

Missing Pupil Policy

(Senior School)



CATERHAM
SCHOOL

Policy Author:

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Policy Statement

The welfare of all of our pupils at Caterham School is our paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the school is aware that they have a responsibility for helping to keep all of the pupils safe at all times. It is therefore the responsibility of all staff to search actively for pupils who are missing, including working with the police where appropriate. The School maintains appropriate staffing and supervision arrangements, taking account of pupils' ages, needs, activities and the circumstances in which they are in the School's care.

All Caterham School pupils are registered before school starts in the mornings. Registration is taken again after lunch for all pupils. A list of absentees is held in the School Office. For the purposes of this policy, a pupil is considered missing when their whereabouts cannot be established and they are absent from the place where they are expected to be, without a known or authorised reason. This is distinct from a pupil who is absent from School and whose non-attendance is managed under the Attendance Policy.

Where an EYFS child is absent from School without notification from a parent/carers, or is absent for a prolonged period, the School will follow the procedures set out in its Attendance and Safeguarding Policies, including contacting parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts and escalating any welfare concerns as appropriate.

On occasions when a member of staff identifies a pupil as missing from their expected location, immediate action is required as outlined in the procedures below.

Communications with parents and the appropriate services (particularly the police) are an integral part of the procedure and all instances of a missing pupil must be reported to the Headmaster, or a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the appropriate investigations made. Where a missing pupil incident gives rise to a safeguarding concern, the School's Safeguarding Policy will be followed immediately, including referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police where appropriate.

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including boarders and those in our EYFS setting. Caterham School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

Caterham School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document. In line with our Provision of Information policy, this document is available to all interested parties on our website and on request from the main school office and should be read in conjunction with the following documents: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, and Attendance Policy and Procedures. This documentation also complies with the National Minimum Standards for Boarding (2026), Standard 20: Staffing and Supervision. This policy works in conjunction with *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*.

Procedure for Missing Day Pupils (Senior School)

A pupil may be identified as missing:

- After an absence at morning registration is not confirmed by the office staff's contact with home.
- By comparing pupils in a class with the day's absence sheet.
- On reconciliation with the afternoon registration.
- By a report of a missing child by a fellow pupil.

Any member of staff discovering a discrepancy must immediately notify the School Secretary who will:

- Contact and make the necessary check such as the tutor/teacher to assess whether the absence is expected, the Health Centre to check for any known medical emergency. Check all lists of trips out of School and check the signing out books at Reception.

If the pupil is still found to be missing, the School Office will immediately:

- Inform the Senior Deputy Head and/or SMT members, who will initiate and oversee a search of the site.
- Coordinate and make the necessary search over the school grounds.
- Advise all teachers due to teach or tutor the pupil later that day that they must immediately inform the office if the pupil appears.

If the site search fails:

- The invacuation alarm may be sounded so that a full register can be taken.
- The Headmaster and parents will be informed, and in some cases a search of local roads will be made on foot, or by car, by available staff and parents as appropriate. This may include the ground staff (Head Groundsman 07973 238234) or facilities team (Facilities Supervisor 07711 402723)
- On completion of this and any subsequent searches made over the day parents will continue to be informed of progress.
- The Police will be contacted without delay where there is reason to believe that the pupil may be at immediate risk of harm or where the circumstances otherwise warrant an urgent police response. In other cases, the Headmaster or Senior Deputy Head will determine, having regard to the circumstances and safeguarding advice, when police involvement is required.

If the pupil is found, or the incident is otherwise resolved:

- The Headmaster and parents will be directly informed by the School Office.
- The Police will be informed if they have been involved.
- The Headmaster will initiate a full inquiry and provide a written report. This report and the incident log will be kept on the pupil's file.

Procedure for Missing Boarders

During the school day, the procedure is the same as that for a missing day pupil, but includes:

- Contact the Boarding Housemaster or Housemistress.

A boarder may be identified as missing if their whereabouts cannot be confirmed visually, from information provided by the pupil or other trustworthy pupils with regard to their movements, the sign-in book or telephone contact with them or their parent/guardian.

Staff discovering a discrepancy must:

- Notify the Boarding Housemaster or Housemistress, and/or the duty boarding staff member and Senior Deputy Head.
- Attempt to ascertain whereabouts from friends.
- Attempt to contact the pupil on his/her mobile phone.
- Arrange a check of the School grounds.
- Contact staff who might previously have taught the pupil that day (if a weekday).
- Check the list of trips and activities out of School.

If a pupil is still missing, the staff should:

- Inform the Senior Deputy Head and the Headmaster.
- Notify the Boarding Tutor and check for any known circumstances that might have led to the pupil being missing.
- Contact their parents/guardians (with due regard for time zones).
- Contact back-up duty staff, and request assistance as appropriate, including the ground staff (Head Groundsman 07973 238234) or facilities team (Facilities Supervisor 07711 402723)
- The fire alarm may be sounded so that a full register of those on site can be made. If this step is taken, the fire alarm monitoring service should be informed ahead of an alarm being sounded.
- If necessary a search of local roads, shops, potential haunts etc. should be made on foot or by car where appropriate.

On completion of this and any subsequent searches made, the Headmaster and parents/guardians will continue to be informed of progress. The Headmaster or in his absence, the Senior Deputy Head, will arrange for the Police to be informed.

If the pupil is found, or the incident is otherwise resolved:

- The Headmaster, Parents/guardians, Senior Deputy Head will be directly informed by the Boarding staff.
- The Police will be informed if they have been involved.
- The Headmaster or Boarding Housemaster will initiate a full inquiry and provide a written report. This report and the incident log will be kept on the pupil's file.

After any Missing Pupil Incident

- The Senior member of staff involved will sensitively discuss with the child's parents the events surrounding the disappearance of the child.
- The Headmaster will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time.
- The incident report will detail:
 1. The date and time of the report
 2. What staff/children were in the group/class
 3. When the child was last seen in the group/class/boarding house
 4. What has taken place in the group/class/boarding house since then and the time it is estimated that the child went missing.
- A conclusion is drawn as to how the incident occurred and whether there were any safeguarding, supervision, security or procedural issues. Where appropriate, procedures, risk assessments, staffing/supervision arrangements and training will be reviewed and updated.