



THE GILLFORD CENTRE

FIRST DAY CALLING PROCEDURES

Approved by	
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Position:	Headteacher
Signed:	
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1. Purpose

To ensure that unexplained absence is considered as a potential safeguarding concern and responded to promptly, proportionately and consistently. The response should be child-centred, risk-based and informed by the child's known vulnerabilities and circumstances.

2. Stage 1 - Immediate attendance checks

1. Registers are completed and saved promptly.
2. Late arrivals are checked against registers where recorded separately.
3. Absence calls, voicemail messages, attendance emails and other notifications are checked.
4. Unexplained absences are identified.
5. The attendance team considers known vulnerabilities and safeguarding information, including whether the child has an allocated social worker, a safeguarding plan, previous missing episodes, medical or mental health vulnerabilities, exploitation concerns, or other factors which may increase risk.

3. Stage 2 - First contact attempt

6. The first priority contact is contacted within one hour of the school start time, normally by text.
7. If there is no response, a follow up phone call takes place, confirming the child's whereabouts and reason for absence.
8. All contact attempts and responses are recorded on the school's appropriate attendance and/or safeguarding system.
9. Where an explanation is received, the appropriate attendance code is considered and any safeguarding concerns arising from the explanation are shared with the DSL/DDSL.

4. Stage 3 - Escalation where there is no contact

10. Where there is no response to the initial contact attempt, further attempts are made using the other contacts held by school, including a non-resident parent or emergency contact where appropriate.
11. The Headteacher and/or DSL/DDSL is alerted where the child's whereabouts cannot be established.
12. For a child who is known to be vulnerable, or where the absence is unusual or gives rise to concern, the DSL/DDSL should consider earlier escalation rather than waiting for standard attendance timescales.
13. Where a child has an allocated social worker, the social worker should be informed of the unexplained absence where this is relevant to the child's safeguarding circumstances, plan, vulnerability or level of concern. The timing of contact should reflect the level of risk and may be on the first day of absence.

5. Stage 4 - Welfare check / home visit

14. A welfare check or home visit should be considered where the school has been unable to establish the child's whereabouts, there is conflicting information, the absence is unusual, or there are other concerns for the child's welfare.
15. Where possible and appropriate, a home visit may be undertaken by school staff or coordinated with another agency already involved with the child.
16. Home visits must be undertaken in accordance with the school's lone-working and risk-assessment arrangements, and the outcome must be recorded.

6. Stage 5 - End-of-day safeguarding review

17. If the child remains absent and their safe whereabouts have not been confirmed by the end of the school day, all reasonable contact routes should have been attempted.
18. The DSL/DDSL should review the information available, the child's known vulnerabilities, previous patterns of absence and any other safeguarding intelligence, and determine whether further safeguarding action is required.
19. The DSL/DDSL should consider whether it is appropriate to contact or refer to Children's Social Care, request Police involvement, and/or notify or seek advice from the Local Authority Children Missing Education service.
20. The actions taken, decisions made and rationale for escalation or non-escalation must be recorded.

7. Day 2 and continuing absence

21. If the child remains absent and the school is still unable to confirm their safe whereabouts, the DSL/DDSL must undertake a further risk review and consider referral to Children's Social Care, Police involvement or welfare check, and notification to the Local Authority Children Missing Education service.
22. Police contact is not an automatic Day 2 action. The decision should be based on the level of safeguarding risk and the information known to school. Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm or an emergency, 999 should be used; otherwise Police contact should be made through the appropriate non-emergency route.
23. Escalation must take place earlier than Day 2 where safeguarding concerns or the child's vulnerability indicate increased or immediate risk.
24. Daily attempts to establish contact and confirm the child's welfare should continue until the absence and safeguarding concern are resolved.

8. Key safeguarding principles

- Unexplained absence should be considered through a safeguarding lens and not treated solely as an attendance matter.
- The response should be proportionate to risk; vulnerable children may require more rapid action.
- Staff should demonstrate professional curiosity where explanations are absent, inconsistent or cause concern.
- Information should be shared with relevant professionals when necessary and proportionate to safeguard the child.
- All contact attempts, decisions, actions and reasons for escalation or non-escalation should be clearly recorded.
- Where the school cannot establish that a child is safe, the matter should remain under active review until resolved.