Thriveology Wellness CIC

Missing Learner Procedure.

September 2026

MISSING LEARNER PROCEDURE

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a clear, consistent, and immediate response when a learner (child, young person, or Post-16 participant) is missing, absent unexpectedly, or cannot be located during Thriveology activities. This includes alternative provision sessions, outreach work, off-site activities, community learning, and Post-16 workplace or life-skills placements.

This policy supports our safeguarding duties under KCSIE 2026, ensuring that any missing learner is located quickly and safely, and that appropriate agencies are informed without delay.

Scope

This procedure applies to:

- All children and young people attending Thriveology's alternative provision
- Learners supported through outreach programmes
- Post-16 learners attending workplace placements or life-skills sessions
- All Thriveology staff, volunteers, and external partners involved in learner supervision

Key Principles

- **Safeguarding First:** A missing learner is a safeguarding incident requiring immediate action.
- **No Delay:** Staff must act immediately—waiting to “see if they return” is not permitted.
- **Clear Communication:** All staff must follow the escalation pathway without deviation.
- **Accurate Recording:** All actions must be documented.
- **Multi-Agency Collaboration:** Thriveology will work with parents, schools, employers, and statutory agencies to ensure learner safety.

Definitions

A learner is considered **missing** when:

- They are not present at the expected time and location
- Their absence is unexplained or out of character
- They leave a session, building, or placement without permission
- They cannot be located during off-site activities
- They fail to arrive at a session and cannot be contacted
- They leave home or a placement and their whereabouts are unknown

Immediate Response Procedure

If a learner goes missing during a Thriveology session (on-site or off-site)

1. **Stop the session and conduct an immediate search** of the area, including toilets, outdoor spaces, and surrounding safe zones.
2. **Alert the Senior Leader/DSL immediately.**
3. **Check sign-in records** to confirm arrival and movement.
4. **Contact the learner's parent/carer** to establish whether they have returned home or made contact.
5. **Contact the referring school or social worker** if applicable.
6. **If the learner cannot be located within 10 minutes**, escalate to **Stage 2**.

Stage 2 – Escalation (within 10 minutes)

1. **DSL or Senior Leader conducts a coordinated search** of the wider area.
2. **Staff must not leave other learners unsupervised**—additional staff may be deployed.
3. **Check CCTV** (if available) and speak to nearby staff or community members.
4. **Attempt direct contact** with the learner via phone if appropriate and safe.
5. **If the learner remains missing after 20 minutes**, escalate to **Stage 3**.

Stage 3 – External Notification (within 20 minutes)

If the learner is still missing:

1. **Call the Police (999)** and report a missing child/young person.
2. Provide:
    - Learner's name, age, description
    - SEND needs or vulnerabilities
    - Last known location
    - Time missing
    - Any known risks (e.g., exploitation, self-harm, family concerns)
3. **Notify parents/carers** that the police have been contacted.
4. **Notify the referring school, social worker, or local authority**.
5. Continue searching until advised otherwise by police.

Missing Learner During Outreach Work

If a learner is missing during outreach support:

1. Follow the same immediate steps as above.
2. Inform the school immediately—schools retain statutory safeguarding responsibility.
3. If the learner is off-site with Thriveology staff, follow the full escalation procedure including contacting police.

Missing Post-16 Learner in Workplace or Life-Skills Placement

If a Post-16 learner is missing from a placement:

1. Employer contacts Thriveology immediately.
2. Thriveology attempts to contact the learner.
3. Contact parent/carer and social worker (if applicable).
4. If the learner is vulnerable or cannot be located within 20 minutes, **contact police**.
5. Review workplace risk assessments and adjust support as needed.

When the Learner is Found

When a missing learner is located:

1. Ensure their **immediate safety and wellbeing**.
2. Contact parents/carers and relevant agencies to confirm they are safe.
3. Provide emotional support and reassurance.
4. Conduct a **return-from-missing conversation**, covering:
    - Reason for leaving or absence
    - Any risks or concerns
    - Any safeguarding disclosures
    - Support needed going forward
5. Update risk assessments and support plans.

6. Record all actions taken.

Recording & Documentation

Staff must record:

- Time learner was identified as missing
- Actions taken and by whom
- Agencies contacted and times
- Outcome and time learner was found
- Any safeguarding concerns raised
- Updates to risk assessments

Records must be stored securely in line with Thriveology's Data Protection Policy.

Prevention Measures

Thriveology will:

- Maintain accurate sign-in/out records
- Conduct risk assessments for all off-site activities
- Ensure appropriate staffing ratios
- Provide clear boundaries and expectations to learners
- Support learners with SEND or SEMH needs who may be at higher risk

- Work closely with families and schools to identify patterns of absence or risk

Review of Incidents

All missing learner incidents will be reviewed by the DSL and Senior Leadership Team to:

- Identify lessons learned
- Improve procedures
- Update risk assessments
- Strengthen staff training

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by changes in legislation, KCSIE updates, or organisational practice.

Review Date: **September 2027**