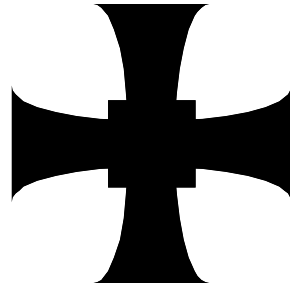


TRINITY SCHOOL CARLISLE



A CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY

MISSING CHILD PROCEDURES

(When a child goes missing whilst in the care of school staff)

Pastoral Committee

Reviewed: June 2025

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Next review: June 2026

REVIEW SHEET

The information in the table below details earlier versions of this document with a brief description of each review and how to distinguish amendments made since the previous version date (if any).

Version Number	Version Description	Date of Revision
5	Full review in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022	September 2022
6	Review in light of KCSiE 2023 and minor changes to links to KAHub, external websites and local contact numbers.	June 2024
7	Reviewed. Minor changes to update references.	June 2025

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MISSING CHILD PROCEDURES

(When a child goes missing whilst in the care of school staff)

In the event of a child going missing whilst in the care of the school staff, the school will put into practice the 'Missing Child Procedures' below. These ensure that a systematic approach to find the child is taken and consideration is given to the levels of risk to the child.

These procedures refer to a pupil who registers at school in the morning or afternoon and then goes missing during the school day (or on an off-site visit) without a satisfactory explanation.

We already have procedures for pupils who fail to register, if there are concerns about the level of attendance, reference should be made to the school Attendance Policy and procedures. A separate procedure exists for Children who are absent from education including first day calling procedures when a parent fails to inform the school that their child will be absent.

These procedures should **NOT** be confused with the procedures to follow when a child is absent from school / first day calling i.e. children who do not show up for school (school's safeguarding response to children missing education). Further guidance and model first day calling procedures can be found in the KAHSC ['First day calling procedures and emergency contact form'](#).

It is vital that at least 2 emergency contact details for parents are held and kept up to date. Contacts should include at least one person who does not normally live in the household. Wherever possible, if the child has a mobile phone, the details of this number should also be held by the school.

Definitions

For the purposes of these procedures a child, young person, pupil or student is referred to as a 'child' or a 'student' and they are normally under 18 years of age.

Wherever the term 'parent' is used this includes any person with parental authority over the child concerned e.g. carers, legal guardians etc.

Wherever the term 'Headteacher' is used this also refers to any Manager with the equivalent responsibility for children.

'Missing' is when a student's whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be the subject of a crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.

Is the student at significant risk?

A 'student missing during school hours' incident would be prioritised as significant risk where:

- the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the child is in danger through their own vulnerability. Vulnerability characteristics may include:
 - the age of the child;
 - child on a plan (Early Help, Child in Need, Cared for or Child Protection Plan, Behaviour Management, Education Health Care Plan);
 - a disability/other health condition and/or special educational needs;
 - substance misuse;
- the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger;
- there are indications that the student has already come to harm (CSE, grooming, radicalisation etc.);

Other contributory factors should be taken into consideration when determining if the student is at significant risk, for example:

- Have there been past concerns about this child and/or family which together with the sudden disappearance are worrying?
- Is there any known history of drug or alcohol dependency within the family?
- Is there any known history of domestic abuse?
- Is there concern about the parent's ability to protect the student from harm?
- Is this very sudden and unexpected behaviour?
- Have there been any past concerns about the student associating with significantly older young people or adults?
- Was there any significant incident prior to the student's unexplained absence?
- Has the student been a victim of bullying or intimidation either face to face or online?
- Are there health reasons to believe that the student is at risk? e.g. does the student need essential medication or health care?
- Was the student noted to be depressed, anxious or isolated prior to the child's unexplained absence?
- Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the student is at risk? e.g. rites of passage, female genital mutilation or forced marriage planned for the child?

Consideration will be given to the individual circumstances and the child's records e.g. whether the child has gone missing before or has a record of leaving school without permission.

Procedures aimed at reducing the risk of a missing child

Start of the school day

- The school should ensure parents are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of their child passes from them to staff and vice versa.
- There are clear procedures for welcoming students into the school. The Zero Path school doors are closed at 8.30am. After this time, students must report to the main school reception area to sign in.
- Teachers are in their classrooms by 8.25am.
- Registration is taken at the beginning of the school day and during period 4 (lunch period) in order to ensure that all are accounted for.
- The main building has a double access entrance via a Zero Path and Main Reception desks. The Sixth Form building has a single reception entrance. All are additionally staffed in the morning and fully supervised by administrators throughout the day. As a multi-block school, the main, and Sixth Form building have reception desks and access control. Signage directs all visitors to these entrances. It is impractical to have access control on all other blocks so students will be safeguarded in these other blocks by other methods such as supervision. At lesson changes the entrances to these blocks are supervised. This includes, monitoring of the Zero Path footfall during lesson changeovers. Unauthorised visitors will be challenged by staff.
- Receptions are secure areas and visitors cannot gain access to other parts of the school without being challenged or at least seen by a member of staff.
- Main entrance doors are fitted with a remote access intercom and a camera so that visitors can be seen prior to being allowed entry and those who leave the building can be seen.

During lesson time

- Staff complete electronic registers promptly and accurately – morning and afternoon.
- All staff must ensure that adequate supervision is maintained, when students are learning outside.
- If students leave their classroom to work in other parts of the school, the class teacher must ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times and students are accounted for on return to the classroom.

- Updated contact information for parents is sought regularly and maintained. A minimum of 2 contacts are required.
- Behaviour Management Plans are in place for pupils with challenging behaviour including those who may be a 'flight risk'.
- There is a conflict between fire and security in schools and security issues take precedent at our school. The risk of a child escaping or leaving without permission is far greater than the risk of a fire starting.
- It is also acceptable for Maglock buttons and break glass boxes to be sited at height for the same reason. Maglocks are hard wired to the fire alarm so disengage when the fire alarm sounds. Where this is the case, this is clearly stated in the school Fire Risk Assessment. Staff need to be mindful of the fact that where there is a power outage which affects the fire alarm, the doors fitted with Maglocks may disengage and result in a security risk.

During break times

- Sufficient numbers of duty staff should be assigned to social spaces before students come out and for the duration of breaks.
- All staff must ensure that external gates to areas outside the school grounds are secured when students are outside and adequate supervision is maintained.
- Staff patrol all areas of the social spaces throughout the session and are allocated specific 'sentry' points during break times.
- The use of two-way radios by duty staff is in place to enable speed responses/action.

End of the school day

- Doors are opened at 3.05pm
- Students leave by assigned exits, to report to parents, buses, or in most cases to head home independently (as a cyclist or pedestrian).

Off-site visits

The school will take all reasonable precautions to ensure that whilst students are on off-site visits, they are appropriately supervised by members of staff, parents, volunteers and others. All off site visits must be approved initially by the EVC and the Headteacher before they can take place.

- Consent from parents is obtained generically when students first start their school - career, for visits.
- Risk Assessments -Thorough risk assessments are conducted. For Category 2 Visits the risk assessments will be inspected by KAHSC before being approved by the EVC and/or Headteacher.
- Supervision roles will be clear and allocated (ratios are adequate throughout the visit). Group control measures in place. Itinerary discussed with supervisors and participants before departure and frequent reminders throughout. Regular head counts throughout.
- Lost/ Separated procedure in place and clearly communicated to all of the group. Panic cards will be issued to all students where necessary. They will include school emergency contact number, school trip mobile number and for residentials accommodation details.
- Leaders will carry all medical and emergency contact details for everyone including travel lists. School Base will also have this information. For Category 2 Visits KAHSC will also hold trip details & emergency contact numbers.
- A mobile phone will be carried for each visit. All supervisors will have the Group Leaders mobile number as do participants if appropriate – this will only be shared with students if it is a school trip mobile.
- Remote Supervision – Parents have been expressly informed about periods of remote supervision. Locations have been checked and suitable and arrangements ensure that

supervisors can meet their duty of care eg. Boundaries, check-ins, head counts, communications. Students are required to stay together in groups of not less than 3.

- In the event a student does go missing the Group Leader should notify the School Emergency Contact ASAP and Try to control communications with families. Keep group together. The school emergency contact should refer to the Emergency Action Card for information required, reassure the Group Leader, keep in regular contact and notify the necessary staff/authorities.

Wraparound care and clubs

- Thorough risk assessments will be carried out;
- A register of those attending each session will be taken;
- Consent will be obtained from parents with contact numbers and details of how the students are to get home and, where necessary, with whom.

Procedures in the event of child going missing

In the event that a student goes missing and cannot be accounted for, staff will ensure a systematic search is made for the child (both inside and outside of the building) as soon as possible. Parents and authorities are notified at the appropriate stage (20 minutes given to staff or parental location of student, before calling 101 if unsuccessful), and a high level of care is maintained of other students at the school while the procedures are followed.

Where a student is thought to have been abducted the Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will **immediately** call the Police using 999.

During the normal school day

In the event of a member of staff fearing that a student has gone missing while at school:

- Remain calm.
- The following should be checked:
 - Texts, emails and voice mail for those who may have not arrived at school prior to registration;
 - Attendance registers;
 - Sign in records at receptions;
 - Off-site visit records (including PE fixtures);
 - Music lesson lists;
 - Lists of those attending other schools e.g. transition activities or alternative provision.
- If a student has registered and the teacher suspects that they are missing from a lesson or activity, raise the alarm by informing the linked pastoral team immediately, who will, alongside above checks, will take advice from DSL's.
- Staff will use professional judgement and risk assess the urgency of the situation to help inform the timeframe required in establishing the students' whereabouts before notifying the Police, but it's advised that no longer than 20 minutes is given to the combined staff/parental search;
- Whilst timeliness should be on a case-by-case basis, DSL's should, together with the attached Pastoral staff, assess the child's vulnerability (refer to Section 3).
- Two members of staff (usually at least member of SLT) will make a search of the premises and outdoor areas. All indoor rooms to be checked systematically first followed by outdoor spaces, grounds (including those generally marked 'out of bounds'), car park and adjacent road(s). This will be undertaken as quickly as possible.
- Whilst the initial search is made, the person in charge will make enquiries of all adults in the school to establish the last sighting and time, and the possible mental state of the student (happy, upset etc.).

- Where appropriate, check with the student's known friends to establish whether or not they are aware of his/her whereabouts.
- If the student has not been found after 10 minutes from the initial report of them as missing, parents will be contacted using emergency contact details provided and staff will try to contact the student via their mobile telephone if known (if applicable). Encourage parents to keep calm and enquire as to whether the student has returned home or might be making his/her way home. Ask the parent to come to the school using the normal route that the child would take and to walk if appropriate. Ask them to bring a recent photograph of their child.
- Organise a wider search of the area surrounding the school. Two-way radios and mobiles should be used in order to effectively communicate with the school.
- If the student is not found during the initial search (after 20 minutes) the Headteacher/DSL will alert the Police (101/999 depending vulnerability) (refer to Section 5), Cumbria Safeguarding Hub on Tel: 0333 2401727 and our Health & Safety Services Provider: Kym Allan Safeguarding, Health and Safety Consultants Ltd. (01228 210152);
- If the parent arrives at the setting and their child is still missing, ask the parent to return home in the event that their child has managed to make his/her way home by an alternative route. Ask them to remain at home and to contact others who the child may have gone to visit. The parent must remain contactable by the school at all times in the event that the child is found;
- Telephone lines should remain as free as possible so that messages are not delayed. It may be possible to plug a separate handset into the fax line temporarily to help the short-term situation. An independent mobile phone could be used for this purpose.

Off-site visits

- If a student is lost at a venue, all other students will be required to remain with their visit leader and assemble at a pre-determined meeting point until the student is located.
- A head count will be taken to confirm all those who are present. Supervising adults will be asked when the student was last seen and what clothes he/she was wearing. All adults will be asked to look for the student as they proceed with the visit.
- The Visit Leader will appoint a responsible adult from the group to conduct a search of the immediate area and to alert anyone else who may be able to assist, keeping in contact with the Visit Leader via mobile phone/radio.
- A member of staff or other responsible adult will remain at the meeting point in the event that the missing student turns up there.
- The Visit Leader will alert officials at the venue (if applicable) that there is a missing student and take their advice.
- The Visit Leader will alert the school assigned emergency contact who will contact the parents via the emergency contact details. If the student goes missing out of normal school hours, the Visit Leader will contact the parents directly, as well as referring to the assigned emergency contact for support and advice.
- If the student remains unaccounted for more than 20 minutes maximum, the local police will be informed and their advice taken;
- The school will contact their Health & Safety Services Provider: Kym Allan Safeguarding, Health & Safety Consultants Ltd.;
- If by the end of the visit, if the student is still missing, arrangements will be made for a member of staff or other responsible adult to remain at the venue or vicinity until the student is located. This will be in conjunction with the local Police, the school setting and the parents;
- The school will at this point notify Cumbria Safeguarding Hub on Tel: 0333 2401727.

When a Child goes Missing Abroad

- Follow the off-site visits related missing child procedure (above) as far as it applies in a foreign country e.g. how you will go about looking for them initially and who you will contact, if anyone, when searching begins.
- Report appropriately during or after the initial search to every local amenity or authority who can help look/widen the search e.g. security at a mall, the station public announcer to put out a message etc.
- Contact the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 020 7008 1500 and ask for the Consular Directorate. The Foreign Office will appoint a caseworker if appropriate and contact the British Embassy in the country concerned.
- Contact the school in the UK at the point the child is still missing and the procedure says they must be told. The school Emergency or Critical Incident & Response Plan should then swing into action. It will be for **school** to contact the UK police either for the area where the missing child lives, or the school's own local police station, and ask them to inform the UK National Central Bureau of Interpol. If necessary, Interpol can then contact the relevant foreign police, although they will usually do so only if they consider the missing person to be at risk of harm.
- The [Lucie Blackman Trust](#) can also provide help and support tailored to specific situations. It is open 24 hours a day and can be contacted on Tel: 01983 718802 - select option 9. When calling from outside the UK remember to add +44 and remove the first Zero.
- The information the Police will want is in the [FCO Missing Person Guide](#) - name, DOB, passport details, what they are wearing, where they were last seen etc.
- The leader should be focussed on searching and informing local authorities or the UK embassy (if there is one at all; there is only one of these per country, usually in the capital and it has the UK ambassador in it) or UK consulate (very similar to an embassy but lower ranking as it doesn't have the ambassador in it - there might be several of these or none of these, and they can be slow at some tasks because they just pass it on to the embassy).
- If a student has gone missing whilst visiting another European country, staff should contact both the UK police and the police local to where students are staying abroad. It's also possible to call the '[Missing Children Europe](#)' hotline on 116000 which can put staff in contact with a charity in the country staff are calling from which deals with missing children. This number operates in over 30 countries across Europe. It also applies in the UK.
- Processes for reporting a missing person in the Country they have gone missing will vary depending on the Country. E.g., they may not accept a missing person report until a certain amount of time has passed nor accept a report in English. The school may have to [arrange and pay for a translation service](#)

Notifying the police

The information required by the Police to assist in locating and returning the student to a safe environment is as follows:

- The student's name, date of birth, status (for example looked after child), responsible authority.
- Where and when they went missing.
- Previous missing episodes and where they went.
- Who, if anyone, they went missing with.
- What the student was wearing plus any belongings they had with them such as bags, phone etc.; include mobile number.
- Description and recent photo.
- Medical history, if relevant.
- Time and location last seen.
- Circumstances or events around going missing with relevant safeguarding information.
- Details of family, friends and associates.
- Contact details of DSL if it was after school hours.

Whilst the search is ongoing, the school will continue to liaise with the Police and act in accordance with Police instructions.

Option 1 – if the student returns before the police have arrived then the Police must be informed and own school procedures need to be followed.

Option 2 - if the student returns to school of their own volition, then the Police must be informed and own school procedures need to be followed.

Option 3 - if the Police locate the student and bring them back to the school the Police will conduct the safe and well interview and the school will follow School procedure.

Where a student has a known risk of being missing, a risk assessment (Behaviour Management Plan) for the student will be written and implemented.