



St Columba's College

Missing Child and Non-Collection Response Policy

This policy applies across the College at all age ranges including Early Years, Prep and Senior Schools.

St. Columba's College is conducted in the educational tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. The school environment is best described by the term "sanctuary," a place where students sense the compassion which motivates those who care for them, where they feel safe to become the best person God created them to be.

Policy owner: KMA / KB
Date reviewed: October 2023
Date of next review: October 2026
Ratify by governors: No

Section 1 Introduction
Section 2 Strategic Practice
Section 3 End of Day

Section 1 Introduction

St. Columba's College provides an educational environment which is caring, friendly, well-structured and positive. It is framed in the Catholic tradition and its Christian community. Managing the reported loss of a child requires immediate response and careful consideration, in order to resolve the matter efficiently and reduce distress.

A child may be considered missing (and for this policy truancy is included as part of the definition) when it is clearly established that the child:

- a. should be present in school
- b. should be engaged in an activity (at school or off-site)
- c. should have left the College but not arrived home given usual patterns of travel or involvement in post school activities and is not so.

Section 2 Strategic Practice

The College should take steps to:

- a. create a Response Group to manage the procedure
- b. ensure basic information, regarding contact lists, communication, procedures etc. are in place and known to all involved
- c. establish a Response Centre.

Depending on the age of the student, the Deputy Head or Prep Deputy Head must be informed of the situation. If he/she is not available, then responsibility should be passed to the Headmaster or Head of Prep.

The appropriate Deputy Head will then:

- a. ensure that full and accurate information is gathered about the nature of the incident at the earliest possible moment.
- b. ensure that all contact numbers for the parents/guardians are established and recorded.
- c. ensure that a single contact number for parents' use (direct line) is provided.
- d. ensure that a single contact person for the parents/guardian is established.
- e. ask parents to check with friends, those whom the child may travel with those visited periodically after school, relatives etc.
- f. look into the travel arrangements from school (contact Coach Company/other coach travellers as necessary and establish whether or not the child travelled and alighted at the appropriate stop).
- g. search all locations on site.
- h. check all activities taking place off and on site to establish potential attendance.
- i. advise the parents/guardians on the appropriate timing by which to inform the police of the loss, if the above checks are negative.

If the child becomes missing off site, the lead teacher will:

- a. contact the Deputy Head immediately;

- b. agree with the Deputy Head the strategy to be adopted (to include when to inform the parents of the situation);
- c. conduct all appropriate searches, make all legitimate enquiries, inform local police;
- d. follow the guidance above regarding contacts etc.

If the child remains missing, adopt any relevant steps advocated by the Critical Incident Policy.

If the child is recovered, review practice and procedure in the light of experience.

Section 3 End of Day

To minimise the chances of a child leaving the site unattended, there are staff on duty on the playground, at the Westminster Lodge gate, as well as on coach duty. Lower Prep children are dismissed from their classroom doors. Upper Prep are collected from the Prep playground and Prep 6 can also be collected from the Westminster Lodge gate. Senior students are allowed to walk home unaccompanied. Prep 5&6 pupils are allowed to walk home if written permission is received in advance.

All Prep after school activities complete registers which are checked against the daily register by the Prep office. The office contact parents if any pupil has failed to arrive at the expected club. Lower Prep pupils are escorted to clubs and children are signed out of the club by their parent/carer upon being collected. Any pupils waiting for collection are taken to the office at 3:30pm (LP) or 3:45pm (UP) and parents contacted to determine collection time and whether the child should join After School Care.

Parents must sign up for After School Care in advance so registers can be printed at 3pm each day. Any changes to the register are informed to the Prep office so that parents can be contacted as required. Once in After School Care, parents must collect their child from the room and sign them out by 5:30pm. Any pupil waiting for collection are taken to the office and parents contacted. The member of PLT on duty will also be informed and take responsibility to wait with the child.

The Senior school encourages all students to participate in the after-school EECA programme. Attendance to activities is recorded on Edulink registers created by individual member of staff with College Admin staff given access to registers. Coaches depart at 5pm on Tuesdays, Wednesday and Thursdays for much of the academic year. Students taking coaches are expected to remain on site prior to coach departure. They are reminded of expectations and coach times via bulletin, letters home to parents and tannoy announcements.

Coach travel

Coach travel is only permitted for pupils under Prep 3 in special circumstances and with agreed planning with the parents. All Prep pupils indicate their means of travel at morning

registration to enable registers to be created. At the end of the day all coach pupils are registered at the Prep office and walked to the coaches. If a coach is delayed, the staff member remains with the pupils and the office contacts the parents. To maintain communication, all Prep pupils must carry a mobile phone with the school contact number programmed into it.

Non-Collection from school, fixture or other activity

Senior

- a. the lead staff member takes responsibility for the child's welfare and contacts the parents/guardians (and listed emergency contacts if necessary).
- b. establish a time scale for collection and supervision by a member of staff.

Prep

- a. club/fixture leaders are responsible for the child's welfare until collected. Children are taken to the school office if late to be collected. The staff member is responsible for the child until they are collected or joins After School Care.
- b. after school care are responsible for the child until 5.30pm and the office will contact the parents/guardians if late to collect. PLT have set evenings where they are on-site until all children have been collected.
- c. Late coach pupils join After School Care until escorted to the coaches by the staff member on duty.

Transport in staff vehicle

If, in extra-ordinary circumstances, a child needs to be transported by a staff member in his/her own vehicle:

- a. attempts must be made by telephone and if possible, by email to the parents to indicate that this is the case.
- b. the DSL, preferably, but any member of CLT must be contacted in person and must be emailed of the circumstances which allow for this eventuality and that communication will be time recorded and act as the start time of the journey. if any other member of staff is available, they should be briefed as to your intentions.
- c. the child must be placed in the back seat of the car.
- d. the child must wear a seat belt.