

MISSING CHILDREN

Children who go missing during the School day

1. Check register and class where the pupil should be.
2. Report at once to a member of the SLT.
3. Initiate an immediate search of the school site extending to and including the immediate environs of the school.
4. Do not chase after a pupil who is running away from the school, as this may make the situation worse. Every action must be taken to ensure the best possible safety and welfare of the pupil.
5. Notify parents/carers about what has happened using the emergency contact arrangements with a view to appropriately involving them in the recovery arrangements.
6. Alert the Police that a child is out of school/possibly at risk.

Quite often children who leave school in this way either make their way home or to other nearby relatives or friends' houses. Alert parents to this likelihood so that they can establish appropriate contacts. Arrange with parents for the school to be contacted immediately the child turns up or is discovered so that any searches can be called off and any alerts still in place cancelled including any to the Police.

It is not unusual for the Police, at this stage, to set up search arrangements or to be otherwise directly involved in locating the child unless a Police Officer should come across the child following the alert.

The age and abilities of the child will be a factor in this respect. Do not, therefore, expect or assume that because the Police have been told that they have taken over full responsibility and do no more. This will not be the case and if we act in this way we will leave ourselves open to serious criticism.

Should there be any evidence to suggest that the child has either not left the site of their 'own free will'; of abduction or other enticement or 'luring' the available details must be reported to the Police immediately the school is made aware of the incident. Such possible 'criminal' acts will result in a different Police response to the incident because in these circumstances there is a required protocol to be followed.

Contact with the Police should be maintained at regular intervals throughout the incident. Should the child not be found within a reasonable time, particularly by a time that, in any event, the child would normally have been expected to have arrived home, then further contact will be necessary with the Police to consider changing the nature of their response or to review the other 'recovery' arrangements in place.

School Decisions to send Children/Pupils Home During the Course of the School Day

Pupils will NEVER be sent out of school during the course of the school day alone. Pupils should only leave the site in accordance with one of the following arrangements:-

- i) The parent or other responsible adult, as determined by the parent, collects the pupil.
- ii) The pupil is taken home or, to another address, as determined by the parent, by two appropriate members of the school's staff.

If none of the arrangements (i) to (ii) are possible, the pupil must be retained in school until the normal end of the school day when s/he can return home in the usual way.

No child will be allowed home at any time to collect any missing work or forgotten equipment.

'Parents'* in this document is the legal definition that applies within education and includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who either has parental responsibility for or, who has the care of the child.

Children who go missing from School (Attendance)

There is general agreement that some children who have experienced certain life events are more at risk of going missing from education. These include:

- Young people who have committed offences;
- Children living in women's refuges;
- Children of homeless families perhaps living in temporary accommodation, house of multiple occupancy or Bed and Breakfast.;
- Young runaways;
- Children with long term medical or emotional problems;
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees or children of asylum seeking families;
- Looked after children;
- Children with a Traveller background;
- Young carers;
- Children from transient families;
- Children who are permanently excluded from school;
- Chronic truants;
- Children with a previous history of mobility leading to gaps in their education;
- Children who accompany their families on 'extended leave' vacations.

Children who are excluded from schools should not miss education. Pupils excluded for a fixed period return to their school at the end of their exclusion.

As absence is monitored extremely closely, the Designated Teachers and the Head Teacher should be made aware of any concerns by staff immediately. Eg. A child not returning from an agreed holiday.

Contact with the family should be attempted and if a reason cannot be established or contact is not made then the Designated Teacher would contact the Contact & Referral Team on 0191 4245010.

In the event of a parent informing the school that a child is moving to another educational establishment, a member of the office staff or the Head Teacher will speak to the receiving school, to ensure that this is the case. This allows for the discussion of the transfer of files etc., whilst also allowing us to check on the continuity of education and making sure there will be no gaps in the child's schooling.

Useful Contact Numbers

Ian Clennell, Safeguarding Officer -	07816579896
Graeme Littlewood, Community Safety Officer -	0191 4247935
Peter McCready, Police contact -	03456043043 x 69191
Northumbria Police Area Command -	0191 4547555