



STEP Academy Trust

Missing Child and Late Collections Policy

Date of Policy: December 2015

Review: December 2017

INTRODUCTION

This policy has been agreed by STEP Academy Trust Board of Trustees and applies to all member Academies.

The safety of our pupils is our priority whilst they are in our care at school. This policy sets out our procedures for dealing with the unlikely event of a child going missing or when a child has not been collected.

Responsibilities

It is the Headteacher's responsibility to ensure that all relevant staff are aware of this policy, what is expected, the procedures to follow and to ensure that the policy is reviewed on a timely basis. It is the responsibility of all staff to read the policy and act at all times according to its guidance.

Staff are responsible for completing Attendance Registers. They must be completed accurately and promptly according to guidelines. Completed registers must be returned to the Academy office by the times stipulated in the Attendance Policy.

If a member of staff takes a pupil, group or class out of the Academy they are responsible for informing parents and staff at the Academy office.

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure they provide correct and updated contact information on a timely basis and know the procedures for handover of their child at the beginning and end of sessions.

If a parent takes a pupil out of the Academy during the day, they must sign them out at the office.

It is the responsibility of Governors to ensure they are aware of the school's procedures and to challenge / support the school in its review of this policy.

Procedures Aimed at Reducing Risk of a Missing Pupil

Start of the school day:

- The school should ensure parents are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of their child passes from staff to them and vice versa.
- There are clear procedures for welcoming pupils into each Academy. The school gates are closed at 9:15am. After this time pupils report to the main school office via the main entrance.

During lesson time:

- Staff mark registers promptly and accurately – morning and afternoons and return them to the school office.
- All staff must ensure that the external gates to any outside area are closed when pupils are playing outside.
- If pupils leave the classroom security to work in other parts of the school, the class teacher must ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times and all pupils are accounted for on return to the classroom.
- Updated contact information for parents and carers is sought and maintained.

During playtime:

- Duty staff should be on the playground before pupils come out.
- External gates remain closed. Staff patrol all areas in the playground throughout the session.

During lunchtime:

- As above
- SLT members are available at lunchtime.
- LSAs accompany children from the playground when they are called in for lunch.

During home time:

- The gates are opened at 15:25.
- Pupils are collected by their parent / carer from the class teacher.
- Pupils in Years 5 & 6 who have written permission to go home alone are released by their teacher.

Educational visits:

- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff / pupil ratios (at least following national guidance and often in excess of this) are provided when pupils leave the school premises.
- Permission from parents is obtained generically at the beginning of each academic year and once again specifically for each trip.
- Mobile telephones taken on every visit and mobile contact numbers left at school.

After School Clubs:

- Thorough risk assessment in place.
- A register of pupils should be taken.
- Consent forms should be obtained from parents with contact numbers and details of who the pupils are to go home and who with.

Procedures In The Event Of A Child Going Missing

In the event of a member of staff fearing that a child has gone missing while at school:

If a teacher suspects that a child is missing from a lesson or activity, they contact the nearest member of SMT and the Headteacher and school office immediately. The Headteacher, SMT member and any teaching assistants will carry out a thorough search of the building, including outside areas, toilets and storage areas.

The following lists held in the school office will be checked:

- Attendance Registers
- Off site record
- Intervention
- Lists of those attending other schools (eg Transition activities)

If necessary, staff will promptly but calmly round up all pupils to the hall and a designated member of staff will supervise the children. The safety and care of other pupils is paramount so the security of the school and the number of staff remaining to supervise the other pupils in the school must be adequately maintained while the search continues.

Staff will count and name check all the pupils present against the register while the group are assembled in one place.

A thorough check of all exits will be made, to ensure all gates / doors were locked / bolted and there are no other ways a pupil could have left the school. If something is discovered this needs to be drawn to the attention of the SMT immediately.

If the child has not been found after 10 minutes from the initial report of them as missing then parents should be notified. The Headteacher or next most senior member of staff on site will decide at which point the police need to be contacted. When contacting parents / carers, staff will ask them to bring with them a recent photograph of their child. *Parents will be informed followed by the police (999) within 10 minutes of the first alert.*

Staff must try to remember and write down a description of what the child was wearing and any distinguishing features.

If the missing child has any special medical or learning needs then these need to be noted to be disclosed to police or other agencies.

The Class Teacher is spoken to gain further information and asked to confirm if he / she attended the previous sessions.

A thorough search of the school buildings continues and is carried out by senior members of staff with the help of other members of staff available.

Particular attention is paid to:

- Rarely used rooms
- Toilets
- Resource Room
- All classrooms
- School hall
- School grounds

In the event of a member of staff fearing that a child has gone missing while off school premises:

1. The Group Leader must ensure the safety of remaining pupils. At least two adults must stay with them.
2. One or more adults should immediately start searching for the child.
3. The Visit Leader should contact school to alert them.

4. If the child is not found within 5 minutes, the Group Leader must contact police by telephoning 999.

The Group Leader should alert school that the police have been contacted and school will make arrangements to notify parents, after which the procedures described above will be followed.

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED ON TIME

The school will ensure that all children are collected by a parent, carer or designated adult. If for some reason a child is not collected at the end of the day, the following procedures will be activated:

We undertake to look after the child safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care.

If a child is not collected within 10 minutes of the agreed collection time, a member of staff will call the parent, carer or designated adult, and use any other emergency contact details available, in order to try to ascertain the cause for the delay, and how long it is likely to last. Messages will always be left on any answer phone requesting a prompt reply.

While waiting to be collected, the child will be supervised by a member of staff who will offer them as much support and reassurance as is necessary.

At pm, the children will be taken to the office where they will be supervised by the Office Manager untilpm. Parents who collect their children afterpm must sign the late collection book which is kept in the office. Atpm, a member of the senior team will take over the supervision of the children.

If a child has not been collected within 40 minutes of the end of the Academy day, the Child Protection Officer must be informed and a decision taken as to whether social services needs to be called. If no contact has been made and no one has arrived to collect the child by 5.00pm, then the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) should be contacted via the Local Authority's Referral and Assessment Team.

Ensure that there are at least two members of staff present whilst waiting for the parent(s)/ carer(s) to collect the child.

The late collection book will be checked on a termly basis and in some cases; parents will be invited to meet the Headteacher to discuss how to limit these incidents.

Parents who know they are going to be late should inform the Academy office in advance.

The minimum age for siblings picking up pupils from school will be up to the schools discretion, but is unlikely to be younger than 16 years of age. The Headteacher must receive a request in writing.

If all attempts to contact a parent/legal guardian, designated person or emergency contact fail then the person in charge at the time should inform the Local Authority Social Services Department of the situation without delay.

The duty social worker will take charge of the situation and decide what happens next, and whether the police need to be involved in helping to trace the parent/guardian of the child.

Social Care will attempt to find the parent or relative. Emergency arrangements will be made for the child in consultation with the Local Authority Social Care.

The child will not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file.

On occasions when parents or the persons normally authorised to collect the child are unable to do so, parents advise how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child (normally using a pre-determined password)

Under no circumstances should staff go to look for the parent or take the child home with them.

Continual incidents of late collection will be recorded and discussed with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity.

Late Collection Fees (LCF)

To deter parents from collecting their children late from school, a LCF is charged. Pupils collected betweenpm andpm are charged £5. Thereafter, an additional £5 is charged for every half hour the pupil remains uncollected. The fee applies per collection not per pupil.

Parents/carers are always expected to contact the school providing a reason for the late collection and an estimated collection time. The Headteacher has the authority to reduce or waive the fee in exceptional circumstances; for example, if the collector is involved in an accident on the way to collect the child.

APPENDIX 1 - Protocol – for Children’s Social Care

On receipt of a call from a school at or after 5.00pm, the EDT Officer will need to be provided with relevant information about the child(ren) and their circumstances (relevant names, addresses and telephone numbers). Additional information relating to any recent changes in family circumstances or if there has been other occasions on which a child has not been collected from school should also be conveyed to the duty social worker.

If the duty social worker is unable to contact parents/carers, a foster carer(s) will be identified to look after the child on an emergency basis. This placement will be treated as an informal arrangement if the child is collected before 10pm. After that time, since the child will then be likely to remain overnight, s/he will be formally accommodated under Section 20 of the Children Act.

Whilst arrangements are being made for a child to be placed with a foster carer the police child protection team will be advised (Form 87A). No action should be taken by the police child protection team at this stage other than to note the details, complete relevant checks and to advise children’s social care whether or not the police are aware of any reason why the parent / carer has failed to collect their child. Should the parent / carer not contact any agency by 10pm, the child be accommodated. The police will again be informed since the child will be regarded as having been abandoned necessitating consideration of a police criminal investigation.

At each stage, it will be the intention of the social services department to seek to return the child to the care of his or her parent(s) / carer(s) unless there is evidence of a risk of significant harm.

APPENDIX 2 - Procedure when parents fail to collect a child or when a child goes missing

Person in Charge _____

The following child has not been collected/is missing:

Name of Child _____ DOB _____

Address _____

Tel No _____

Name of parent/guardian _____

For child not collected:

Date & time child should have been collected _____

Name of person who should have collected the child _____

For child gone missing:

Date, time & location of disappearance _____

Who was responsible for caring for the child at the time he/she disappeared?

What was the child wearing? _____

Any distinguishing features? _____

Circumstances surrounding disappearance? _____

Duty Social Worker informed for child not collected (date/time) _____

Parents contacted Yes No

What happens next? _____

Signed by registered person _____ Date _____