Missing Child Policy (including a Child Missing Education) & Procedures when a child is not collected on time (Whole School including EYFS)

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This policy consists of two parts. Part One details the school response to a child missing from Tower House or a child missing education, and the school response to a child missing from a co-curricular trip outside Tower House.

Part Two details covering the procedure to be followed by the school in the event of a parent failing to collect a child at the appointed time.

PART ONE: Missing Child Policy including Children Missing from Education

1. Introduction

The welfare of all our children at Tower House School is our paramount responsibility.

A child being absent from education, for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including abuse or neglect, child sexual and/or criminal exploitation and county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called 'honour based' abuse or risk of forced marriage.

Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. This includes the importance of effective information sharing to ensure our children are safe and receiving suitable education. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child being absent in the future. Where staff have concerns that a child is absent from school for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, or missing from school, this policy should be followed.

Every member of staff has read and understood Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he is in our care.

2. Information for Parents

The enhanced supervisory arrangements for outings involving our youngest children are set out in a detailed policy document: 'Educational Visits including EYFS Children' and can be found on the school website and provided to parents on request. We review these policies regularly (at least once a year) in order to satisfy ourselves that they are robust and effective. All new staff receive a thorough induction into the importance of effective supervision of very young children and read at least Part 1 of KCSIE, and have regular child protection training.

3. Action to be followed by staff if a child fails to attend first day of school

All new pupils (regardless of their age) are placed on the School's admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the School has agreed that the pupil will attend the School. If a child fails to attend on the agreed date, staff must inform the Attendance Champion (the Head) or the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Head / Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

The School admission register, also known as the School roll, contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School along with the date of admission or re-admission to the School, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended.

Where there are changes affecting the child (including a change of address or school), these will be reflected in the admission register. This will assist the School and external agencies when making enquiries to locate any missing children.

The School also has an attendance register which records pupil attendance. The attendance register is taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion we will record whether each registered pupil is physically present in school or, if not, the reason they are not in school by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Registers are legal records and school leaders must ensure that the school's admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Please see the School's Attendance Policy for more information.

The School will preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 6 years from the date of entry. Where amendments are made to the registers, the School will that ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment.

4. Duty to report

The school monitors attendance closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance.

Schools must regularly inform the Local Authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from school, have irregular attendance, or where absence escalates. Schools also have a safeguarding duty, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate absences.

Please refer to the School's Attendance Policy for further information on reporting duties.

5. Prolonged and/or persistent absence

Where a pupil has not returned from a period of leave or has had a continuous period of absence, the School, together with the local authority, may need to carry out joint reasonable enquiries under regulation 9(1)(h) or (i) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to try to find out where the pupil is.

In addition, the school recognises its wider reporting duties following deletions from the admission register, in accordance with regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, to help identify children who are missing education and/or otherwise at risk of harm.

The DfE guidance 'Children Missing Education' (2024) defines a child missing in education as a child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education otherwise. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), expands the consideration to children who are absent from education. Children who are absent from or missing education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions are at significant risk of underachieving. This can also be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues,

including being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

The guidance sets out the school's obligations to identify and report children who are missing in education. The school must report to its local authority all pupils of compulsory school age who are added to the admissions register and all pupils who are removed from the register, if they always leave the school other than at standard transition points (i.e. except the end of the final year of education normally provided by the school). Where a pupil lives in a local authority which is different from the location of the school, the school's reporting responsibility is to the local authority in which the school is situated.

In accordance with its safeguarding duties, as set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', the school recognises children missing in education as a potential safeguarding issue and follows its safeguarding procedures, as set out in its safeguarding policy.

The school has a duty to make reasonable enquiries as to the whereabouts of a child who is missing, in conjunction with its local authority, and cannot remove a missing child from its admissions register until it has agreed with the local authority that all reasonable endeavours to locate the child have been exhausted.

6. Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing from the school

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child was found to be missing, we would carry out the following actions without delay:

- Check with the pupil's friends to see if they know their whereabouts
- Review the 'Pupil Sign In / Out' log maintained by the secretary in the office.
- Take a register in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- Inform the Head of the Junior School (if in Reception to Year 3), Deputy or Head;
- Ask all of the adults and pupils calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child;
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom with age appropriate activities;
- At the same time, arrange for more adults to search everywhere within the whole school, both inside and out, carefully checking all spaces, cupboards, washrooms where a child might hide;
- Check the doors, gates and CCTV footage for signs of entry/exit;

A record is kept by the school of any instances in which a pupil is missing from school without satisfactory permission and documentation, including the action taken and the pupil's explanation.

If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken without delay:

- Inform the Head (if off school premises/required) and the DSL;

- The parent(s) will be phoned by the Head or Deputy to explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the school at once;
- The Head, Deputy or DSL will notify the Police immediately. Full details of circumstances / individual to be shared;
- The Head, Deputy or DSL will arrange for staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds;
- If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff would set out on foot to trace the route;
- The DSL will inform Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Partnership and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate. The DSL will check with the LSCB this has happened;
- The Insurers will be informed;
- The school will cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Richmond Children's Social Care;
- Inform the Chairman of Governors.
- The School's insurers would be informed
- If the child is injured, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE;

During the course of the investigation into the missing pupil, the school will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. Procedures will be reviewed and if required, adjusted.

The School will always consider the wider circumstances around a child going missing from school and whether there are wider safeguarding concerns that may need to be addressed in line with the School's safeguarding policy.

7. Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing on an outing

- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present;
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity;
- Immediately inform the Head of the Junior School (if the child is in Reception, and Years 1-3), Head, Deputy or DSL by mobile phone.
- The remaining children would be taken back to school by staff as soon as reasonably practicable. The trip Leader is to remain at venue;
- The manager or other suitable person at the venue being visited will be informed and asked to cooperate with the ongoing search and response. This would include conducting a though search of the venue, including areas not usually accessible to the public and review any CCTV footage available;
- The Head or Deputy will ring the child's parent(s) and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the venue/ the school at once;
- Immediately contact the Police (local to the venue);

- The DSL will inform Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Partnership (the LSCB) and who should liaise with safeguarding partners including local children's services as appropriate;
- The school will cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Partnership;
- Inform the Chairman of Governors without delay;
- The Insurers will be informed as soon as reasonably practicable;
- If the child has injuries which meet the reporting threshold, a report would be made under RIDDOR to the HSE as soon as practicable and no later than 15 days after the accident.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found will be made, by the Head, Deputy or DSL for the incident report. The school will review its procedures and, if appropriate, these would be adjusted.

8. Actions to be followed by staff once the child is found

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child;
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing;
- The Head/Deputy will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident
- The Head will oversee a full investigation (if appropriate involving Social Services/ Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Partnership), the findings of which will be shared with the parent(s).
- Media queries should be referred to the Head.
- The investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements.
- The report should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened, the purpose of the outing, the length of time that the child was missing and how he appeared to have gone missing, lessons for the future.
- Consider whether actions need to be taken in line with the School's Safeguarding Policy where there are concerns about the welfare of the child.

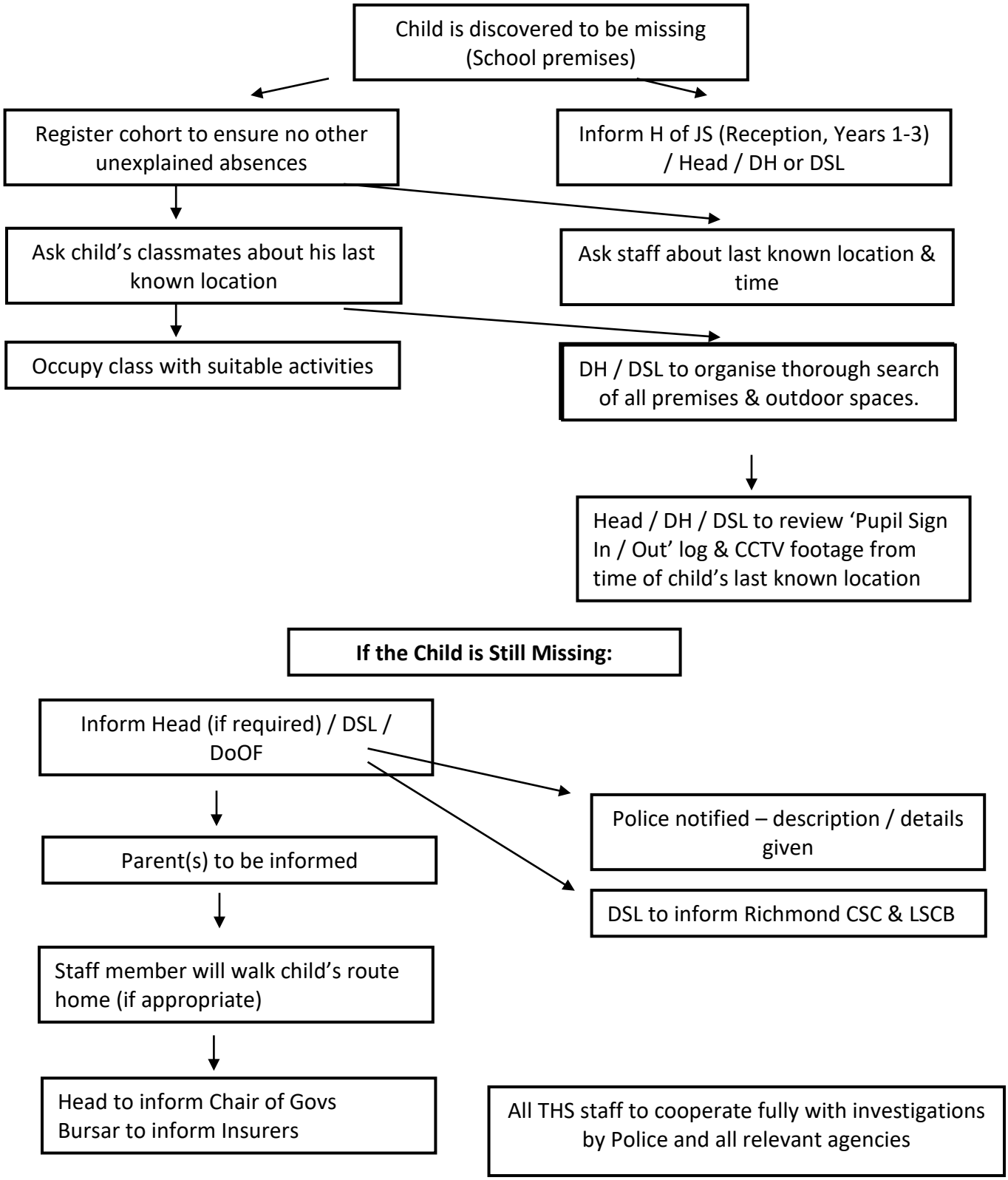
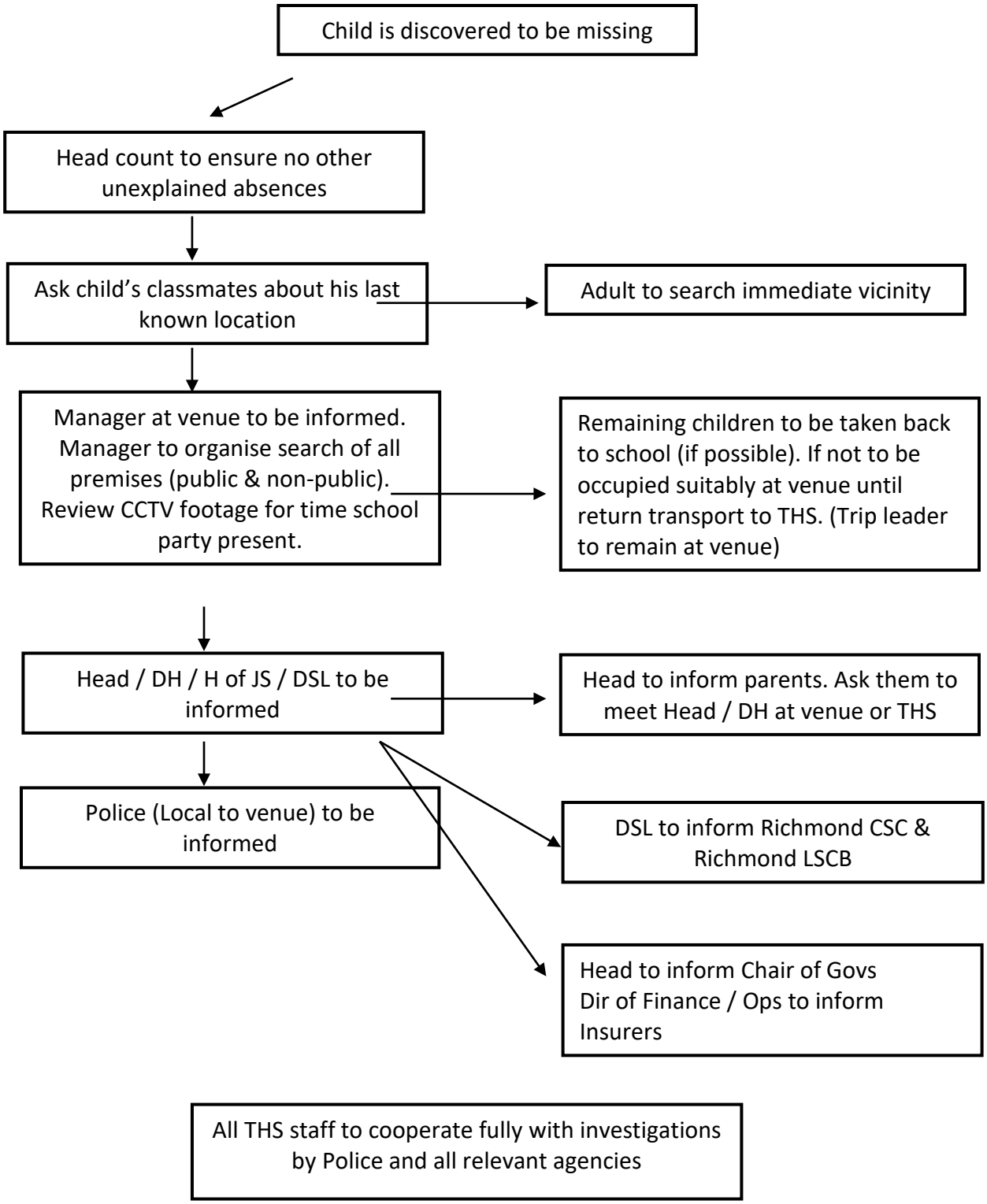
PART TWO: Procedures to be followed by staff when a child is not collected on time from THS

If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed collection time, the school will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. Where reasonably possible the School will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. If there is no answer, a member of SLT will begin to call the emergency numbers for the pupil. During this time, the pupil will be safely looked after by the School. If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers within a 1 hour period/ when the premises are closing, the member of SLT will contact the Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Partnership via the Single Point of Access on 0208 547 5008. Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Partnership will make emergency arrangements for the child and will arrange for a visit to be made to the child's house and will check with the Police. The member of SLT will make a full written report of the incident.

The School will look after the child safely throughout the time that they remain under the School's care, until such a time as they have been collected by a parent, guardian or carer, or until appropriate alternative care arrangements have been made with Social Care and/or the Police in order to prioritise the child's safety. The School's DSL will keep a record of incidents where parents/carers do not collect a child from school or are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents. If any concerns about the child's safety and welfare result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Safeguarding Policy and procedures.

Tower House School is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment

Appendix I: **ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM THE SCHOOL FLOWCHART**



Appendix II: ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM AN EDUCATIONAL VISIT OUT OF SCHOOL FLOWCHART