

Emergency Contact and First-day Calling Procedures

There have been three recent cases, which highlight the need for more robust emergency contacts and first-day calling procedures. These cases emphasise that these procedures are not only important for children who the school may consider 'Vulnerable' but actually important for all children as their absence in itself may be indicative that they have become vulnerable. The cases are summarised below for context:

- A mum died from an epileptic fit while bathing her children age 3 and 4. The next morning the school phoned home immediately after checking registers, no answer and so continued ringing through the contact list until they had an answer. A family member straight to the house and found mum had died, but the children were safe.
- A dad died from natural causes, Mum was working away from home, and the children were 2 and 4. In the morning Mum rang dad, no answer, but assumed he was doing the school run and continued with her working day. The school noted the absence of the 4 year old. They started first day calling 2 hours after registration and rang dad only, leaving a message. They did not ring anyone else on the contact list. They repeated the call to Dad at 3.40. Mum rang home at the end of her working day and now worried rang another school mum. Grandmother went to the home and could not gain access because of a key in the lock inside. The police gained entry at 8pm; the children had been alone with their deceased Dad all day.
- A mum died. School made a call to her when the child was not at school; the contact list was not used. No further calls were made. A letter was sent to the parent 3 days later. Eventually the house was entered 5 days later. The child, age 6 or 7 had also died. The child was non-verbal and had SEN.

As a result of these concerns please find below an example Emergency Contact form which asks for key information that may have been useful in the above and other circumstances, and also the recommended First-Day Calling Procedure.

It is expected that schools will review their current procedures and adopt these recommendations where appropriate. This is an example form that does not need to be used in its entirety if recommendations can be added into current forms/templates.

It is imperative that schools also consider what arrangements have been made when children have been placed in Alternative Provision around Emergency Contacts and First-Day Calling Procedures.

In the context of a child being absent without contact from parent, please consider the following:

- Who is responsible for following up an absent child?
- Are the Emergency Contacts shared – when/how?
- Would the same first-day calling procedure be followed and by whom?
- Does the school accurately record the attendance of children in Alternative Provision?

School Emergency Contact Form

Child's Details

Child's Surname		Child's Forename	
Date of Birth		Year Group	
Address			
Child's Phone Number (If have own phone)			
Adult(s) at this address			
Sibling within school		Sibling's Year Group	
Sibling within school		Sibling's Year Group	
Sibling within school		Sibling's Year Group	

Contact Details (Please include at least one contact that does not live at the same address as the child)

Contact 1

Name		Relationship to Child	
Address			
Parental Responsibility? (Y/N)		Is this person able to collect? (Y/N)	Could the child stay overnight? (Y/N)
Contact Number			
Additional Number			
Additional Number			
Email Address			

Contact 2

Name		Relationship to Child	
Address			
Parental Responsibility? (Y/N)		Is this person able to collect? (Y/N)	Could the child stay overnight? (Y/N)
Contact Number			
Additional Number			
Additional Number			
Email Address			

Contact 3

Name		Relationship to Child	
Address			
Parental Responsibility? (Y/N)		Is this person able to collect? (Y/N)	Could the child stay overnight? (Y/N)
Contact Number			
Additional Number			
Additional Number			
Email Address			

Contact 4

Name		Relationship to Child	
Address			
Parental Responsibility? (Y/N)		Is this person able to collect? (Y/N)	Could the child stay overnight? (Y/N)
Contact Number			
Additional Number			
Additional Number			
Email Address			

Contact Details of Key Professionals

(eg. for child who is CP or LAC– Social Worker/Virtual School, or YOT Worker)

Name		Relationship to Child	
Contact Number			
Additional Number			
Additional Number			
Email Address			

Name		Relationship to Child	
Contact Number			
Additional Number			
Additional Number			
Email Address			

Date Form Completed:

Date Received in School:

First-Day Calling Procedure

Primary Schools

- 1) Class registers completed and saved
- 2) Late children checked against registers if recorded separately
- 3) Absence calls listened to/attendance emails checked
- 4) First day text sent to first name on contact list within half an hour of school start time asking for response
- 5) If no response to text call first name on contact list within 45 minutes of school start time
- 6) Ring down contact list until reply is received, ensuring where possible that someone from outside of the family home has been contacted
- 7) If no reply send second text and email to first and second contacts on list
- 8) Alert HT/DSL that this child is absent and no contact has been made within an hour of school start time
- 9) HT/DSL to risk assess the current level of concern and consider whether circumstances warrant a home visit
- 10) Home visit to be made following decision at 9, where possible by school staff or any other agency involved with the child
- 11) Contact Police to initiate a "safe and well" check if all other stages have been completed and there is still no contact regarding the absent child. This should be done using the 101 number.

Secondary Schools

There is an expectation with the secondary school procedure that the child may be in more of a position to access help if required, and also that due to the volume of children within a secondary school a more realistic procedure needs to be in place for dealing with a greater number of pupils.

- 1) Class registers completed and saved
- 2) Late children checked against registers if recorded separately
- 3) Absence calls listened to/attendance emails checked
- 4) First day text sent to first name on contact list within an hour of school start time asking for response
- 5) If no reply send second text and email to first contact on list stating that the child is absent and the school are unaware of their whereabouts as no response
- 6) If known also try child's own phone number
- 7) Alert HT/DSL that this child is absent and no response has been received
- 8) HT/DSL to risk assess the current level of concern and consider whether circumstances warrant a home visit.
- 9) Home visit to be made following decision at 8, where possible by school staff or any other agency involved with the child
- 10) If no response by the end of the day, ring down contact list until reply is received stating that the child has not been in school all day and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence if no response from parent is received
- 11) If child does not present in school on second day, there has been no contact received from any of the contacts and the child's whereabouts are still unknown, contact Police to initiate "safe and well" check. This should be done using the 101 number