

Missing Child Procedure (Afternoon Register)

February 2026

Purpose

To ensure that any child not present at afternoon registration is located quickly and safely, and that all staff follow a consistent safeguarding process.

Scope

This procedure applies to all teaching staff, support staff, supply staff, and any adult responsible for pupil supervision during the school day.

1. Identification of a Missing Child

A child is considered missing if:

- They are not present at afternoon registration.
- Their absence has not been reported or authorised.
- Their whereabouts cannot be confirmed immediately.

The safety of the child is the priority, and the situation must be treated as a potential safeguarding concern until resolved.

2. Immediate Actions (Within the First 5 Minutes)

- **Check the register** to ensure the child has not been marked incorrectly.
 - **Ask nearby staff** (class teacher, TA, lunchtime supervisors, club leaders) if they have seen the child since lunch.
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3. Initial Search of the School Site (Within 10 Minutes)

Staff should conduct a quick, coordinated search of:

- Toilets and cloakrooms
- Library and quiet areas
- Playground and outdoor spaces
- Corridors and stairwells
- Any known “safe spaces” or usual hiding spots

At least one adult must remain with the class at all times.

4. Escalation (After 10–15 Minutes or Sooner if Concerned)

If the child is not located promptly:

- **Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** immediately.
- **Contact parents/carers** to confirm whether the child has:
 - Been collected
 - Gone home ill
 - Attended an appointment
 - Been given permission to leave the site

If parents cannot confirm the child's whereabouts, the situation remains a safeguarding concern.

5. Senior Leadership Response

The DSL or senior leader will:

- Coordinate a full search of the school site.
 - Review CCTV if available.
 - Check perimeter gates and exits.
 - Decide whether to contact the police (usually if the child cannot be located within 20 minutes or if there is immediate concern for safety).
 - Record all actions taken.
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6. Communication and Recording

All staff involved must:

- Record times, actions, and who was informed.
- Note where the child was last seen and by whom.
- Log the incident on the school's safeguarding system (CPOMS).

Parents must be informed once the child is found.

7. When the Child Is Found

- Ensure the child is safe and unharmed.
- Provide reassurance and support.
- Establish the reason for the absence.

- DSL to decide whether further safeguarding action is required.
 - Review procedures if needed.
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8. Review of the Incident

Senior leadership and the DSL will:

- Evaluate whether procedures were followed correctly.
 - Identify any gaps in supervision or communication.
 - Update the policy if improvements are needed.
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9. Responsibilities

- **Class teachers:** Complete registers accurately and act immediately on missing pupils.
- **Support staff:** Assist with searches and provide information.
- **DSL:** Lead safeguarding response and escalation.
- **Senior leadership:** Oversee incident management and review.
- **Office staff:** Check sign-in/out logs and contact parents.