised, has no staff badge, has no lanyard, or a red lanyard yet alone in school, is challenged.
- No visit or off site activity should take place without a risk assessment having been completed which identifies appropriate supervision ratios for staff to pupils.
- A missing pupil will result in the procedure outlined in section 6 or section 7 being followed.

## **6. Pupils that are presumed missing within the school**

If after a brief search a pupil is not located the procedure is:

- The Front Office, form teacher/tutor and Head of School section must be alerted as soon as possible.
- The Head of School organises a thorough search of the school including toilets, common areas and playground. A sweep is made of the school to check whether they are attending a learning support, music lesson or another activity.
- If the child is missing from a group going off site for a visit or activity (e.g. off site Games lessons, Art visit), the Visit or Activity Leader should make every effort to find the child before reporting the child missing. Once the Front Office, form teacher/tutor and the Head of School are notified, the Head of School will decide whether to delay the visit or activity for a reasonable time; halt the visit or activity; or let the group carry on with their arrangements and take over responsibility for finding the missing child. If the group continues with their off site visit or activity, the Head of School will keep in contact with the Visit or Activity Leader to update them of the situation.
- The Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead are informed.
- If the missing child is not found, the school is evacuated as for an emergency drill and form registers are taken to ensure no other child is missing.
- If the child is not accounted for at the drill, the situation becomes a Critical Incident.
- The police are contacted by phone and the child is reported as missing.
- The child's parents are informed by the Head and advised on whether to travel to school.

## **7. Children that are presumed missing on a visit or off site activity**

If a child goes missing from a school visit or off site activity, where parents are not attending and responsible for their own child, the school ensures that there is a procedure that is followed.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, the Visit Leader asks children to stand with their designated group leader / teacher who takes a group register to ensure that all other children are accounted for.
- Two members of staff then search the immediate vicinity but do not search beyond that.
- The staff must contact the venue staff as soon as possible who will assist in the search. If the venue has a lost child procedure in place (e.g. museum, zoo, playing fields etc.) this should be followed.
- If the child is not located, the Head, Head of School and Designated Safeguarding Lead are informed.
- The situation becomes a Critical Incident.
- The police are contacted by phone and the child is reported as missing.
- The Head contacts the Principals as soon as possible.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team may be sent to the venue to support the group and be the point of contact for the police.
- The child's parents are informed by the Head and advised on whether to travel to school or to the venue.
- While an Assistant Visit Leader arranges to take the remaining children back to school with some staff, the Visit Leader and any available staff may stay at the location to assist in the search.

## 8. The investigation

- For missing children, the Critical Incident Policy will be followed as part of the investigation, detailing among other notes:
  - the date and time of the incident
  - when the child was last seen in the group / visit
  - the estimated time that the child went missing
  - description of pupil – physical features / clothing etc.
  - what staff / children were in the group or visit
  - what has taken place in the group / visit since then
- In time, the Vice-Principal will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all staff present at the time in school, on the school visit or at the activity venue.
- A conclusion is drawn as to why the incident happened.
- If the incident warrants a police investigation all staff must co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including the interviewing of staff.
- Social Services may be involved if it seems likely that there is a serious safeguarding issue to address.
- The incident is reported under RIDDOR agreements and is recorded in the incident book; the local authority health and safety officer may want to investigate and will decide if there is a case for prosecution.
- After the review, suggested updates to procedures will be discussed and implemented as necessary.

**See also:** [Battersea Critical Incident Policy](#), [EVOSA Policy](#), [Thomas's Battersea Non-Collection of Children Policy](#), [Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy](#)

<b>This policy will be reviewed annually</b>			
Created: August 2013	By:	Mal Hall, Deputy Head	
Latest Review: March 2019	By:	Mal Hall, Assistant Head  Approved: Simon O'Malley, Head	Clarification / update of Upper School dismissal procedures; clarification of procedures for timetabled off site visits and activities
Next Review: January 2020			