

Children Missing or Absconding from Education Policy

If a child goes missing, the following guidelines have been devised to clarify the actions to take:

- Ensure other children are looked after appropriately while you organise a search for the child concerned.
- Inform the child's parents, if they are present at the event, or nominate an appropriate person to telephone them and advise of the concern. Reassure them you are doing all you can to locate their child. Remember the child may contact the parents directly so this action is very important.
- Organise all available responsible adults by areas to be searched. It is best to take a short time to organise the search properly so that all places are searched fully.
- Send searchers immediately to any exits to the venue to ensure the child has not left and to any obvious potential danger spots, such as nearby lakes or rivers.
- Search the areas where the child has gone missing, including changing rooms, toilets, public and private areas, and the grounds for provisions.
- Request all those searching to report to a nominated adult at a specific point.
- This nominated person should remain at this reference point and note events, including a detailed physical description of the child. This should include approximate height, build, hair, and eye colour, as well as the clothing the child was wearing and where and when they were last seen. The police will require all this. If the search is unsuccessful, you should then contact the police.
- A report should go to the police no later than 20 minutes after the child's disappearance is noted, even if the search is not complete.
- If the police recommend further action before they get involved, follow their guidance.
- If the police act upon the concern, always be guided by them in any further actions.
- When the child is located at any stage, ensure you inform all adults involved, including the parents, searchers, and the police if they are involved by then.
- All missing child incidents **MUST BE** notified as soon as possible to the Safeguarding Officer, who may notify the MASH.