Missing Pupil Policy

Approved by the Headteacher and Governing Body on 21.09.2026

Reviewed: 09.26
To be reviewed: 09.28

Introduction and rationale

This policy is written to guide staff in the event of a pupil going missing on the premises, going missing outside of the school grounds or having absconded.
This policy is also written in response to minimum standards if care for residential special schools drawn up by the national care standards commission, now joined under Ofsted.

On school Premises

A register of students will be completed each morning and afternoon in school and each morning and evening in each residential group.
In addition, the Waking Night Officer will complete a pupil register every evening.
It is the responsibility of the Senior Care Staff on site to be able to account for the whereabouts of every pupil.

Upon discovering a student is missing on site, an immediate search is to be made of the school buildings with all available staff.

If the pupil is a known absconder, this should have been recorded in their individual risk assessment, CPOMS and should include any known haunts for that pupil. Staff should re-group after ten minutes and extend the search to the school grounds. This should not exceed a further fifteen minutes. When the search has to be carried out at night times, torches are available in each group.

The site manager or team leader is responsible for ensuring these are charged at all times.

If at this point the pupil has not been located the Duty Head should be informed and the senior on site should:

- Organise all available staff to search the immediate local area.
- Staff must consider potential dangers and not put themselves at risk.
- Make a phone call to local police station giving a clear description of pupil and clothing being worn. Eaton Road is the nearest Police Station.
- Contact the parents of the pupil missing.
- DO NOT leave the premises but remain on site to coordinate the search, answer phone calls and provide pupil information sheet (This is located at the residential work station)
- The police will want to visit the school.
- Ensure that there is adequate staff left in building to deal with other pupils. When searching the local area on foot, remember that you may be vulnerable (use school car or mini bus whenever possible).
- Following the incident, ensure appropriate documents CPOMS are completed as soon as possible.
- Arrange a meeting to discuss incident and effectiveness of the current procedures.
- Review pupils individual risk assessment.

Off School Premises

Pupils involved in an outing are entered onto the Off Premises Form in the school office. When going off site staffs are to wear their ID badges.
All staff on off-site activities should ensure they have a fully charged mobile phone with them.
A head count of pupils should be made at regular intervals and always before the mini bus or car leaves a venue. If a pupil is discovered as missing, then a search (not exceeding ten minutes) of the immediate area is undertaken by all available staff, ensuring that all other pupils continue to be appropriately supervised.

If the missing pupil is not located, then;

- Staff member should notify Duty Head and act on any instructions given.
- The Duty Head will notify the police and provide them as precise a description of the pupil as possible, the last known whereabouts of the pupil and any other details they may require.
- Notify, if appropriate, the venue that is being visited and ask them to initiate their lost child protocols.
- The Duty Head will notify the pupil's parents and keep them updated as necessary.

The member of staff initiating the search should remain in situ until the police or assistance from school arrives in case the missing pupil should return or be found. In such stressful circumstances it is important that staff remain as calm as possible.

Absconding

A pupil is considered to have 'absconded' if they intentionally or knowingly leave the school site or the immediate area on an off-site activity without permission.

If a pupil absconds then:

- Where possible a member of staff should follow the pupil at a safe distance and if possible encourage the pupil to return with them.
- A senior manager at school must immediately be informed of the situation.
- Where possible, the member of staff following pupil should remain in contact with school or group.
- The senior manager will then, if appropriate, allocate further staff members to go and collect the pupil and return them to school or venue.
- The senior manager will also inform the pupil's parents and keep them updated.

If a pupil absconds and is then deemed to be missing, procures will follow those outlined previously for a student missing.

It is important that following an incident the issues that arise are addressed and staff should:

- Review the individual risk assessment for pupil.
- Where appropriate, talk through the incident with pupil. Ensure a record of discussion is kept.
- Inform all staff of incident.
- Review procedures for pupil every half term to ensure appropriate control measures are in place and all staff are informed.
- Inform Governors about any incidents of absconding.