

MISSING STUDENT POLICY

1. Policy Statement

Sir William Perkins's School aims to take all possible measures to ensure that students do not go missing whilst on School premises or on School trips. Sir William Perkins's School understands a "missing" student to be a student not present without authorisation or explanation.

Formal registers are taken twice a day, before morning lessons and in the afternoon. Any absences are followed up promptly. During the school day, teachers are also expected to take a register at the start of each lesson and to follow up any concerns they might have about a student's absence from a lesson.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school documents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Supervision of Students
- Fire Risk (Prevention) Policy and Procedures
- Good Behaviour Policy
- Discipline and Exclusions Policy
- Educational Visits Policy.

Sir William Perkins's 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 Opportunities policy.

2. Key Definitions

Sir William Perkins's School understands missing students to belong to two distinct categories:

- A. Students who are present on any given day on the School site or school supervised activity but then go missing at some point during the day without authorisation or explanation.
- B. Students who are absent from School without authorisation or explanation and who have not been marked present in the attendance register i.e.: they have not disappeared from the School premises; rather they are missing from School altogether. In the case of such students, Sir William Perkins's School follows the [Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(with amendments\)](#) and has regard to Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2023). And after 19 August 2024 the new guidance in Working together to Improve School attendance 2024. Information and guidance contained in the latest [Keeping Children Safe In Education](#) guidance regarding children missing in education will also be followed. This means that it has important statutory reporting responsibilities to the local authority. This is because students who are missing from education must be treated as potentially vulnerable.

3. Procedure for students missing during the school day or from School activities off-site (Category A):

- 3.1.** Registers must be taken during morning registration, at the beginning of each lesson, at the beginning of each co-curricular activity after school and regularly during every off-site activity. If, for any reason, the tutor does not turn up for registration, after 5 minutes, a member of the form should ask another member of staff. This can be done on a paper register which is then returned to register trays or the school office. The attendance administrator will ensure that the electronic register is updated with this information. In the event that a student is recorded as present in the morning but is not present or accounted for in lessons and the absence cannot be explained (e.g.: student has not signed out, student has not been sent home by the First Aid Room staff, nor had a Music or Speech and Drama lesson), staff must send an alert to pastoral@swpsorg.uk without delay.
- 3.2.** This dedicated email (pastoral@swps.org.uk) alerts all pastoral staff, office staff and members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to the fact that a student is missing and triggers staff in the First Aid Room / Wellbeing Room / Reception to notify staff if they are aware of the location of the student. The e-mail should state the student's name or initials and year group and any other relevant details. Alternatively, staff should call Reception to ask them to e-mail on their behalf, or else find a member of SLT.
- 3.3.** In the first instance, this email to pastoral@ triggers staff in the First Aid Room / Wellbeing Room / Reception to notify staff if they are aware of the location of the student. In the event that a student is declared 'missing', a member of staff will inform the appropriate staff members via the pastoral@ email and someone will look for the student. A response to this effect is sent by replying to the pastoral@ email. In this initial search staff will check toilets, the student entrance, Wellbeing room, cloakrooms, changing rooms, music and drama practice rooms, and The Atrium.
- 3.4.** If the missing student is designated a DTS student (danger to self) then all available staff who receive the pastoral@ email will join in with this search.
- 3.5.** In the event of no member of staff being available to respond, Reception will ring the Wellbeing Room staff in the first instance and then ring the Heads of Year office, Deputy Head Pastoral, Senior Deputy Head, and Deputy Head Academic in that order until a member of staff is deployed to search for the student. The Wellbeing Room staff will also liaise with Reception if there are students needing supervision in the Wellbeing Room so that another member of staff can be quickly deployed to supervise them.
- 3.6.** In the event that the student's absence cannot be explained and accounted for after the initial search by the staff team, a comprehensive search of the buildings, grounds and local area will be organised by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and the Head must be informed. The search party will normally comprise of Deputy Head Pastoral, Head of Year and/or tutor (if available), a site supervisor and any appropriate member of teaching or support staff. If the student is believed to be off site, a search party will be sent to possible locations where the student might be. Members of the search party may wish to obtain relevant information from the missing student's friends e.g. a mobile telephone number. The exact point and time of when and where the student was last seen, and by which adult, must be ascertained. The adult last responsible for the child must be questioned as to the whereabouts and demeanour of the student.
- 3.7.** Administrative staff will be required to maintain a central point of communication. This will be in the Main School Office. All parties involved in searching for the student must liaise with and return to this agreed point to discuss progress.

- 3.8.** In the event that the student is not found, the Estate Facilities Manager may be asked by the search coordinator or a member of the search party (at the request of SLT) to ring the emergency evacuation bell. The search party will continue to search the premises whilst the rest of the School evacuates the building. If the evacuation fails to locate the missing student, the Police will be called using 999 by administrative staff or by a member of the search party. The missing student's parents/carers will be called by a senior member of staff.
- 3.9.** In the event that a student's absence cannot be explained or accounted for in any off-site activity, the search is organised and led by the activity leader, the organisation responsible for the area used, and the police are called using 999 if, after an appropriate time, the search proves unsuccessful. The Head (or the member of SLT on call, who will liaise with the Head) should be contacted as soon as the police have been informed.
- 3.10.** At whichever point a missing student is found, they must be reassured, and all adults involved in their care must be convinced of their wellbeing and safety. In the event of any concerns the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and/or deputy DSLs or social services must be informed. It is important that the student understands the impact of their going missing - staff time, possibly police time, parental/carer anxieties.
- 3.11.** Incidents involving missing students will be reviewed at Senior Leadership meetings so that processes can be reviewed and improved where appropriate. An incident report should be written up by Deputy Head Pastoral in consultation with the relevant staff involved in the search and this will be recorded in CPOMS. The Head will be automatically alerted by CPOMS of this report.
- 3.12.** Students who are unexpectedly absent from school will be followed up by the attendance officer in procedures outlined in the Attendance Policy.

4. Students who repeatedly go missing from Sir William Perkins's School premises or activities

- 4.1.** Students who repeatedly go missing from School premises or activities will require special procedures. The appropriate members of the Pastoral Team will liaise with parents/carers and a Risk Assessment will be drawn up. Teaching staff will be informed to keep a close eye on the student and to alert pastoral@swps.org.uk the moment they have any cause for concern about the student's whereabouts. These incidents will be recorded on CPOMS.
- 4.2.** Students who repeatedly go missing may well trigger a child protection concern as going missing can be a sign of emotional distress. The reasons for the student going missing will be explored by pastoral staff and appropriate support will be put in place. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be kept informed if there is cause for concern.
- 4.3.** There may also be sanctions for students who repeatedly go missing because of the staff time involved in finding them, and possibly also police time. Sir William Perkins's School has several exits and it is impractical to police them all. Sir William Perkins's School may, in serious cases, resort to the Discipline and Exclusions Policy if a student is unable to reliably stay in School during the school day.

5. Procedures to prevent students going missing on educational visits and off-site activities.

To prevent students going missing on educational visits and off-site activities, the Group Leader should ensure the following:

- 5.1.** Students should always be in groups of at least three.
- 5.2.** Students should be given a clear rendezvous location and time and telephone number to call a member of staff on if they are given any unsupervised time.
- 5.3.** Only students of sufficient maturity should be given any unsupervised time. If staff have concerns about any individual student, they should insist that the student stay with them. The duration of any unsupervised time and its location should also be appropriate to the maturity of the students and any SEND needs. Staff in charge of mixed age groups should give careful consideration to what is appropriate for students of different ages. Younger students or those with SEND needs may need to be steered towards particular locations;
- 5.4.** The risk assessment must address the issue of unsupervised time if this is being given to students.

6. Procedures for students missing from school (Category B)

The School would have concerns about a student who has not been marked present in the Attendance Register without explanation or authorisation and where the School had been unable to contact the parents/carers for an explanation. The procedures for following up on such unexplained absences are set out in the Attendance Policy.

7. Monitoring and Review

The Governing Body are ultimately responsible for the effective oversight, review and amendment of this policy and understands its legal obligation to do so.

This document is reviewed and updated annually by the Deputy Head Pastoral or as events or legislation requires.

Next scheduled review: June 2026 Last reviewed: June 2025	
Key updates in this version	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No changes.