

Missing Child Policy

Date of policy: January 2019

Developed by: Senior Leadership Team

**Ratified at Governing Committee:
Safeguarding & Clinical Governance**

Date: January 2019

Date of next review: January 2022

Southfields
Multi-Academy
TRUST



Southfields
Academy



Linden Lodge
School

A Specialist Sensory & Physical College

Introduction:

The welfare of pupils at Linden Lodge is our paramount responsibility throughout the 24 hour 'waking day' curriculum. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that he or she is responsible for helping to keep all of our pupils safe at all times. In the event that a child goes missing from school, or from one of the residential units, or when on an educational visit or school trip, we shall follow the Wandsworth Safeguarding Children and Young People guidance 'Protocol for Young Runaways and Missing Children and Young People' or the equivalent procedure for pupils from out borough Local Authorities.

Procedures outlined below are designed to ensure the quick and safe return of that pupil.

Aims

Our aims with respect to pupil welfare are:

1. To ensure that if a child is found to be missing either during the school day or overnight, they are located quickly and returned safely to the school, the educational visit group or the school trip group.
2. To ensure that all children are kept safely on the school premises, unless they have permission to leave the premises on an authorised visit.
3. To ensure that pupils who leave school during the school day are accompanied by an authorised adult.
4. To ensure that the school buildings, grounds and play areas are safe and secure at all times, both day and night.
5. To ensure that teachers, unit managers and support staff keep children under proper supervision at all times.
6. To establish if the child was missing due to wandering off or if they had 'run away'.

Procedures

1. If a child cannot be found by their teacher or residential unit manager, a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) **will be told immediately, and told when and where the child was last seen.**
2. Time is of the essence and prompt actions must be taken by all.
3. If the child was part of a group the remaining children will be left safe in the care of suitable staff. All other available staff will conduct a thorough search of the child's classroom or residential unit, play areas, storage areas, toilets, all other school buildings and the school grounds.
4. If the child is not found during the search, the police will be called by a member of the ELT.
5. If the child has gone missing from school premises members of staff who are not supervising children ; will be sent to search the area in the immediate vicinity of the school.

6. If a child goes missing during an educational visit or school trip, the teacher or residential worker in charge will ensure that the remaining children are safely cared for by the other staff and adults. An urgent but thorough search will be made of the immediate vicinity and if the child is not found quickly the police will be called by the teacher or residential worker in charge, who will then notify a member of the ELT.
7. As soon as possible, the parents/carers will be notified via telephone by the member of the ELT that their child is missing.
8. If the child is under the care of an out borough Local Authority this Authority will be contacted immediately by a member of the ELT to ensure their protocols and procedures are followed. In all cases of children missing from Linden Lodge, Wandsworth Local Authority will be notified by a member of the ELT by telephone and this will be followed up in writing.
9. If the child has an allocated social worker a member of the ELT will notify them by telephone and this will also be followed up in writing.
10. If a member of staff finds the child the relevant member of the ELT will be advised as soon as possible. The member of the ELT will take responsibility for informing parents/carers, police and all other authorities.
11. For any child who goes missing a 'missing child' form must be filled in as soon as possible (Appendix 1). In cases where the police are informed a copy will be given to them as well as to any allocated social worker/duty social worker. Where possible a photograph of the child will be provided. A copy of the form must be placed in the child's school file and a copy provided to social services.

Children who have 'run away'

There are many reasons why a child or young person might think about running away and we must be aware what could lead to this happening. Some of the issues may include:

- Problems at school
- Peer relationships
- Arguments and conflict at home and at school
- Death or a birth in the family
- General unhappiness
- Abuse (violence in the family)
- Boundaries and control
- Substance misuse

Due to the very nature of our children's needs they would be extremely vulnerable and at risk if they were in the community on their own.

Independent Return Interviews

When a child is found they will be offered an independent return interview to try and establish the reasons for them going missing. Independent return interviews provide an opportunity to uncover information that can help protect children from the risk of going missing again, from risks they have been exposed to while missing or from risk factors in the place they have gone missing from. The interview will be convened in the school and involve someone from the child's local authority and carried out within 72 hours of the child returning to the School. It will be carried out by an independent person, who will not be a

member of School staff, trained to carry out these interviews and able to follow up any actions that emerge. The police may also be involved in this interview.

The aim of the interview is to:

- Identify and deal with any harm the child has suffered
- Help the child feel safe and understand they have options to help them avoid the circumstances that led to them running away
- Provide the child with information on how to stay safe if they choose to run away again, including helpline numbers

The interview will be held in a neutral place where the child feels safe. It provides an opportunity to hear from the child about why they went missing and to understand the risks and issues faced by the child while missing.

Following the interview the School, the parents/carers, local authority children's services and the police will work together to build up a comprehensive picture of why the child 'ran away', to understand what happened while they were missing, to understand who they were with when they were missing, where they were found and what support they require on returning to the School.

Post-Incident Review

Following any lost child incident the Headteacher will investigate how the incident occurred and will take appropriate action, including a review of all relevant policies and procedures, to ensure, wherever possible, that a similar event does not happen again.

Removal from Roll

We use an 'off roll' notification to notify the local authority of a pupil who is removed from the school roll. If we do not know the whereabouts of a pupil then he/she will be included in the local authority's missing child database.

A missing child can be defined as a child whose whereabouts are unknown to any of the statutory agencies and for example includes victims of domestic violence who have gone into hiding, runaways, and children of families who have taken leave or extended holidays without returning when due to do so, or have moved without leaving a forwarding address. Furthermore, children removed from school by parents who are unhappy with the provision / feeling not the right school / parent intending to home educate child / child refusing to attend school.

How referrals are made to the Missing Children Register

The designated member of staff with responsibility for attendance (the Pupil Services Manager) will make enquiries about children who are not attending the school and refer them to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in accordance with the following referral criteria

1. All the emergency contact numbers on the missing child's file will have been called.
2. The family will have been written to at their last known postal and email addresses.
3. Checks will have been made with any known family or friends

Where there are the following concerns Children's Social Services will be contacted immediately:

- Safeguarding issues
- The child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan
- The child is a Looked after child (LAC) or if Children's Social Services are known to be actively involved with the child.

If a child has not been found after these checks a referral to the EWS.

The EWS will make reasonable enquiries to locate the child and then advise the school when a pupil's name may be removed from roll. At the same time, the school will enter the pupil's details onto the (DfE (S2S) database, following the guidance on how to do this on the REU Website or <https://www.gov.uk/school-to-school-service-how-to-transfer-information>

When a child has moved out of borough, the school still has responsibility for referring the pupil to the EWS if the destination is unknown. The EWS undertakes the checks above and if necessary refers the pupil to the Missing Children Register.

Related documentation

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Educational Visits and School Trips policy and the Child Protection Policy which contains more details related to Children Missing in Education.

Wandsworth Safeguarding Children and Young People
Protocol for Young Runaways and Missing Children and Young People

This policy will be reviewed every three years.

**Reviewed and agreed by Safeguarding and Clinical Governance
Committee Governors.**

Pupil Missing from
School / School Trip / Educational Visit

Date:

Pupil's name:	Age of pupil:
Male / Female	Date of birth:
Time and place pupil last seen:	Time Senior Manager notified:
	Name of Senior Manager:
Hair colour:	Any special needs e.g. behavioural communication/
Eye colour:	
Ethnicity:	Any medical needs:
Clothing worn:	Any other relevant information:
Parent/Carer name:	Time parent/carers contacted:
Contact number:	By whom:
For all pupils at Linden Lodge Wandsworth Local Authority notified by whom:	For Out Borough pupils only Out Borough Local Authority notified by whom:
Contact at LA:	Contact at LA:
When:	When:
Police informed by whom:	Social Worker informed by whom:
When:	When:
Time found:	By whom:
Location found:	
Parent/Carer informed:	Time parent/carers contacted:
	By whom:
For all pupils at Linden Lodge Wandsworth Local Authority notified By whom:	For Out Borough pupils only Out Borough Local Authority notified By whom:
Contact at LA:	Contact at LA:
When:	When:
Police informed by whom:	Social Worker informed by whom:

When:

When:

Independent interviewer requested by Social Worker

Date:

By whom: