ST LEONARD'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL, BRIDGNORTH

Child missing from school care (either from the school premises or away from the school premises) Policy

Ratified by the Governing Body: Feb 2026

Review Date: February 2028

1. Purpose

The safety and welfare of all pupils is our highest priority. This policy outlines the procedures to be followed if a pupil is:

- Missing from the school site during the school day
- Not present at a session without explanation
- Missing from after-school club, wraparound care, trips, or extended provision
- Not collected at the end of the school day

This policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding Policy, Attendance Policy and Behaviour Policy.

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2. Legal Framework

This policy is informed by:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Local Authority safeguarding procedures

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3. Definitions

Missing Child (On Site):
A pupil who is unaccounted for during the school day and whose whereabouts cannot be established.

Missing from Education:
A child who does not attend school regularly or whose whereabouts are unknown for a period of time.

Children missing from education may be an indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental health concerns, forced marriage, radicalisation or other safeguarding risks. Concerns relating to Children from Missing Education will therefore always be treated as a potential safeguarding matter and managed in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and local safeguarding procedures.

Uncollected Child:
A pupil who has not been collected by an authorised adult at the end of the school day or after-school provision.

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4. Procedure: Child Missing from the School Site

If a pupil cannot be located:

Step 1 – Immediate Action (0–5 minutes)

- Inform the Headteacher and DSL immediately.
- Conduct an immediate search of:
    - Classroom
    - Toilets
    - Shared areas
    - Outdoor spaces

    - Medical room
- Check registers and signing-out records.
- Where appropriate, site gates/ exits may be monitored or secured while searches are undertaken.

Step 2 – Escalation (5–15 minutes)

If the child is still missing:

- Office staff contact parents/carers immediately.
- Staff conduct a wider search of the site and immediate perimeter.
- Consider CCTV review (if applicable).
- DSL conducts risk assessment (consider age, SEND, medical needs, vulnerability).

Step 3 – Emergency Response (After 15 minutes or sooner if high risk)

If the child remains missing:

- Call police (999 if immediate danger).
- Provide:
    - Child's name, age, description
    - Last known location
    - Known risks or vulnerabilities
- Inform Chair of Governors.
- Record all actions taken with timings.

Once Child is Found:

- Check welfare immediately.
- Provide reassurance.
- Inform parents/carers.
- Complete safeguarding record.
- Conduct internal review to identify lessons learned.

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5. Procedure: Unexplained Absence at Registration

- First-day calling procedures followed within 30 minutes of registration.
- Text/phone call to parents.
- If no response:
    - Contact additional emergency contacts.
    - Consider home visit (if appropriate).
- If unable to establish contact and there are safeguarding concerns:
    - Refer to local authority.
    - Consider police welfare check.

Patterns of absence are monitored by the DSL and Attendance Lead.

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6. Procedure: Child Missing from After-School Club or Trip

All educational visits must include a dynamic risk assessment, clear supervision ratios, deignated group leaders, emergency contact packs, regular regroup points and headcount protocols.

- Immediate headcount.
- Inform Trip Leader/Club Lead.
- Search immediate area.
- Inform school leadership.
- Contact parents.
- Contact police if not located promptly.
- Follow visit risk assessment procedures (if off-site).

All educational visits must include clear supervision ratios and headcount protocols.

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7. Safeguarding Considerations

Particular care will be taken if the child:

- Has SEND
- Has a history of going missing
- Is subject to a Child Protection Plan
- Is looked after
- Has medical needs

In such cases, police may be contacted sooner.

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8. Recording and Reporting

All incidents must be:

- Recorded on the school safeguarding system
- Timed and factual
- Reviewed by the DSL
- Reported to Governors if stage 3 is reached (anonymised)

Where appropriate, a risk assessment will be updated.

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9. Preventative Measures

The school will:

- Maintain accurate registers
- Supervise transitions carefully
- Conduct regular headcounts
- Ensure secure site boundaries
- Train staff annually on missing child procedures
- Teach pupils about staying safe

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10. Review

Following any missing child incident, the school will:

- Conduct a debrief
- Identify procedural improvements
- Update risk assessments
- Inform Governors