

Local Procedure Title	Missing
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Local Procedure Author(s)	Jamie Dowsett
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<p>1. Introduction and Aims</p> <p>Introduction to Missing Person Local Procedure for Unsted Park School</p> <p>When a child or young person goes missing from care or education, they are exposed to significant risks. The safeguarding of children and young people at Unsted Park School is of paramount importance, and this includes taking steps to prevent and manage incidents where a student may go missing. As part of Aspris Children's Services, we are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of the children and young people in our care. This procedure outlines the framework for assessing and managing the risks associated with missing episodes, as well as the preventative measures in place to safeguard the students and ensure a prompt and effective response when such an event occurs.</p> <p>Our approach aligns with the Department for Education's statutory guidance on Children Who Run Away or Go Missing from Home or Care, which outlines the necessary steps for safeguarding and responding to missing children. Through clear procedures, training, and effective communication, we aim to protect the children in our care and reduce the likelihood of any student going missing from education or care.</p> <p>You can access the full DfE statutory guidance on children who go missing here Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care</p>
<p>2. Definitions</p> <p>At Unsted Park School, it is crucial to have consistent and clearly understood definitions for children or young people who are not present where they are expected to be. This ensures that a suitable and timely response is provided during missing incidents. The following definitions are based on statutory guidance and are integral to our approach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Away from placement without authorisation: A looked-after child whose whereabouts are known but is not at their placement or expected location, and where the carer has concerns, or the incident has been reported to the local authority or the police. • Absent: A person who is not at the location where they are expected or required to be. • Missing: Any individual whose whereabouts cannot be established, and where the circumstances are out of character or suggest the person may be the subject of crime or at risk of harm. • Missing from care (Missing from Home): A looked-after child who is not at their placement or expected location (e.g., school), and their whereabouts are unknown. • Absconded: A child who is subject to a court order (e.g., curfew or bail conditions) and is missing. Police must be informed of the order and its expiry date to classify the child as an absconder. If the expiry date is unknown, the child will be classified as "missing" rather than absconded. <p>Schools and Colleges: Unsted Park School recognizes its legal duty of care towards all pupils. This duty includes taking all reasonable steps to ensure pupils' safety and ensuring they remain</p>

within the care of the school at all times throughout the school day and during school-led activities.

In line with **Regulation 12(1) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**, the school must inform the local authority if any pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent without permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more. The local authority must be notified at intervals agreed upon between the school and the local authority.

Response to Missing Incidents: Any instance of a child or young person going missing must be treated as an emergency. The immediate response at Unsted Park School will be focused on preventing harm and ensuring the young person is recovered to safety as quickly as possible.

3. Intervention prior to a student going missing

If a student is seen leaving the premises unaccompanied, the member of staff witnessing this must inform the most senior member of staff immediately available or, if no one is available, send a message to other staff via telephone or a reliable messenger without losing sight of the child if possible, giving space if safe to do so or raising awareness if on the road.

Some of our students need space and have it written into their risk assessments that they will contact parents if they need time away or will call in with staff on a regular basis. They may stay on the school grounds without staff supervision.

In certain situations, it may be appropriate for a member of staff to go beyond the school boundary to support or retrieve the student if they feel that the student is at risk. The member(s) of staff need to bear in mind risks associated with running after a student as this may cause the student to run into a road or into another dangerous situation. Where possible staff should stop at a distance and communicate what they are doing, ask them if the student would like to talk, and explain that if the student stays in sight, then they will not need to follow them. Unless the student is at risk of immediate harm, staff should give them time and space to calm down.

Individual risk assessments are also completed to identify if a child is at risk of leaving the site.

4. Action to be taken in the event of a student going missing

If a student goes missing, initial actions to be taken are;

- A) A member of SLT or the senior on duty must be contacted immediately.
- B) The on-call Senior manager must be contacted immediately.
- C) The time, location of last known or seen whereabouts is to be noted for reference.
- D) Black file (electronic file) from school staff room collected and taken to reception (or where senior lead is running the each from)

Subsequent actions will be determined by the level of risk, as detailed in the students individual Risk Assessment and (where applicable) the students Missing Person Risk Assessment.

Stage 1

- Establish who has gone missing and locate missing person plan
- Begin a timeline
- Inform a senior member of staff who should coordinate the search. Refer to the individual missing person plan and ascertain if the young person has previously gone missing. Use this information to coordinate the search.
- At night, in severe inclement weather or if the young person is at risk of immediate harm the police should be called immediately.
- Conduct an immediate search of the last known whereabouts and known hiding places. Recent events should be reviewed to try and ascertain antecedents and if the student may of left the school unauthorised.

- Conduct a thorough search of buildings and grounds. **Four people will normally take about 20 minutes, at this point the missing person responses time log should be read to see when the police should be contacted.**
- If the student has a mobile phone, try and make contact.
- If the student is still missing, staff should expand the search to outside of the school boundary; this could be done either on foot or using a school car depending on the circumstances.
- Parents/carers should be contacted to see if they have heard from the student, and to inform them that they are missing. **Call parents to establish communication or location.**
- In light of this, a decision should be made as to how long the student should be allowed to be missing before going on to Stage 2, along with circumstances around why the student has gone missing, who they are with and the weather conditions.
- Staff should continue to actively search for the student while the following stages are taking place. If a student is missing for more than 20 minutes (or in incidents where Police are called, as soon as a call to the Police has been made) the 'log of actions taken/places searched' section of the student's Missing Person Information Sheet should be used, so that if the incident becomes prolonged or there is a need for changes in staff dealing with it, there is an accurate record of what actions have been taken since the beginning of the incident.

Stage 2

- If deemed necessary, the student should be reported to the police (using the 101 number) or 999 if the young person is considered to be at immediate risk of harm (using information from the Missing Persons response time log) A list of missing time frames prior to informing the Police of a missing person is available in the staff room or on reception.

The on-call Senior management should be consulted prior to contacting the Police; all available information should be at hand prior to making the call.

5. Missing Procedures for Off-site Trips

In the event that a young person is missing on off-site trip the person in charge of the trip will ensure that the remaining students are supervised safely and instigate a search of the area/building. A second member of staff should be allocated to phone into Unsted Park School to inform SLT of the situation.

SLT will coordinate the search centrally maintaining appropriate telephone contact. SLT will coordinate and direct staff as necessary. All staff phone numbers will be used by SLT on call to ensure full contact and support.

If the young person is not found within 15min the family should be contacted and then the police. SLT will continue liaising between the family and police until the student is found.

6. Aftercare Following a Missing Episode at Unsted Park School

At Unsted Park School, the safety and well-being of every student is our top priority, and we are committed to providing a comprehensive and supportive response when a child or young person returns from an episode of going missing.

Safe and Well Checks: After any missing episode, the child or young person will always be offered a 'safe and well' check. This check will be conducted to assess the physical and emotional state of the student and ensure that they are not at risk of harm. The school will arrange for the student to see a health professional if they wish, to address any medical or emotional concerns. This process ensures that the child or young person's immediate

needs are met upon their return. Safe and well checks should be conducted by an independent person. If the placing authority does not provide such an independent person, Unsted Park School will make use of local resources to fulfill this role. We ensure that the individual conducting this check is suitably trained and vetted to provide an appropriate and timely response. In certain circumstances, the police may be asked to complete a welfare check or conduct an interview to further assess the child or young person's well-being.

Debrief Meeting: Following any episode of going missing, the child or young person will be encouraged and supported to participate in a 'Debrief Meeting'. This meeting will be tailored to the individual needs of the student and aims to understand the circumstances surrounding the missing episode. A basic template detailing areas to be covered is provided in the ACS Form: 06B, and the debrief will be recorded accordingly. This meeting allows for reflection on the incident, and any actions or lessons learned will be recorded and shared as needed. Managers will review the debrief reports to ensure that any identified lessons are acted upon and that relevant authorities are notified if any concerns regarding possible offences or safeguarding issues are raised.

Independent Return Interviews: When a child is found after going missing, they will be offered an independent return interview within 72 hours of their return to Unsted Park School. This interview is an essential part of our safeguarding process, as it provides an opportunity to gather information that could help prevent future incidents of going missing. It allows us to explore any risks the child may have been exposed to while missing and identify any underlying issues that may contribute to the child running away. The independent interview will be carried out by a trained professional, who is not involved in the child's direct care, to ensure that the child feels safe and comfortable sharing information. Following this interview, any necessary actions will be taken to protect the child from further risk.

It is important to identify early any potential risks that the young person may have encountered.

All in-depth debrief should take place if:

- The student has been reported missing on two or more occasions
- Is frequently absent without authorisation
- Has been hurt or harmed while they have been missing
- Is known or suspected risk of sexual exploitation or trafficking
- Is known or suspected of involvement in criminal activity or drugs
- Has contact with persons posing a risk to children

Following the debrief UPS will:

- Build a comprehensive picture of why the student went missing
- What happened while they were missing
- Who they were missing with and where they were found
- What support they require on returning to school/home

At Unsted Park School, we are committed to providing a robust support system for our students, ensuring that any missing episode is handled with the utmost care and diligence, and that relevant authorities, including the police, are involved when necessary to safeguard the child.

7. Use of reasonable force/ Restrictive Physical Intervention

The use of physical interventions, such as restraint should not be used unless there is an immediate risk of significant harm, serious damage to property, as a last resort and if colleagues are confident that such interventions will work/de-escalate the situation and make the child safe;

if this outcome is not likely, they should withdraw and immediately consult their manager or the Police.

8. Reporting and recording

In each instance of a child going missing, the following records must be completed:

- An Engage report must be completed. A record of the de-brief held with the student should be attached to the engage report
- Staff (usually the students Key worker or form tutor with guidance from senior staff) must review and update the students Running away or Going missing Risk assessment (ACS 06 form) , Individual risk assessment and Behaviour Management plan.
- An entry made in the schools Missing persons incident log.
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In some cases an incident involving a student going missing will need to be reported to the students placing authority (SEN case officer and also to the student's social worker if they have one – For all LAC & CIN).

SLT will coordinate these notifications.

Documentation

Missing Persons Information Sheet.

This document must be completed for all students.

Section 1 of this document contains an up-to-date photo of the student along with descriptive information about them.

Section 2 can be used to write down information specific to an individual occurrence of a student going missing (e.g., clothing being worn and the student's mental state/mood). This document should be used when reporting a student to the police as missing. The MPIS should be updated at termly or if any changes occur.

Risk Assessment

Prior to or upon admission to Unsted park School an Individual Risk Assessment form is prepared for each student. The Risk assessment contains Missing Persons section which includes information on whether the student has gone missing previously, when the students last occurrence of going missing was, information on attempts to go missing or leaving site without permission accompanied by staff, actions to be taken to prevent a student from going missing, actions to be taken if a student does go missing, and a guide time for staff to leave before calling the Police.

The response is dependant upon the students' circumstances and behaviour changes; therefore, Risk Assessments are updated after each incident of a student going missing.

Missing Persons Risk Assessment

Where a student has a known history of going missing, a Missing Persons Risk Assessment should be completed and stored in the student's main file. This document uses criteria related to the likelihood of a student going missing and the severity of risk if a student were to go missing to create an overall student's vulnerability to types of risk related to going missing.

Missing Persons Incident Log

This document is a central record of all incidents involving students going missing (whether it is necessary to involve the police).

It must be updated after each missing person incident.

9. GOVERNANCE AND MONITORING

Missing Person incident reports and de-brief reports will be reviewed on a weekly basis by SLT as part of Unsted parks incident monitoring/lessons learnt process. Managers reviewing Missing person incident and debrief reports are expected to ensure that any lesson learned, and actions identified and disseminated and/ or implemented in a timely manner.

This includes notifying the relevant responsible authorities of any issues which may relate to possible offences and/or safeguarding. Managers should consult with Regional managers for guidance.

In some cases where a student has gone missing for a long period of time or been at risk of harm, a review of the incident may be required. Aspris ACS 06A form can be used for this purpose.

Children's Services: Local Procedure

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Responsibility for Risk Assessing			
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Responsibility for Co-ordinating an incident			
Responsibility for Recording			
Arrangements for Debriefs			
Arrangements for Safe and Well Checks			
Arrangements for reviewing local protocols with Police/Host Authorities as applicable			

Local Procedure Review History:

Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Summary of revisions

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