

Missing Child Policy

The Link (Alternative Provision)

Statement

At The Link, we are committed to safeguarding the wellbeing of all our pupils. We recognise that children and young people in alternative provision may have additional vulnerabilities and may be at greater risk if they go missing. This policy outlines our procedures to prevent and respond effectively in the event that a pupil goes missing from our care.

Aims of the Statement

- To ensure all staff at The Link know what to do if a pupil goes missing.
- To ensure a swift, coordinated response to locate the pupil and secure their safety.
- To reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable young people.
- To meet our safeguarding responsibilities under statutory guidance including *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2026)

Preventative Measures

We aim to reduce the risk of a pupil going missing by:

- Completing robust risk assessments for all pupils, particularly those with known behavioural, emotional, or safeguarding concerns.
- Conducting regular headcounts and attendance checks.
- Keeping daily registers, updated immediately when pupils arrive or leave.
- Ensuring pupils are signed in and out if they arrive or leave at different times.
- Ensuring staff are aware of pupils' whereabouts during all activities, breaks, and off-site activities.
- Maintaining strong relationships with parents/carers and external agencies (e.g., social workers, home schools).

Procedures if a Pupil Goes Missing (On-site)

1. **Immediate Actions**
 - Alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or senior staff immediately.
 - Conduct an urgent search of the building, outdoor areas, and any known hiding places.
 - Ask staff when the pupil was last seen, and any events leading up to the pupil going missing
2. **Secure the Environment**
 - Ensure other pupils remain supervised and safe.
 - Restrict access to external exits if needed.
3. **Escalation**
 - If the pupil is not found within 10 minutes (or sooner depending on risk level), call the police (999) and report them missing.
 - Inform parents/carers as soon as possible.

Procedures if a Pupil Goes Missing (Off-site)

During off-site visits or learning:

- Staff will conduct regular headcounts.
- If a pupil is found to be missing:
 - Alert the trip leader and follow the same immediate and escalation steps as above.
 - Contact emergency services and the DSL at The Link immediately.
 - Staff will remain with the rest of the group while ensuring continued attempts to locate the missing pupil.

When the Pupil is Found

- Reassure and support the pupil.
- Investigate the reasons for the incident, including speaking with the pupil in a safe and non-judgmental way.
- Review their individual risk assessments, support plan, and safeguarding file.
- Notify parents/carers and any involved professionals (e.g., social worker).

Post-Incident Actions

- Report to the local safeguarding team and/or Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if appropriate.
- Record event on CPOMS and Every Compliance.
- Submit a serious incident notification to Ofsted or commissioning local authority (if required).
- Hold a debrief with staff to identify lessons learned.
- Update policies, procedures, and individual care plans as necessary.
- Provide support to pupils and staff affected.

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or after any significant incident. All staff at The Link will be trained in the procedure and updated on any changes.

Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Amended By	Details of Change
V1	09.06.2025	Gemma Bucklee	New Policy
V2	21.4.2026	Gemma Bucklee	Updated dates, changed review to every 2 years

Approval

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by Head of Service Inclusion or as required by changes in legislation.

At every review, this policy will be approved by the Trust Board.

The policy was last approved by the Trust Board on 14/05/2026.

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