



Policy for

Missing Child

(including procedures for when a child is not collected on time)

Prepared by:	Shared with schools
CEO	Spring 2023

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Statement of intent

All AET policies are written to support our schools and communities. We do this by ensuring they are always in line with our Colleague Values:



Applying these values to everything we do means always acting with integrity, in the interests of others, being honest, open and transparent and putting the safety of our children first.

PART ONE: MISSING CHILD POLICY

Introduction

The welfare of all of our children at Ash Grove Academy is our paramount responsibility. A child going missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including sexual exploitation and so called 'honour-based' violence.

Every adult who works at the School has been trained to appreciate that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. This includes the importance of effective information sharing to ensure our children are safe and receiving suitable education.

Where staff have concerns that a child is missing from school, this policy should be followed. Every member of our staff who works with children has read Part 1 of the Department for Education's guidance, *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022*. Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care.

Action to be followed by staff if a child fails to attend first day of school

All new pupils (**including children in the Foundation Stage**) are placed on the school's admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed that the pupil will attend the School. If a child fails to attend on the agreed date, staff must inform the Headteacher / Principal and the Designated Safeguarding Lead without delay. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will consider notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity. Where there are changes affecting the child (including a change of address or school), these will be reflected in the admission register. This will assist the school and external agencies when making enquiries to locate any missing children.

Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing from the school

Our procedures are designed to ensure that a missing child is found and returned to effective supervision as soon as possible. If a child is found to be missing, we will carry out the following actions:

- Take a register to ensure that all the other children were present.
- Check with the children if they have seen the missing child.

- Check the sign in/out register/computer system
- Inform the Headteacher / Principal and / or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Ask all the adults and children calmly if they can tell us when they last remember seeing the child.
- Occupy all of the other children in their classroom(s) with a relevant activity.
- At the same time, arrange for one or more adults to search every where known with in the immediate local area (please specify for your own school)
- Check the doors, gates and CCTV records for signs of entry/exit.

If the child is still missing, the following steps will be taken:

- Inform the Headteacher / Principal and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) within the school asap.
- The Headteacher / Principal / DSL will arrange for staff to search the rest of the school premises and grounds.
- If the child's home is within walking distance, a member of staff will set out on foot to attempt to catch up with him/her.
- After a certain period of time (no more than an hour). Ask the Headteacher / Principal / DSL to ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the school at once.
- Ascertain any further information about the child before contacting the police.
- Contact the police and follow the advice that they offer.
- Inform the Chair of the LAC and the CEO about the situation.
- Once the child has been located carry out an investigation with the Trust CEO to ascertain the circumstances of the situation and whether further information is appropriate to communicate to pupils, parents, etc.
- A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found will be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures will be adjusted.
- If the child is injured, a report will be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE)

During the course of the investigation into the missing pupil, the school, in consultation with the Trust and CEO, will decide what information should be given to other parents, staff and other pupils and how press enquiries are to be dealt with.

A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the pupil was found will be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures will be adjusted.

Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing on an outing

- An immediate head count will be carried out to ensure that all of the other children were present.
- An adult will search the immediate vicinity.
- Contact the venue manager and arrange a search following the schools own and the venues risk assessments.
- The remaining children will be taken to a safe place until arrangements can be made to return them to school.
- Inform the Headteacher / Principal and DSL by mobile phone.
- Ask the Headteacher / Principal or another member of the SLT to ring the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to either the venue or the school at once.
- After a period of time (stated in the risk assessment) contact the police and following their instructions.
- Inform the Chair of the LAC and the CEO of the Trust
- If the child is injured, a report should be made under RIDDOR to the Health & Safety Executive (HSE).
- A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found will be made for the incident report. The school will review its procedures and, if appropriate, these will be adjusted.

Actions to be followed by staff once the child is found

- Talk to, take care of and, if necessary, comfort the child.
- Speak to the other children to ensure they understand why they should not leave the premises/separate from a group on an outing.
- The Headteacher / Principal will speak to the parents to discuss events and give an account of the incident.
- The Head will discuss the possibility of an investigation (if appropriate involving the LSCB)
- Media queries should be referred to the Headteacher/Principal (after discussion with the Trust CEO if appropriate)
- Where appropriate, the investigation should involve all concerned providing written statements.
- The report should be detailed covering: time, place, numbers of staff and children, when the child was last seen, what appeared to have happened, the purpose of the outing, the length of time that the child was missing and how he appeared to have gone missing, as well as lessons for the future.

Duty to report

- The school will inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.
- Where a pupil has been continuously absent without authorisation for a period of not less than 20 school days (and there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil is unwell or unable to attend because of any unavoidable cause), and the school and LA have failed, following reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is, the school may delete the pupil's name from the admission register. The school will inform the LA of such deletion no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register.
- The school also recognises its wider reporting duties following deletions from the admission register, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, to help identify children who are missing education and/or otherwise at risk of harm.

PART TWO: PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF WHEN A CHILD IS NOT COLLECTED ON TIME

- If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed collection time, the school will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, the Headteacher / Principal will begin to call the emergency numbers for this child.
- During this time, the child will be safely looked after by a member of staff or put into an after-school club, etc.
- If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers when the premises are due to close, the Headteacher / Principal / DSL will contact the Social Care Duty Officer. School will then follow the advice of the Social Care Team. The school will make a full written report of the incident.
- The school undertakes to look after the child safely throughout the time that they remain under our care, until such a time as he has been collected by a parent, guardian, or carer, or until appropriate, alternative care arrangements have been made with Social Care and/or the police in order to prioritise the child's safety. The school's DSL will keep a record of incidents where parents/carers do not collect a child from school or are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents. If any concerns about the child's safety and welfare result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.