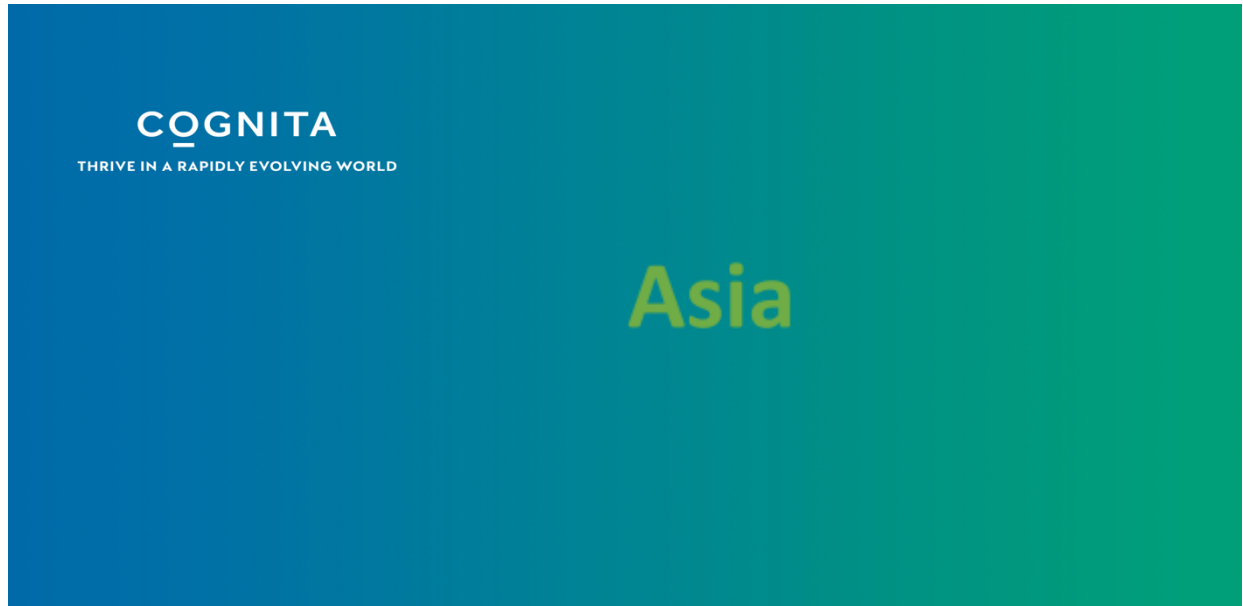




Attendance & Lost or Missing Children Policy



2025 - 2026
St Andrews Green Valley

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1. Purpose

1.

The safety and welfare of all our children is our paramount responsibility. Any child going missing is a potential indicator of abuse, neglect or exploitation, particularly on repeat occasions. As a school we understand that effective attendance procedures support us in achieving our responsibility to keep children safe from hurt and harm.

1.2

Children who have not arrived at school without a valid reason, and after reasonable attempts to establish their whereabouts have failed should be classified as a lost or missing child and the procedures laid out in this policy followed. This includes children who have been registered at school but fail to turn up to a lesson or school event and after attempts made to locate them unsuccessful.

1.3

All staff and volunteers understand the reporting procedures for children who have failed to attend school, a lesson, school event, and what to do in the unlikely event that a child becomes lost or goes missing either from the school site or during an off-site visit.

1.4

It is the Head of School's responsibility to ensure that this policy is understood and followed.

1.5

It is the responsibility of all staff to read the policy and to act at all times accordingly. If staff are concerned about the welfare of any child, they must seek the guidance of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately.

1.6

A Lost or Missing Child refers to any child where the school doesn't have a valid reason for their absence, during the time the child is expected to be at school (including educational trips, sporting events or clubs). A valid reason for a child's absence is prior notification from a parent, carer or guardian that a child will not be at school, such as that the child is attending a medical appointment, visa appointment or are suffering from an illness.

2. Introduction

2.1

It is important that staff, parents, carers including guardians and students are familiar with the content and expectations of this policy. Regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Missing learning time leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and it is well known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, beginning from the Early Years.

2.2

The school have a duty of care to respond to incidents where a child fails to attend school without a valid reason, where there are concerns for a child's wellbeing or safety and/or a child goes missing from school or during an off-site visit. This may on occasion include reporting their concerns to Child Protective Services (CPS) and/or the Police.

2.3

Parents, carers including guardians have a duty of care to inform the school when their child is not going to attend school and state the reasons why, this includes ill health, medical appointments, family circumstances such as a bereavement, visa related appointments and any other circumstance that leads to a child being absent.

2.4

There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement, as well as a strong link between poor mental health, vulnerability, truancy and antisocial behaviour. Research also suggests that poor attendance at school can be an indicator of abuse, harm or exploitation.

3. The legal framework

3.1

Most country legislation specifies the legal responsibility of parent/carer(s) of statutory school age children to ensure they attend school. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient full-time education which is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND), either by regular school attendance or home education.

3.2

Schools should have an Admissions Register and an Attendance Register and place all children on both registers. Failure to do so may be an offence. Early Years schools require a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises and their hours of attendance.

Thailand has compulsory schooling laws.

4. Parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) responsibilities

4.1

Encourage regular and punctual attendance, being fully aware of their responsibilities.

4.2

Ensure that the child in their care arrives punctually, prepared for learning.

4.3

Provide clear reasons for any absence which ensures the school can code the absence properly and accurately.

4.4

Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence as early as possible and preferably before the start of the school day.

4.5

Contact the school as early as possible if the child is going to arrive late for any reason.

4.6

Avoid making arrangements to remove children from school during term time, when possible.

4.7

Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence, including any safeguarding matter.

5. School responsibilities

5.1

Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (deemed as attendance below 90%)

5.2

Work to ensure every student has good attendance so he/she can access the education he/she is entitled to.

5.3

Act early to address patterns of absence and report concerns to the school safeguarding team.

5.4

Encourage parents, carers and guardians to ensure their child attends all learning opportunities regularly and punctually.

5.5

Keep accurate and efficient records of attendance and registration at school, including attendance at all after school and before school activities.

5.6

To activate the Lost or Missing Child procedures as appropriate.

5.7

We achieve this in the following ways:

- ☐ Teachers must take a register at least once in the morning and once in the afternoon.
- ☐ Mark all children not present by the designated time **8.20-8.40 am** taking account of absence notes.
- ☐ Follow up un-notified first day absence with a telephone call to the parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) by **9.30am**
- ☐ Monitor attendance and tardiness and implement strategies for promoting improved awareness of attendance such as year groups or vulnerable children, as required, including the use of formal letters home.

- Report on patterns of attendance at Safeguarding Committee and Governance meeting and to Cognita as required to safeguard and promote the welfare of students.
- Specifically monitor any persistent absence.
- Make proper use of the Cognita codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations, including preservation of the entries on both the Admissions and Attendance Registers for a period of three years after it was made.
- Only the Head of School or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.
- Close discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to identify children causing concern, including interviewing children and parents regarding any unsatisfactory attendance.
- Close liaison with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) where there are concerns of children being missing from education regularly.
- Provide parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) with the timings of the school day and the calendar via the school website and any other usual method such as the school newsletter, in advance.

6. Late arrivals

6.1

It is essential that, if a child arrives late, they should sign in at the school office so that all systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every student is at all times.

6.2

There are occasions that the safeguarding team are required to carry out welfare checks on children and inform Child Protective Services (CPS) or the police on student whereabouts, so having access to the most up-to-date information is vital to effectively safeguard all children at the school.

6.3

Children and their parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) who regularly arrive late to school should be challenged and appropriate measures decided and implemented by the school. As well as being detrimental to academic achievement, persistent lateness could be an indicator of abuse, harm or exploitation, and the earlier lateness is addressed the better the outcomes for the child.

In the first instance pastoral school leaders will meet with parents to discuss barriers to punctuality and support with a plan to address the need such as arranging bus transport or student focused pastoral support.

7. Leaving school early during the day

7.1

Children are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by a member of staff or their known parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s); or to attend a school visit, an off-site scheduled lesson, or a sporting fixture.

7.2

If a child must leave the school during the day for illness or a parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) is required to collect them for an appointment, they are required to sign out at the School Office. Where there are known appointments, parents should notify the school in advance.

7.3

If a child leaves the school during the school day without prior notification or authorisation, then they are considered a Lost or Missing Child and the Off-Site Protocol followed.

As outlined below.

8. Requests for absence from parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s)

8.1

Schools, not parents, should authorise absence. Requests to the school for granting permission for leave of absence to a student during term time should be made in writing in advance directly to the **Head of Primary or Secondary**. Authorisation of leave of absence will only be given in exceptional circumstances. Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

8.2

We ask that parents, carers or guardians make contact with the school when a child is going to be absent for ill health reasons so the school can keep records updated and, importantly, be kept informed of the student's progress to full health and anticipated return date. If necessary, the school may ask for medical evidence of any illness. We expect any absence for illness to be evidenced by a note from the parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) as soon as possible.

8.3

An absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from school without the permission of the Head of Primary or Secondary in advance.

9. Persistent absentees

9.1

Persistent absentees are children with attendance below **90%**. The school will contact the parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) if their child's attendance approaches this threshold to discuss the reasons behind the low attendance and to formulate a plan of action that attempts to increase the child's attendance.

9.2

The school will offer appropriate support to a child where the absence is a result of a mental health need, serious medical concern, welfare concern of the child or due to an ongoing safeguarding concern that includes bullying and/or online harm.

9.3

Effectively managing attendance requires a whole school approach. Therefore, schools are expected to outline who is responsible for following up on children who have persistent absence.

% of Absence	Lead Responsibility - Role	Lead Responsibility - Name
90 – 95 %	School secretaries monitor	Wan/ Plaeng
80 – 89 %	Pastoral Leads	Heads of KS
☐ 80 %	Designated Safeguarding Lead	Laura Kerr

10. Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities

10.1

The school's Attendance Register, kept by means of a computer, should be backed up in the form of an electronic copy at least once a month.

10.2

Reporting requirements to the authorities of the country you are in must be adhered to and followed.

In Thailand this means referring to the Ministry of Education.

11. Child Doesn't Arrive to School

11.1

The school must have procedures for responding to children who do not arrive at school without prior notification or authorisation. It is a requirement that the school makes attempts to establish the child's whereabouts on the first day the child doesn't arrive at school. It is therefore vital that registers are completed efficiently and accurately at the beginning of the school day.

11.2

If contact is unable to be made after several attempts, then the child is considered a Lost or Missing Child. Special considerations need to be made for children who:

- ☐ Are known to the safeguarding team and therefore considered an at-risk child.
- ☐ A child with a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND).
- ☐ A child in guardianship or boarding.

A Senior Member of Staff and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) should be informed after the several unsuccessful attempts to establish the child's whereabouts have failed. This will trigger a strategy meeting to establish a plan of action which will include:

Informing the Regional Safeguarding Lead (RSL).

Exploring alternative ways to make contact with the parent(s), carer(s) or guardian(s), including contacting the emergency contacts provided to the school.

A home visit if appropriate. This will need to be carried out by at least 2 staff members and all risks taken into consideration.

Contacting Child Protective Services (CPS) or the Police.

12. Child Missing or Lost on School Premises

12.1

- ☐ Contact a Senior Member of Staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the School Office Immediately.
- ☐ Ensure all remaining children are kept safe in a secure place with adequate supervision.
- ☐ Staff will make a thorough search of the building and immediate surroundings including storage areas and toilets.
- ☐ A thorough check of all exits will be made, ensure all gates/doors are locked and there is no other way a child could have left the site. Do not allow anyone to leave the site until the child has been found or it has been established that the child is no longer on school premises.
- ☐ CCTV should be checked immediately to ascertain if the child has left the school premises and/or if the child is accompanied by another person, if so then follow the Child Lost or Missing Off-Site Protocol.
- ☐ If the child is not found after this initial search, then the parent(s)/carer(s) or guardian(s) will be informed.
- ☐ If appropriate contact to the child's mobile phone should be made to ascertain their whereabouts and if they need support.
- ☐ A thorough search of the premises should continue until the child is found.
- ☐ If the child is not found this will indicate that the child has left the school premises. If whereabouts are unknown, then contact the police.
- ☐ Prior to contacting the police make sure you have a description/photo of the child, what they are wearing, information pertaining to any medical, behavioural, mental health or Special Educational Needs, as well as any known triggers as to why the child may have gone missing.
- ☐ Contact the Regional Safeguarding Lead (RSL) and nominate a point of contact that will act as a liaison between the school, the missing child's family, the police and the Regional Team. This is likely to be a Senior Member of staff or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

13. Child Lost or Missing Offsite

13.1

- ☐ Ensure all remaining children are kept safe in a secure place with adequate supervision.

- All other available staff will search the last known area where the child was seen. If appropriate attempts should be made to contact the child by mobile phone.
- Contact a Senior Member of Staff, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the School Office Immediately.
- If the child is not found after this initial search, then the parents/carer(s) or guardian(s) will be informed.
- If the child is not found after the initial search and/or no contact is made by mobile phone, then contact the police without delay.
- Prior to contacting the police make sure you have a description/photo of the child, what they are wearing, information pertaining to any medical, behavioural, mental health or Special Educational Needs, as well as any known triggers as to why the child may have gone missing.
- Contact the Regional Safeguarding Lead (RSL) the school should also nominate a liaison to act as point of contact between the parent(s), carer(s), guardian(s), relevant authorities and the Regional Office.

14. Educational Visits & Trips

14.1

Schools must be aware that there are greater risks for children who become Lost or Missing on Educational Visits and Trips, due to the unfamiliar environment for both the child and staff present and possible additional dangers. If appropriate, contact should be attempted with the child via mobile phone before the emergency services are contacted without delay. Procedures for a Child Lost or Missing Offsite will then be followed.

15. Before/After School Activities

15.1

All staff must be aware that children can become Lost or Missing before the start of the school day or during after school activities. Schools must implement protocols for taking registers for all school related activities and respond to any Lost or Missing Child using the correct protocols stated in this policy.

All students should be present for activities unless permission is advance permission is given. Daily attendance is shared in the secondary CCA Line Group and updated through the day. If a student is missing from a CCA the leader should update the Line Group for clarification or support.

In Early Years and Primary school, the CCA leader can check attendance list and confirm attendance with the primary secretary.

16. Following the Incident

16.1

It is in everyone's interest to resolve what has happened as quickly as possible, consistent with a fair and thorough investigation.

16.2

A Serious Incident Reporting Form (SIRF) should be completed at the earliest possible opportunity and shared with the Regional Safeguarding Lead (RSL).

16.3

The written findings of the investigation must be reported by the Head of School to Cognita Head Office within 48 hours of the occurrence of the incident.

16.4

All relevant policies and procedures will immediately be reviewed and revisions presented formally to the Regional Safeguarding Lead for Asia for approval within 5 working days.

16.5

The parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) will be involved at all times. As will the child involved if deemed appropriate.

16.6

Following receipt of our investigative report, the Regional Safeguarding Lead (RSL) for Asia will report conclusions as to the next steps to further safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the care of the school to the CEO Asia.

16.7

Where the parent(s)/carer(s)/guardian(s) remain concerned despite reassurances informed by the school, they may choose to use the school's complaints procedure accordingly.

17. Monitoring and Evaluation

17.1

Attendance rates are reported regularly to the Cognita Board. Proprietorial Governors report on student attendance, as well as any patterns or trends of persistent absence from school. Representatives of the Proprietor scrutinise Admissions and Attendance Registers for compliance and safeguarding purposes.

17.2

The effectiveness of this policy, including if procedures are being adhered to must be audited every term, the Regional Team will request the results of the school's audit to ensure that both policy and procedure are being followed.

17.3

Policy and procedure will be reviewed and evaluated during the Annual Safeguarding Review.

17.4

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated by the Regional Safeguarding Lead (RSL) annually.

Ownership and consultation	
Document sponsor (role)	Glen Hookway (Regional Safeguarding Lead)
Document author (name)	Cognita UK(with amends for Asia relevance)
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Audience	All School Staff and Volunteers

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Related documentation	
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