

Policy Name:	Pupil Absence and Missing Child Policy
Policy Number:	SG7

Staff member responsible	Revision Date	Approved By	Approval Date	Reason
Bronwyn Kidd (Deputy Head)	September 2022	Jonathan Slot	September 2022	Annual update
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This policy is applicable to the whole school including Early Years

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Shaping Brighter Futures

We provide an inspiring and joyful education that will be remembered for a lifetime and which empowers our children with the confidence, knowledge, skills and character to thrive. We are shaping brighter futures.

School Aims:

At St Neot's education is full of fun and good humour. We want every child to enjoy their time at school, to feel part of a community that holds family values at the core. We are determined that our children not only learn outdoors but learn about the outdoors. We want to create well-rounded, independent thinkers that are not only confident in their academic ability but hold the soft skills necessary for Senior School and the world ahead.

The St Neot's Way is:

- *Where we promote a true sense of community, family values, a love of the outdoors and a commitment to having fun.*
- *Where every child comes into school feeling safe, valued and with a broad smile on their face; and who returns home with uplifting stories to tell.*
- *Where a first class, personalised, rigorous academic journey is matched by an enriching, broad and challenging co-curricular programme.*
- *Where the children's character, contribution and service is as valued as their academic success.*
- *Where the children's physical wellbeing is surpassed by their mental wellbeing.*
- *Where highly skilled, passionate and dedicated teachers, working in first class facilities, are full of ambition for themselves and the children in their care.*

St Neot's Values

Happiness Kindness Self-Belief Honesty Respect

The welfare of all of the children at St. Neot's Prep is our paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that they have a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised whilst they are in our care. We are housed in a secluded 70-acre site which is a major benefit to all in the school, however, we are aware of the safety limitations that this can result in, therefore we undertake regular risk assessments and uphold high levels of supervision. As a school we also recognise that some families may need support with pupil attendance and we will support these families positively, and link with Children's Services where deemed necessary. Regard has been given to [Children Missing Education](#) (August 2024) and [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(September 2024\)](#) ("KCSIE").

1. Normal Procedures

The following procedures are in place to ensure as high a safety level as can reasonably be managed.

Children in Nursery (Tiny Tuskers and Tuskers)

Attendance and Collection Procedures:

- In Nursery (Tiny Tuskers and Tuskers) parents hand their children over to staff who sign the children in and out on daily sheets in the Brampton Building. These registers are then recorded onto the computer system iSAMS
- Parents are asked to give advance notice, where possible, if their child is to arrive late or to leave early
- In the case of unexpected absences (such as a child being unwell) parents are asked to contact the school as early as possible so that we are aware of the absence and can record the reason. This is done via absence@stneotsprep.co.uk
- Any unaccounted for absences are followed up and relevant codes are assigned on the register.
- Staff are informed of all absences via iSAMS
- Any pupil who arrives late or leaves early will be signed in and out as normal
- Only agreed carers can collect children. A password system is in place, should someone new arrive to collect a child
- Staff are aware that no child should be released to an adult if they are not known and approval has not been given by the parent and a password given. The DSL or member of SLT can always be contacted for advice
- Any child not collected at the end of the school day will remain in the nursery building, in creche, until it ends at 6pm
- If a parent was not expected to be late, and no message has been received they will be contacted in order to check on their welfare
- If at 6pm, a carer fails to arrive to collect a child, they will be taken to the main School building and handed over to a member of SLT who will be on duty. Their parents/carer will be contacted. If there is no response, the duty member of staff will begin to call the emergency numbers for the child (having informed the Headmaster). During this time, the child will be safely looked after.
- If there is no response from the contact numbers or the emergency numbers within half an hour of the premises closing, the duty member of staff will contact the Headmaster, a senior member of staff or the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will make a decision as to how to proceed. Further actions will be agreed. This could include contacting the Police, Children's Services or other external agencies.
- Further information on children missing education and monitoring attendance can be found in our Safeguarding Policy (SG1)

Fire Alarm Procedures:

- If the fire alarm bell sounds, or an evacuation of the building is required for any reason, staff will gather the children and evacuate to their designated evacuation spot
- The sign in sheets for pupils and staff rota will be taken out so that all pupils and staff are accounted for
- The administration team will bring out the form list and absence list, so that the record of all attendees for the day is available
- If anyone is missing, a search will be conducted under the instruction of a member of SLT
- If the child cannot be found, then the procedures outlined in *Section Two* will be actioned

Additional Procedures:

- When moving around the school site, the children will be placed in small groups with a member of staff. They will be escorted at all times, with regular head counts.
- When going on trips, a thorough risk assessment will be completed considering many factors. This will include the supervision of pupils
- As part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum, staff talk to children about appropriate adults, keeping themselves safe and general well being. They are encouraged to talk to staff if they are concerned about anything

Children in Pre-Prep

Attendance and Collection Procedures:

- All children are registered electronically on iSAMS twice a day. This is done at 8:20am, and then after lunch (by 14.00), in line with the whole school
- Pupils are dropped off by parents directly into their classroom or at their classroom door, where they are handed over to a member of staff
- Parents are asked to give advance notice, where possible, if their child is to arrive late or leave early
- Pupils who arrive late, or leave early, must sign in and out, at Main Reception
- In the case of unexpected absences (such as a child being unwell) parents are asked to contact the school as early as possible so that we are aware of the absence and can record the reason. This is done via absence@stneotsprep.co.uk
- Any unaccounted for absences are followed up and relevant codes are assigned on the register
- Staff are informed of all absences via iSAMS
- Staff have access to an "End of Day Document" that has permissions on it for collection and changes to normal collection routines.
- Only agreed carers can collect children. A password system is in place, should someone new arrive to collect a child
- Staff are aware that no child should be released to an adult if they are not known and approval has not been given by the parent and a password given. The DSL or member of SLT can always be contacted for advice
- At the end of the day, pupils are collected from their classroom where a member of staff dismisses them into the care of their parents. Children who are not collected and who are not attending a club, will be sent to Pre-Prep creche, which runs until 6pm
- If the child attends an after school club or creche, the parents will collect them from that location directly and the staff member running the activity will release them into the parents/carers care
- If a parent was not expected to be late, and no message has been received they will be contacted in order to check on their welfare
- If at 6pm, a carer fails to arrive to collect a child, they will be taken to the main School building and handed over to a member of SLT who will be on duty. Their parents/carers will be contacted. If there is no response, the duty member of staff will begin to call the emergency numbers for the child (having informed the Headmaster). During this time, the child will be safely looked after.
- If there is no response from the contact numbers or the emergency numbers within half an hour of the premises closing, the duty member of staff will contact the Headmaster, a senior member of staff or the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will make a decision as to how to proceed. Further actions will be agreed. This could include contacting the Police, Children's Services or other external agencies.

- Further information on children missing education and monitoring attendance can be found in our Safeguarding Policy (SG1)

Fire Alarm Procedures:

- If the fire alarm bell sounds, or an evacuation of the building is required for any reason, staff will gather the children and evacuate to their designated evacuation area
- The admin team will bring out the form list and absence list, so that the record of all attendees for the day is available
- If anyone is missing, a search will be conducted under the instruction of a member of SLT
- If the child cannot be found, then the procedures outlined in *Section Two* will be actioned

Additional Procedures:

- When moving around the site, the children are accompanied by a member of staff and are escorted at all times. The staff member will check that all children are present before departure and again on arrival at their destination. Regular head counts are conducted
- During games sessions, any off-games children are looked after by designated staff
- When going on trips, a thorough risk assessment will be completed considering many factors. This will include the supervision of pupils
- As part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum staff talk to children about appropriate adults, keeping themselves safe and general well being. They are encouraged to talk to staff if they are concerned about anything.

Children in Middle and Main School

Attendance and Collection Procedures:

- All children are registered electronically on iSAMS three times a day. This is done at 8:20am, after the first break at 11:00 and then after lunch (by 14.00), in line with the whole school.
- Pupils are dropped off by parents/ carers at 'flower pots' (outside Main Reception) where a member of staff is on duty. They then walk into school, via Main Reception, to their Form Rooms for registration
- Parents are asked to give advance notice, where possible, if their child is to arrive late or leave early
- Pupils who arrive late, or leave early, must sign in and out, at Main Reception
- In the case of unexpected absences (such as a child being unwell) parents are asked to contact the school as early as possible so that we are aware of the absence and can record the reason. This is done via absence@stneotsprep.co.uk
- Any unaccounted for absences are followed up and relevant codes are assigned on the register
- Staff are informed of all absences via iSAMS
- Staff have access to an "End of Day Document" that has permissions on it for collection and changes to normal collection routines.
- Only agreed carers can collect children.
- Staff are aware that no child should be released to an adult if they are not known and approval has not been given by the parent. The DSL or member of SLT can always be contacted for advice
- At the end of the day, pupils are collected from 'flower pots' by their parents/carer
- In Year 3 and Year 4, their Form Teacher dismisses the children directly to their parent/carer
- In Year 5 to Year 8, their Form Teacher or a duty member of staff dismisses the children directly to their parent/carer

- Children who are not collected and who are not attending a club, will be sent to Pre-Prep creche (Middle School) or Prep and Chillax (Main School), which runs until 6pm
- If the child attends after school clubs/ Prep or creche, the parents will collect them from the designated collection point where a member of staff will be present to oversee dismissal
- If a parent was not expected to be late, and no message has been received they will be contacted in order to check on their welfare
- If at 6pm, a carer fails to arrive to collect a child, they will be taken to the Main School building (for those in Middle School) and handed over to a member of SLT who will be on duty. Their parents/carer will be contacted. If there is no response, the duty member of staff will begin to call the emergency numbers for the child (having informed the Headmaster). During this time, the child will be safely looked after.
- If there is no response from the contact numbers or the emergency numbers within half an hour of the premises closing, the duty member of staff will contact the Headmaster, a senior member of staff or the Designated Safeguarding Lead, who will make a decision as to how to proceed. Further actions will be agreed. This could include contacting the Police, Children's Services or other external agencies.
- Further information on children missing education and monitoring attendance can be found in our Safeguarding Policy (SG1)

Fire Alarm Procedures:

- If the fire alarm bell sounds, or an evacuation of the building is required for any reason, staff will gather the children and evacuate to their designated evacuation spot
- The admin team will bring out the form list and absence list, so that the record of all attendees for the day is available
- If anyone is missing, a search will be conducted under the instruction of a member of SLT
- If the child cannot be found, then the procedures outlined in *Section Two* will be actioned

Additional Procedures:

- When moving around the school site the children are allowed some independence. However, all teaching staff must account for any missing children at the start of their lesson, and if they are concerned, contact Main Reception who will alert a member of SLT and the missing child procedure will be actioned. This applies to all lessons including games/sport and Outdoor Learning.
- When going on trips, a thorough risk assessment will be completed considering many factors. This will include the supervision of pupils
- As part of the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum staff talk to children about appropriate adults, keeping themselves safe and general well being. They are encouraged to talk to staff if they are concerned about anything.

Break Times

Nursery (Tiny Tuskers and Tuskers) have a fenced and gated designated area for playtime. At times they also make use of the Pre-Prep playground and woods. They will be supervised at all times when out at break and when outside playing. When Nursery are 'free flowing' between the classroom and their garden area, staff will monitor who is outside and who is inside, to ensure pupils' whereabouts are known at all times.

Pre-Prep has various designated areas to play, including outside the classroom (Reception quad area), adventure playground and a designated area of the woods. The children line up to go out to

play, are accompanied to their play area and are supervised whilst playing. At the end of break, the children line up in class groups, are all accounted for and then return to their classrooms under supervision.

Children in Year 3 to Year 8 have designated areas to play. This includes the astro pitch, main school woods, 'Roses' and the library. Children are released after lessons, change their shoes and go out to play. Staff are allocated duties to cover all areas. At the end of break, a bell is rung and duty staff ensure all areas are clear (including the woods and changing rooms). Duty staff do not leave their area of supervision until all pupils have left to return to class. After the first break (Period 3) staff ensure that they use the pupil absence list to account for any missing pupil's, via a formal registration. After the second break, pupil's register in their form rooms during Form Time. If they are concerned that a child is missing, they must contact Main Reception who will alert a member of SLT and the missing child procedure will be actioned.

Pupil Attendance and Absence

- The School has an admission and attendance register. Children are placed on the admission register with an agreed start date. Failure of the child to attend on that date will prompt the school to contact the family as to the reasons for non-attendance and the school will inform the local authority. The School is aware this should be done promptly to avoid children from going missing.
- An attendance register is taken twice daily once first thing in the morning and then again after lunch break. Each day all unexplained absences are followed up and accounted for. Records of attendance are monitored and poor attendance is raised with parents/carers and other external agencies if appropriate. Patterns of absence can be looked at and triggers that may cause absence identified. Specific concerns/triggers such as travelling to areas where there is conflict, where FGM or forced marriage occurs should act as warning signs to staff.
- Parents must request in writing permission from the Headmaster to take their child out of school for holidays, day visits during term time etc. The absence is considered by the Headmaster and then either approved or denied. A record of the absence request is kept so if the child is absent a record of the request and approval can be checked.
- The School holds multiple contact numbers and details for parents/carers and also asks for an emergency contact. This is useful for a number of reasons, not least if there is a welfare or a safeguarding concern. Parents are asked to confirm their contact details annually, but are also encouraged to contact the School if any details change (such as a change of address). Any changes are made on the School's computer system; iSAMS. This record will include dates of the change.
- In accordance with Children Missing Education (2024) the School will notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. Equally, the School will inform the local authority when a child's name is to be removed at a non-transition point. The School will provide the full details of the pupil including name, address, telephone number, at least one parent's contact details, the school the child has come from/going to and any other relevant information.
- Where a family goes missing and there are safeguarding and/or child protection/welfare concerns, Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP) must be informed.
- If the child/children are known to Children's Services, they must be informed immediately. Anyone made aware of the whereabouts of a 'Missing Family' should inform the DSL/DDL, who will inform Children's Services,

- The School will report to Hampshire Local Authority a pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent from school without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.
- The DSL and Heads of Year monitor pupil attendance, with regards to persistent absence in accordance with our threshold of 10% and above
 - 10-15% absence (persistent absence) – pupil is flagged on CPOMS for monitoring. If a pupil has two consecutive half terms where they fall into this bracket this will trigger a discussion between the Head of Year and parents, noting the level of absence and exploring ways in which to improve it in the future.
 - Above 15% absence – pupil is flagged on CPOMS and Head of Year is asked to comment on reasons for the high absence level. If there is no clear explanation for the high level of absence, a member of the DSL team will work with the Head of Year to establish next steps, which will almost certainly include talking to parents/guardians and the possibility of liaising with external authorities.

2. Actions to be followed if a Child Goes Missing from School

If a child is missing then a member of SLT (usually the Deputy Head/DSL) must be alerted without delay. They will coordinate the search for the child. The following steps must be taken:

- All registration books (late in, early out etc) should be checked
- Pupil movements should be accounted for, for example, consulting the music lesson timetable, the Learning Support department and Health Hub.
- Clarity from the Form Teacher, Deputy Head, Health Hub and Admin Team that whereabouts are unknown (no changes to normal routine)

If the child is still not found, then the Headmaster and rest of SLT should be alerted and a full search and next steps organised.

- All pupil movements around the school should be stopped and the pupils asked to stay where they are. If it is the end of a breaktime, all pupils will return to their form room and remain there until authorised to carry on with normal lessons.
- If the children were still out at break, then the bell would be rung, and all children would be asked to return to their form room. The children would be asked to stay with their teacher until informed by a member of SLT that normal lessons are to resume.
- Teaching staff will take a register of their form and Main Reception will coordinate these to ensure all other pupils have been accounted for. Any other missing children identified will be reported to SLT
- All staff and children will be spoken to and asked calmly if they can remember seeing the child and where that was
- At the same time, a search will be arranged and coordinated by a member of SLT actively searching everywhere within the departments/school both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms or where a child might hide. All available staff will be used and will be given a designated area reporting back to the designated member of SLT covering the search when they have completed their search or if they find the child.
- All exit points (doors, gates etc) will be checked for signs of entry/exit
- Due to the extensive grounds, all support staff, such as the grounds staff, IT department and admin team, will be asked to join in the search
- If the child lives nearby, a member of staff will be assigned to walk that journey home and search for any signs of the child

- During these active searches, staff must remain in contact with the member of staff co-ordinating the search who should remain in the school building. It is important that all parties involved are aware of any developments

If the child is still not found within an hour, or there is concern about the safety and well being of the missing child, then the Emergency Response Procedure should be followed and the following steps should be undertaken:

- The Headmaster or a member of SLT must ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. They must be asked to come to the school immediately
- A member of SLT (preferably the DSL) or Headmaster will notify the Police
- The search will continue with the Headmaster either co-ordinating or liaising with the member of SLT who has been co-ordinating the search.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform Hampshire Children's Services
- The school would cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Children's Services
- The Chair of Governors will be informed
- Ofsted/ISI will be informed if applicable
- The insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured, then they must be reviewed by the Health Hub, on their return and any further medical advice sought, if required. A written report would be produced and RIDDOR informed if appropriate

Only when the child is found and staff are given the all clear, should normal lessons/school activities resume.

3. Actions to be Taken if a Child goes Missing on a Trip / whilst Off-Site

If a child was to go missing whilst on a school trip or whilst off-site, then a similar procedure should be followed:

- The lead member of staff should act as the search coordinator
- All children should be brought back to one group and registered
- At least one member of staff must search the immediate vicinity whilst the other staff talk to the children to ascertain the last known whereabouts of the missing child.

If the child is still not found, then the school must be contacted and the Headmaster and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) informed. The Emergency Response Procedure should be followed and the following steps should be undertaken:

- The manager of the venue must be contacted so that an extensive search can be coordinated
- The Headmaster or a member of SLT must phone the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. They must be asked to come to the school at once
- The lead member of staff on the trip must contact the Police and inform the Headmaster and the DSL that this has been done
- The search will continue with the assigned member of staff keeping the Headmaster and DSL informed

- Depending on the location of the trip/off-site activity it may be appropriate for the Headmaster, DSL or other member of SLT to travel to the location
- The DSL will inform Hampshire Children's Services
- The school will cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Children's Services
- The Chair of Governors will be informed
- Ofsted/ISI will be informed if applicable
- The insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured then medical advice should be sought. A written report would be produced and RIDDOR informed if appropriate

4. Actions to be Taken Once the Child is Found

- Once the child is found, they should be talked to and cared for. The priority will be to make sure they are feeling safe, well and cared for. If necessary, medical advice should be sought.
- If the search has escalated, as per the procedures above, the child should stay with a member of staff until a parent arrives
- The other children will be spoken to, to ensure that they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing
- The Headmaster will speak to the parents to discuss the events and give an account of the incident
- The Headmaster will promise a full investigation (if appropriate, involving Police, Children Services/ Local Children Safeguarding Board)
- The investigation will include written statements from all involved
- The parents/staff/ pupils may need counselling after such an incident, which will be provided
- Relevant staff will be kept informed of any developments
- Media queries should be referred to the Headmaster

5. Documentation

A full written record of all actions should be kept during the search. The written records should be date and time stamped with the name of the individuals involved. The more information that can be documented the better, as this will form the basis of the formal report that will need to be completed at the end of the search, once the child has been found.

The detailed report must be completed without delay. The report should be factual and should include:

- Date and time of events
- The circumstances surrounding the incident, including why were they in the situation (eg: on a school trip, out at break, in between lessons)
- A full list of who else was present, including those supervising and pupils
- Where the child went missing from and what happened in the lead up to the child being noted as missing
- When and how that it was noted that the child was missing and who raised the alarm
- The length of time that the child was missing for
- Full list of individuals contacted (include date and time)
- List of actions taken
- List of areas searched and by whom
- External agencies involved

- Date and time that the child was found and by whom
- Exact location that the child was found
- Condition of the child when they were found (health, physical and emotional description)
- Actions taken once found
- Include statements from all staff involved and any other relevant information
- Document when the Chair of Governors, ISI, Ofsted and any other agencies were informed

A statement from the missing child should also be obtained but this may need to be taken at a later date depending on the circumstances. In some cases, it may be necessary from an external agency such as the Police to take this statement and feedback to the school.

If the child has been injured, a report would be catalogued with the Health Hub and reported to RIDDOR if appropriate.

6. Review of Incident

Those involved must work with external agencies so that a safe outcome can be achieved. It is also important that staff have the opportunity to reflect and discuss the incident and that learning points can be reviewed.

A meeting date to review and reflect on the incident should be planned, with those involved, asked to attend. Learning points should be identified and shared. If it was a traumatic incident, support to staff and the families may be needed to be offered.

The case should be discussed at the next Health and Safety Meeting, although if it is a serious incident, an emergency meeting may need to be called.

All action points must be actioned and the safety and well being of all staff and pupils ensured.

Depending on the circumstances surrounding the child going missing, for example if the child ran away, a personalised support plan for that child, complete with risk assessment, may need to be completed.

All relevant risk assessments and policies should be reviewed and any changes made, if deemed necessary, on reflection on this incident.