



Part of Brighter Futures Educational Trust

MISSING CHILD (IN SCHOOL / FROM SITE) POLICY

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Review Committee: ELT

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Version Control

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out the procedures to follow if a pupil goes missing while under the supervision of the school, including on-site and during off-site activities.

A missing child incident is a safeguarding concern requiring an immediate, coordinated and proportionate response.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all pupils and all staff across the Trust, including permanent, temporary and supply staff, and to all school activities (on-site and off-site).

3. Definitions

Missing child (from site): A pupil whose whereabouts are unknown during the school day and cannot be located after an immediate search.

Absconding: A pupil who leaves a supervised area without permission and may be attempting to leave the school site.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

- Ensure this policy is implemented effectively and reviewed annually
- Ensure staff training and resources (e.g. radios) are in place

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Lead safeguarding response and decision-making
- Liaise with Police, Local Authority and parents/carers
- Ensure incidents are recorded and reviewed

Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

- Coordinate response on site
- Allocate search areas and oversee communication

All Staff

- Maintain vigilance and follow procedures immediately

- Report concerns without delay
- Participate in searches when directed

5. Prevention and Risk Reduction

The Trust recognises that pupils with SEMH needs may be at increased risk of leaving supervised areas. Preventative strategies include:

- Clear routines and expectations
- Individual risk assessments and behaviour support plans
- Appropriate staffing ratios and supervision
- Environmental controls (e.g. secure gates, monitored exits)

6. Immediate Response – On-site

If a pupil is identified as missing:

1. Alert SLT immediately via radio/phone
2. Establish last known location and time seen
3. Conduct an immediate, coordinated search of the building and grounds
4. Staff to check allocated areas and report back promptly
5. Maintain clear communication throughout (radio channel – move to a clear channel/phone)

The initial search should be completed as quickly as possible (typically within 10-15 minutes).

7. If Pupil is Believed to Have Left the Site

If there is reason to believe the pupil has left the school boundary:

- Contact Police immediately (999 if risk is high)
- Inform parents/carers without delay
- Provide Police with full details (description, clothing, risks, known triggers)
- Continue dynamic risk assessment ensuring staff safety

8. Tracking and Pursuit

Where safe and appropriate, staff may follow/track the pupil:

- Do not put yourself or others at risk
- Maintain communication with SLT

- Do not engage in physical intervention unless trained and necessary

9. Off-Site Activities

Prior to any off-site visit:

- Risk assessments must include missing child scenarios
- Clear roles, supervision and communication methods must be established

If a pupil goes missing off-site:

- Follow the same escalation procedures
- Inform local venue staff if applicable
- Contact Police and parents/carers as required

10. Communication and Escalation

Clear communication is essential:

- Use agreed radio channels/phones
- SLT to coordinate updates
- Maintain accurate timeline of events

11. Return of the Child

When the pupil is located:

- Ensure immediate safety and wellbeing check
- Inform SLT, parents/carers and Police (if involved)
- Return pupil safely to school or appropriate location

12. Post-Incident Review

A review will take place within 72 hours:

- Identify triggers and contributing factors
- Update risk assessments and support plans
- Consider additional interventions or external support

13. Recoding and Reporting

All incidents must be recorded on CPOMS and Behaviour Watch, including:

- Time, location and circumstances
- Actions taken and by whom
- Outcome and follow-up actions

Records will be stored in line with safeguarding and data protection requirements.

14. Safeguarding Link

Missing child incidents must be treated as safeguarding concerns.

Repeated incidents should trigger a wider safeguarding review and possible referral to external agencies.

15. Training

All staff will receive training on this policy, including:

- Recognising risk factors
- Responding to incidents
- Using communication systems effectively

16. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Trust.

Incidents will be monitored to identify patterns and inform practice.

17. Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Children Missing Education (CME) Policy

