



# STEP Academy Trust

## Missing Child and Late Collection Policy

Date of Policy: January 2019

Review: October 2020

### Introduction

STEP Academy Trust Board of Trustees has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies to all Academies within the Trust.

### 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 in the morning and afternoon. 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 The Strategic Governing Body 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 and for when the gates will be secured. After this time pupils report to the main school office via the main entrance. A child will be marked down as late in accordance with what is stated in each academies attendance policy.

#### During lesson time:

- Staff mark registers promptly and accurately – morning and afternoons and return them to the school office.
- The designated staff member must ensure that the external gates to any outside area are closed when pupils are playing outside.
- If pupils leave the classroom security, the class teacher must ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times and all pupils are accounted for on return to the classroom. It is the class teacher's responsibility to check that any pupil leaving the classroom has reached their intended destination.

#### 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.
- SLT members are available at playtime.

#### During lunchtime:

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

#### During home time:

- Gates are opened at the appointed time depending on the academy timetable.
- 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.
- Consent forms should be obtained from parents with contact numbers and details of who the pupils are to go home with.
- If a pupil is to be collected by an individual not on the pupil's permission list, they are not to be released by the Academy until one of the individuals with parental responsibility for the pupil has confirmed the name of the individual collecting.

#### Educational visits:

- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff/pupil ratios in line with the STEP Academy Policy 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.
- The academy's mobile telephone is 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 at the start of the session.
- Consent forms should be obtained from parents with contact numbers and details of who the pupils are to go home 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 SLT 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
  - Offsite record
  - Intervention
  - Lists of those attending other schools (e.g. transition activities)
  - Signing out sheets

- 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 academy and the number of staff remaining to supervise the other pupils in the academy must be adequately maintained while the search continues.
- Staff will count and name check all the pupils present against the register while the groups 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 academy. 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, to gain further information and asked to confirm if the child 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. Report the child as missing to the establishment where the visit is occurring, so that their lost child procedures can be initiated.
4. The Visit Leader should contact the academy immediately to alert them.
5. If the child is not found within 5 minutes, the Group Leader must contact police by telephoning 999.
6. The Group Leader should alert the academy that the police have been contacted and school will make arrangements to notify parents, after which the procedures above will be followed.

#### **Procedures 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.
- Parents who collect their children 15 minutes after the scheduled time must sign the late collection book (or whatever system is in place). If the child has not been picked up 30 minutes after the scheduled time, a member of the senior team will take over the supervision of the children. Please see our Charging Policy for late collection fees.
- If a child has not been collected within 40 minutes of the end of the academy day, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed and a decision taken as to whether social services need 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 school's discretion, but is unlikely to be younger than 16 years of age. The Headteacher must receive a request in writing.
- 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).

## **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? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by registered person \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_