Broomfield House School

**CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION AND MISSING CHILDREN/NON-COLLECTION OF CHILDREN**

This Policy, which applies to the whole school including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), is publicly available on the School website and upon request a copy, (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required), may be obtained from the School Office.

All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours including activities away from school. This policy should be read and understood in conjunction with our Safeguarding – Child Protection, Behaviour Management, Whistleblowing Policies, the Staff Behaviour Policy (Code of Conduct) and the Lost and Missing Children Procedures**.** This policy takes full account of the child protection procedures agreed by the Kingston and Richmond Local Safeguarding Children Partnership (KRSCP) and statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Govt: 2023).*

Applies to all:

- activities undertaken by the school inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours and away from the school site
- who, work, volunteer or supply services to our school - that is all staff (teaching and support staff), children on placement, the Proprietors and volunteers working in the school.

**Monitoring and review**: This policy is subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The Headteacher will undertake a full annual review of this policy and procedures, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. All staff will be informed of the update/reviewed policy and it is made available to them in either a hard copy or electronically

Date: September 2026
Review Date: September 2027

Our staff will follow the school's separate procedures for dealing with children who go missing, particularly on repeat occasions. They should act to identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation. The school will put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. Staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage. More information can be found in *Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care* (DfE, January 2014), the *Children Missing Education Policy and Protocol* (KRSCP, 2023), *Children Missing Education* (DfE, September 2016), and *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, September 2026).

Patterns of children missing education can be an indicator of either abuse or safeguarding risks. A relatively short length of time a child is missing does not reduce risk of harm to that child, and all absence or non-attendance should be considered with other known factors or concerns.

**DSLs and staff should consider:**

Missing lessons:

- Are there patterns in the lessons that are being missed? Is this more than avoidance of a subject or a teacher?
- Does the child remain on the school site or are they absent from the site?
- Is the child being sexually exploited during this time? Are they late because of a caring responsibility?
- Have they been directly or indirectly affected by substance misuse?
- Are other pupils routinely missing the same lessons, and does this raise other risks or concerns?
- Is the lesson being missed one that would cause bruising or injuries to become visible?

Single missing days:

- Is there a pattern in the day missed?
- Is it before or after the weekend suggesting the child is away from the area?
- Are there specific lessons or members of staff on these days?
- Is the parent informing the school of the absence on the day?
- Are missing days reported back to parents to confirm their awareness?
- Is the child being sexually exploited during this day? Do the parents appear to be aware?
- Are the pupil's peers making comments or suggestions as to where the pupil is at?

Continuous missing days:

- Has the school been able to contact the parents? Is medical evidence being provided?
- Are siblings attending school (either our or local schools)?
- Did we have any concerns about radicalisation, FGM, forced marriage, honor-based abuse, sexual exploitation?
- Have we had any concerns about physical or sexual abuse?

The school will view absence as both a safeguarding issue and an educational outcomes issue. The school may take steps that could result in legal action for attendance, or a referral to children's social care, or both. The local authority should share the fact that a child has a social worker when the child first attends the school or if one is allocated while the child attends the school.

**Children Missing from Home or Care**

*https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care*
*http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-lobbying/children-risk/runaways*

Children who run away from home or from care, provide a clear behavioural indication that they are either unhappy or do not feel safe in the place that they are living.
Research shows that children run away from conflict or problems at home or school, neglect or abuse, or because children are being groomed by predatory individuals who seek to exploit them. Many run away on numerous occasions.

The association of chief police officers has provided the following definitions and guidance.
*"Missing person is: 'Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be the subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.'*
*An absent person is: 'A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.'*
All cases classified as 'missing' by the police will receive an active police response – such as deployment of police officers to locate a child. Cases where the child was classified as 'absent' will be recorded by the police and risk assessed regularly but no active response will be deployed. The absent case will be resolved when a young person returns or new information comes to light suggesting that he/she is at risk. In the latter instance, the case is upgraded to 'missing'.

Within any case of children who are missing both push and pull factors will need to be considered. Push

factors include:

- Conflict with parents/carers; Feeling powerless;
- Being bullied/abused; Being unhappy/not being listened to;
- The Toxic Trio (domestic violence, mental ill-health and drug/alcohol misuse as defined by Ofsted). Working Together notes these issues rarely exist in isolation. There is a complex interaction between the three issues.

Pull factors include:

- Wanting to be with family/friends;
- Drugs, money and any exchangeable item; Peer pressure
- For those who have been trafficked into the United Kingdom as unaccompanied asylum seeking children there will be pressure to make contact with their trafficker

As a school we will inform all parents of children who are absent (unless the parent has informed us). If the parent is also unaware of the location of their child, and the definition of missing is met, we will either support the parent to/directly contact the police to inform them.

**Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**
*http://paceuk.info/*

Sexual exploitation of children is not limited by the age of consent and can occur up until the age of 18. CSE involves children being in situations, contexts or relationships where they (or a third person) receive 'something' as a result of them performing sexual activities. The something can include food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, or money. Child sexual exploitation can happen via technology without the child's being aware; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. CSE can happen to a child of any age, gender, ability or social status. Often the victim of CSE is not aware that they are being exploited and do not see themselves as a victim.

In response to identified national and local trends concerning the multifaceted nature of child exploitation and adolescent risk including but not limited to County Lines, Knife Crime, Trafficking, Gangs and Groups, The London Borough of Richmond AFC in partnership with the Met Police and KRSCP have streamlined and established a Multi-Agency Risk and Vulnerability panel that will consider children at risk or vulnerable to all forms of child exploitation. The panel is called MARVE and is similar to developments across London Boroughs.

**Characteristics of Child Sexual Exploitation and abuse:** it is often planned and systematic—people do not sexually abuse children by accident, through sexual abuse can be opportunistic; grooming the child—people who abuse children take care to choose a vulnerable child and often spend time making them dependent; grooming the child's environment—abusers try to ensure that potential adult protectors (parents and other carers especially) are not suspicious of their motives.

**Indicators of sexual abuse:** Some of the following signs may be behavioural indicators of sexual exploitation:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions; who associate with other young people involved in exploitation; have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant; who suffer from changes in emotional well-being; children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education; staying away from certain people or avoiding being alone with someone; displaying sexual behaviour that is inappropriate for their age;

- inappropriate masturbation or self-harm (including eating disorders) and an unwillingness to remove clothes when changing for PE etc.

Physical observations include damage to genitalia, anus or mouth; sexually transmitted diseases; unexpected pregnancy, especially in very young girls; soreness in genital area, anus or mouth and other medical problems such as chronic itching; unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain. The concerns listed are not exhaustive. Staff can and should also record and report other concerns about a child, such as general welfare concerns.

**Trafficked Children**

Human trafficking is defined by the UNHCR in respect of children as a process that is a combination of:

- Movement (including within the UK);
- For the purpose of exploitation

Any child transported for exploitative reasons is considered to be a trafficking victim.

There is significant evidence that children (both of UK and other citizenship) are being trafficked internally within the UK and this is regarded as a more common form of trafficking in the UK. There are a number of indicators which suggest that a child may have been trafficked into the UK, and may still be controlled by the traffickers or receiving adults. These are as follows:

- Shows signs of physical or sexual abuse, and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted infection or has an unwanted pregnancy;
- Has a history with missing links and unexplained moves;
- Is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day; Works in various locations;
- Has limited freedom of movement; Appears to be missing for periods;
- Is known to beg for money;
- Is being cared for by adult/s who are not their parents and the quality of the relationship between the child and their adult carers is not good;
- Is one among a number of unrelated children found at one address;
- Has not been registered with or attended a GP practice; Is excessively afraid of being deported.

For those children who are internally trafficked within the UK indicators include:

- Physical symptoms (bruising indicating either physical or sexual assault);
- Prevalence of a sexually transmitted infection or unwanted pregnancy;
- Reports from reliable sources suggesting the likelihood of involvement in sexual exploitation / the child has been seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation;
- Evidence of drug, alcohol or substance misuse;
- Being in the community in clothing unusual for a child i.e. inappropriate for age, or borrowing clothing from older people
- Relationship with a significantly older partner;
- Accounts of social activities, expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding;
- Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation;
- Returning after having been missing, looking well cared for despite having not been at home;
- Having keys to premises other than those known about;
- Low self-image, low self-esteem, self-harming behaviour including cutting, overdosing, eating disorder, promiscuity;
- Truancy / disengagement with education;
- Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults;
- Going missing and being found in areas where the child or young person has no known links; and/or
- Possible inappropriate use of the internet and forming on-line relationships, particularly with adults.

These behaviours themselves do not indicate that a child is being trafficked but should be considered as indicators that this may be the case. If staff believe that a child is being trafficked, this will be reported to the designated

safeguarding lead for referral to be considered to children's social care.

We will follow-up unexplained absences of any child with a telephone call from the school on the morning of the first day of absence and notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a child who is on the child safeguarding register. The school will hold a minimum of two emergency contact numbers for each pupil. The DSL shall also inform the applicable local authority of any child who has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority. Additionally, the DSL will notify the applicable local authority (within which the child resides) when not at Broomfield House School of any child who is going to be deleted from the admission register where the child:

- has been taken out of school by his/her parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education; has ceased to attend Broomfield House School and no longer live within reasonable distance of Broomfield House School;
- has been certified by a doctor as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend Broomfield House School before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend Broomfield House School after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- has been permanently excluded;
- is in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and Broomfield House School does not reasonably believe he/she will be returning at the end of the period or, has been permanently excluded;
- where the child fails to attend school regularly or is absent without leave for more than 10 school days (continuous);
- when we remove or add a pupil's name to the admissions register at non-standard transitions ie where a compulsory school-aged child leaves a school before completing the school's final year or joins a school after the beginning of the school's first year. In the instance of pupils leaving Broomfield, the Head of Admissions will deregister the child with Richmond Local Authority once it has been confirmed that they have started at their new school.

The applicable local authority must be notified as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than the time of deleting the child's name from the register. This will assist the local authority to fulfil its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing in education and follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

**Children being withdrawn from school:** If a child is withdrawn from the school, all efforts will be made to identify the school to which the child is being admitted; their confidential educational and child protection records will be sent separately. If the parent/guardian/carer fails to provide information regarding the new school, an urgent referral will be made to Children's Services. Educational records sent to our school concerning a child who is not registered by the parent will be returned and the school advised to refer to their Local Authority Education Welfare Service. A child's name will only be removed from the School's Admission Register in accordance with the Child Registration Regulations. Further information is contained in our Admissions Policy.

We also understand our duty to provide information to the local authority for standard transitions if requested.
We also appreciate that there is an overlap with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE 2025) which recognises children missing education as a safeguarding issue particularly when a child leaves with no know destination. In addition to reporting to the London Borough of Richmond we also inform the local authority where the child is normally resident. We also understand that our right to remove a child is also subject to the terms and conditions of our school/parent contract. We recognise that from September 2016 (due to the absence of illness or unavoidable cause) that we have the right to delete a pupil for non-return within 10 school days after authorised leave of 10 school days or more, or after 20 school days unauthorised absence but this does not arise until

Broomfield House School and the local authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries as to the pupil's whereabouts and failed. As such, Broomfield House School recognises that it is a criminal offence not to report, as required.

When a pupil is removed from the school roll their safeguarding file, should there be one, will be securely transferred to their next place of education.

**Notifiable Incidents:** This is an incident involving the care of a child that meets any of the following criteria:

- a child has died (including cases of suspected suicide) and abuse or neglect is known or suspected;
- a looked after child has died (including cases where abuse is **not** known or suspected);
- a child has been seriously harmed and abuse or neglect is known or suspected;
- a child in a regulated setting or service has died (including cases where abuse is **not** known or suspected).

Any such incident should be reported to South West London Child Death Overview Panel. The Single Point of Contact for child death reviews in Kingston and Richmond is Sarah Bennett, telephone number 07469 100487. Also Ofsted and the DfE are to be informed along with the *Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences* (RIDDOR) in accordance with the regulations of 2013.

**Lost and Missing Children/Non-Collection of Children**

Where possible, children are collected by a known member of their family or a child minder. If a person asks to take a child home and the staff have not been made aware of this by the child's parents or carers, by email, Famly app or by phoning the school office, the staff will not release the child into this person's care. The child will be taken to the school office, and the parents will be contacted to check whether permission is given to allow the child to go home with the person.

At Broomfield House School we are committed to the care of any uncollected child at the end of the day until that child is collected. Parents/carers are expected to advise the School Office if they will be late to collect their child.

Our school day ends at 12/3:30pm (or at 4.30pm for Year 6 on Tuesdays and 4.30pm for Years 4-6 on Wednesdays) and children are supervised by the teaching staff at the point of collection until their parent arrives or until 12.15/3:45pm when they will be taken by the member of staff to the school office where they will be supervised until their parent/carer arrives.

In the event that a child is not collected by the due time a telephone call will be made to parents, not later than 12.15pm/3:45 pm, to ascertain the situation. The child will remain supervised in After-School Club or in the school office, until the parent/carer arrives.

At Broomfield House School a child is never released to an unauthorised person, even if the collection is late, unless an authorised person telephones to state that, because of an emergency, a different person will be collecting the child. The authorised person should give the name, address and a physical description of the unauthorised person and the member of staff should check this description and details before permitting the child to leave.

If someone other than the parent/carer will be collecting a child we ask that the parent/carer introduce the third party to staff prior to the arrangement.

If a parent is unavoidably detained then a third party can collect the child if a password, agreed between the parent/carer and teacher, is used.

If a child is not collected within 15 minutes at the end of the school day or 10 minutes at the end of after school care and no contact has been made with the parent, then the Headteacher or the Deputy should be made aware.

If the parent can not be contacted or does not come to collect a child, the Headteacher or Deputy will contact children's social care services as school closes, who will then take over the care of the child and the contact with parents.

**Procedure for lost/missing children**

At Broomfield House School every precaution is taken, through the use of risk assessments and thorough planning and supervision, to ensure that children are safe both at school and on outings. However, there are limited situations where a child could become lost.

Should a child become lost the following action should be taken:

- Alert the member of staff in charge, the Headteacher or Deputy Head, who will make enquiries of relevant members of staff to ascertain when and where the child was last seen.
- A note of the time would be taken when the search starts.
- Remember the safety of other children, with regard to supervision and security.
- Ensuring that the remaining children are sufficiently supervised and secure, one or preferably two members of staff should search the building, outside areas and immediate vicinity.
- If the child cannot be found then the Police and parents must be informed. This must be no later than 15 minutes for EYFS children, and 20-30 minutes for children in Years 1 – 6.
- Continue to search, opening up the area, and keeping in touch by mobile phone if available.

When the situation has been resolved members of staff should review the reasons for it happening and ensure that measures are taken to ensure that it does not happen again.