



NORTH LIVERPOOL ACADEMY

CHILDREN WHO GO MISSING POLICY

1. Check register and class where they should be
2. Initiate an immediate search of the school site extending to and including the immediate environs of the school
3. Report at once to a member of the LMT
4. Notify 'parents'* about what has happened using the emergency contact arrangements with a view to appropriately involving them in the recovery arrangements
5. Alert the Police that a child is out of school/possibly at risk

Quite often children who leave school in this way either make their way home or to other nearby relatives of friends' houses. Alert parents to this likelihood so that they can establish appropriate contacts. Arrange with parents for the school to be contacted immediately the child turns up or is discovered so that any searches can be called off and any alerts still in place cancelled including any to the Police.

It is not usual for the Police, at this stage, to set up search arrangements or to be otherwise directly involved in locating the child unless a Police Officer should come across the child following the alert.

The age and abilities of the child will be a factor in this respect. Do not, therefore, expect or assume that because the Police have been told that they have taken over full responsibility and do no more. This will not be the case and if we act in this way we will leave ourselves open to serious criticism.

Should there be any evidence to suggest that the child has either not left the site of their own free will; of abduction or other enticement or 'luring' the available details must be reported to the Police immediately the school is made aware of the incident. Such possible 'criminal' acts will result in a different Police response to the incident because, in these circumstances there is a required protocol to be followed.

Contact with the Police should be maintained at regular intervals throughout the incident. Should the child not be found within a reasonable time, particularly by a time that, in any event, the child would normally have been expected to have arrived home, then further contact will be necessary with the Police to consider changing the nature of their response or to review the other 'recovery' arrangements in place.

If a child insists on going home and not staying in school please contact SMT who will ensure that the parents know. It is better to have a planned exit rather than a truancy.

This advice has been agreed with the Police.

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School Decisions to send Children/Pupils Home During the Course of the School Day

The converse situation of above is where schools themselves consider that there is a need for a pupil to be sent home for a particular reason.

There have been isolated incidents, more so in secondary than primary schools, when pupils have been sent home during the course of the school day without the knowledge or agreement/consent of 'parents'*.

Reasons have varied from:-

- Lack of or unacceptable dress or personal appearance
- Forgotten books, homework, kit or other items of equipment
- Immediate formal exclusion
- Other unacceptable behaviour outside formal exclusion

We legally have a duty of care towards all pupils in our charge. Parents' expectations whilst their children are in school is that the school will act in a reasonable and responsible manner in relation to their children's Health and Safety, care and welfare. Parents will not expect their children to be released into the local communities simply by decision of the school and without any consultation with them. Any situation in which individual or groups of children are to be placed by the school should be the subject of full and documented risk assessment, the overriding aim of which should be to ensure that such pupils are not placed in any vulnerable or unnecessary risk situation. Any child disadvantaged, injured or in any other way harmed through a school decision that has placed them at unnecessary risk may well result in allegations of negligence and claims against the school.

We are, therefore, strongly advised not to send pupils out of school during the course of the school day. Should there, in very exceptional circumstances, be a need to do so, this should only happen after contacting, and discussing the situation with parents and agreeing and getting their consent to the proposed arrangements. Thereafter pupils should only leave the site in accordance with one of the following three arrangements:-

- i) The parent or other responsible adult, as determined by the parent, collects the pupil
- ii) The pupil is taken home or, to another address, as determined by the parent, by an appropriate member of the school's staff
- iii) The pupil is allowed to leave the school unaccompanied but only in accordance with arrangements agreed with and consented to by parents

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The last method should only be used where older secondary aged pupils are concerned and only where both the school and the parent are agreed (i.e. there is no doubt) that the pupil is capable of complying fully with the agreed arrangements and is capable of reasonably conducting themselves in a safe and proper manner.

In no circumstances should this method be used for younger secondary aged pupils.

If none of the arrangements (i) to (iii) are possible or appropriate and/or there has been no discussion with, agreement or consent given by parents the pupil must be retained in school until the normal end of the school day when s/he can return home in the usual way.

In addition to the above:-

- No child will be allowed home at any time to collect any missing work or forgotten equipment
- No parents will be contacted for lost or forgotten equipment (save medical supplies)
- No child will be allowed out of school unless there is a certified letter from a parent.

In relation to the use of exclusion from school DfES guidance is clear in that an exclusion should normally begin on the next school day. In addition it would be negligent action to enforce an exclusion if doing so might put the safety of the pupil at risk.

'Parents'* in this document is the legal definition that applies within education and includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who either has parental responsibility for or, who has the care of the child.

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