



Independent School for Girls Aged 2 to 18
and Boys Aged 2 to 11

MISSING PUPILS POLICY

Harrogate Ladies' College family of Schools:

Highfield Pre School, Highfield and College

SLT Responsibility: Joanna Fox and James Savile

Governor Committee Review: Pupil Welfare

Date of Last Review: August 2024

Review Cycle: Biennial

PRINCIPAL: Sylvia F. Brett BA (Dunelm), MA (London). **COLLEGE VISITOR:** Baroness Harris of Richmond.
Clarence Drive • Harrogate • North Yorkshire • HG1 2QG **T:** +44 (0)1423 504543 **E:** enquire@hlc.org.uk **www.hlc.org.uk**

REGISTERED OFFICE: Harrogate Ladies' College, Clarence Drive, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 2QG.
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Since 1893



Missing Pupils Policy

This policy applies to the Harrogate Ladies' College Family of Schools – Highfield Pre-School, Highfield and College - hereafter referred to as "the School".

This policy:

- applies to staff (including volunteers), pupils and parents at the School;
- should be read with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and procedures; and
- is a mandatory requirement of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (DfE 2022) and the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The procedures in this policy may be adapted as necessary in the circumstances.

Introduction

This policy is to be used when searching for, and if necessary, reporting any pupil missing from the School. The policy includes the requirement to record any incident, the action taken and the reasons given by the pupil for being missing.

NB A child going missing from School or from home is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow this procedure for dealing with children who go missing:

Staff should act to identify any risk of abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation. Consequently, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or senior member of staff on duty in the DSL's absence, should always be informed when a pupil is found to be missing. The DSL or senior on-call will always apply procedure acting to safeguard any child who is missing in School. In particular, the matter will be referred to other agencies, including children's social care services and/or the police in cases where a pupil has gone missing on repeated occasions, or where a single instance of truancy or running away gives rise to concerns of abuse or neglect, or other risk of harm including where there is evidence of a crime.

Important Numbers

Senior Deputy	Office: ext. 255	Home: ext 204	Mobile : 07592 370244
Head of Highfield	Office: ext249		Mobile: 07827 338387
Senior Resident	Office ext: 243	Home Ext:284	Mobile: 07786 864926
Pre-School Manager	Office: ext 281		Direct: 01423 537030
Head of Lower School	Office: ext. 203		Mobile : 07585 331473

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting.

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Head of Middle School	Office: ext. 203		Mobile : 07557 261749
Head of Sixth Form	Office: ext. 279		Mobile : 07585 331771
Head of Boarding	Office: ext 350	Lincoln ext:237	Mobile: 07833 444078
Wellness Centre	Office: ext. 215	01423 537003	Emergency Mobile : 07833 445016

Procedure for pupil missing from School premises

College:

If a pupil is missing from a lesson or an activity, the member of staff should contact the School Office for College as soon as possible either by email or telephone.

The School Office will check the signing-out book. If the pupil has not signed out, the School Office staff will make the necessary checks, with the caretaking team as required, around School, at the Wellness Centre, in the Music House, with previous lesson, peers, Boarding Houses and on the absence list etc.

Highfield:

For Highfield Pre-School, the Pre-School Manager should be notified. If it is confirmed that the child is in session, checks will be made of the building and grounds.

For **Highfield Prep**, the Highfield Reception should be informed and similar checks will be made as in College.

If a College pupil still cannot be located the following should be initiated:

During School Office Hours

Receptionist

1. Re-checks Wellness Centre –
2. Alerts appropriate Head of School or senior member of staff. Additional checks made.

If unsuccessful, Head of School or senior member of staff:

1. Rings the pupil's mobile (if the pupil is likely to have a mobile on his / her person) in case he/she answers (mobile phones are not allowed to be on)
2. Checks location of next lesson and calls department – **if unsuccessful**,
3. Follow the steps in the Missing Pupil Procedure below.

If at any point the pupil is located – **RECEPTION** must be informed and they will then pass information to those concerned (Wellness Centre and Head of School)

Out of School Office Hours

The pupil's Housemistress must be alerted who will then:

1. Check Wellness Centre

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2. Call the pupil's mobile number if able to
3. Search, or instruct Heads of House or prefects to search, House and environs
4. Check with the pupil's friends and ask them to call / message them

If a Highfield Pre-School pupil still cannot be found, the following should be initiated:

The Pre-School Manager instructs staff to recheck the building and grounds and informs the Head of Highfield. The steps in the Missing Person Procedure will then be followed.

If a Highfield Prep pupil still cannot be found, the following steps will be initiated:

The Highfield School Administrator will inform the Head of Highfield and ensure that all buildings are rechecked. The steps in the Missing Person Procedure will then be followed.

Missing pupil procedure:

Where it seems likely that a College pupil may have left the school grounds:

1. The Housemistress/Head of School, as appropriate, will speak to the pupil's close friends and peer group and try to establish a last sighting and, if possible, obtain a mobile telephone number (if not already on file). The help of the Head of School / Housemistress will be sought to recheck the immediate surrounds.

It is important to keep the atmosphere calm.
2. The Housemistress / Head of School, as appropriate, will check all the obvious places on campus: Sports Hall, Field, Music House (if not already checked). The on-duty caretaker can be called and asked to assist with the search.
3. If the pupil is not found, the Senior Deputy will be contacted (or the senior member of staff on call) and will inform other members of Staff to ask them to question any other particular friends or those who may have been with the pupil recently.

(If appropriate, a fire drill practice may be carried out to see if that reveals the missing pupil.)
5. The Senior Deputy or senior member of staff on call over a weekend will inform the Principal if the police need to be informed.
6. The Head of School/ Housemistress will be directed to telephone the pupil's parents. All decisions as to the point at which the parents should be contacted will be made by the Senior Deputy or senior member of staff on call over a weekend.
7. Senior Deputy or senior member of staff on call to telephone Police following consultation with the pupil's parents (where possible and / or appropriate).

Where it seems likely that a Highfield pupil has left the school grounds:

1. The Head of Highfield (or member of the Highfield Leadership Team) will speak to the pupil's close friends and peer group and try to establish a last sighting. The help of staff will be sought to recheck the immediate surrounds.

It is important to keep the atmosphere calm.

2. Staff, as appropriate, will check all obvious places on campus and the on-duty caretaker can be called and asked to assist with the search.
3. If the pupil is not found, the Head of Highfield (or member of the Highfield Leadership Team) will inform the Principal who will instruct when to inform the Police.
4. The Head of Highfield (or member of the Highfield Leadership Team in his absence) will telephone the Police following consultation with the pupil's parents (where possible and / or appropriate).

Where a boarder has not returned to the Boarding House by curfew (depending on age) but is most likely to be on campus the Housemistress must:

1. See friends; try to ascertain where, when and in what circumstances the pupil was last seen and whom he/she is likely to be with. Contact Duty Caretaker to see if anyone is left in the Main School Building following prep or supper
2. Ring missing pupil's mobile. Request Head of House and/or other prefects to search area immediately around the House and environs
3. If no further progress, contact other boarding Housemistresses. The on-duty caretaker can also be called and asked to assist in the search of the site
4. If the pupil is not found, the Senior Deputy should be contacted (or Senior member of staff on call if out of hours)
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7. The Housemistress will be directed to telephone the pupil's parents by the Senior Deputy or the senior member of staff on-call. All decisions as to the point at which the parents should be contacted will be made by the Senior Deputy (or Senior member of staff on call, as appropriate
8. The Senior Deputy (or Senior member of staff on-call, as appropriate) will decide if the police need to be informed. Senior Deputy/on-call senior member of staff to telephone Police following consultation with the pupil's parents (where possible and / or appropriate).

Procedure for pupil missing outside of School

If a pupil is missing from a school trip/educational visit or has not arrived at the School following a journey, the member of staff in charge will:

1. attempt to contact the pupil
2. check whether there were any delays or changes to the journey
3. check with other pupils and ask them if they have any knowledge of the missing pupil's whereabouts
4. Contact the on-duty emergency contact staff in school for support and guidance.
5. contact the pupil's accommodation, if applicable
6. contact the venue or the people that the pupil had visited, if applicable
7. contact hospitals and the Police and the parents or guardians.

If at any time there is a concern that a pupil has suffered or is at risk of suffering significant harm, the School's child protection procedures must be followed (see the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*).

Records

The School must keep a full written record of any significant incident of a missing pupil including:

- the pupil's name
- relevant dates and times (e.g. when it was first noticed that the pupil was missing)
- the action taken to find the pupil
- whether the Police or children's services were involved
- outcome or resolution of the incident
- any reasons given by the pupil for being missing
- any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident
- a record of the staff involved.

Records will be retained centrally and a full written record of the incident will also be kept on the pupil's file. After any such serious incident, a full de-brief of procedures will be held by the Senior Deputy to inform and ensure best practice.

Contacting the Police

Generally, before the police are called, the DSL and the pupil's parents should be informed. If,

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however, attempts to contact the DSL are unsuccessful, there should not be a delay in making contact with the police if required.

When contacting the police to report a missing child, call 101 (not 999). Pass on to the police all pertinent details as they request. Ask for the direct contact number so you can make swift contact should the situation change.

Where the School contacts the police during the day or night, the following information should be provided:

- The pupil's name;
- The pupil's age;
- An up-to-date photograph if possible;
- The pupil's height, physical description;
- Any disability, learning difficulty or special educational need the pupil may have;
- The pupil's home address and telephone number;
- A description of the clothes the pupil is thought to be wearing;
- Any relevant comments made by the pupil, such as 'I am going to Leeds'; and
- Any suspicion or evidence of a crime.

Follow-up to a Missing Pupil Incident

Once a pupil returns from being missing, they will be provided with support and the opportunity to discuss the incident with the DSL, the Wellness Centre staff and, in the case of boarders, the Independent Listener. They may also be provided with the contact details for external support services (e.g. Childline or the NSPCC) should they be required.

The pupil's parents will also be given the opportunity to discuss the incident with the DSL, who will provide advice and support where required.

Any residual concern about the pupil's welfare resulting from an incident will be acted upon and, where appropriate, children's social services and/or the police will be informed. Where deemed appropriate, a risk assessment/Welfare Care Plan will be drawn up and shared with the relevant staff.

Monitoring and Review

The School will record all serious incidents in CPOMS, in accordance with this policy, which will be used to monitor patterns of behaviour.

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The policy is reviewed and updated at least annually by the Senior Deputy. In undertaking the review, the Senior Deputy and records of missing pupil incidents that indicate there may be an issue with supervision, pupil support or security at the School, along with any issues raised by individual members of staff, parents or pupils at the School.

The Governors will also undertake a biannual review of this policy.

Government guidance is updated from time to time. Reviews and updates will take into account updated government guidance.

Version control

Date of last review of this policy	September 2024
Date for next review of this policy	September 2026
Policy owner (SLT)	Senior Deputy
Policy owner (Proprietor)	Dame Francine Holroyd