



## Missing Person Policy September 2025 (to be reviewed annually)

### 1. Introduction

Reach for Inclusion provides education for three cohorts:

Foundation: Primary-aged learners accessing alternative provision via Local Authority or school referral.

Engage: Secondary-aged learners accessing alternative provision via Local Authority or school referral.

L.I.F.E: Post-16 learners placed by the Local Authority, all of whom have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) or other defined vulnerabilities.

All learners at Reach for Inclusion — *including those over 18* — are considered **vulnerable young people**, due to age, SEND status, their EHCPs, or placement within alternative provision. Safeguarding and missing-learner procedures therefore apply to all learners regardless of age or placement pathway.

This policy outlines the procedures where:

1. A learner is missing during the school/centre day, and
2. A learner fails to attend (Children Missing Education – CME).

This policy must be read alongside:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025*
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*
- *Children Missing Education 2016*
- *SEND Code of Practice*
- Local Authority Safeguarding Partnership Procedures
- Reach for inclusion Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

### 2. Definitions

#### 2.1 Missing Learner (During the Day)

A learner is considered missing when:

- Their whereabouts cannot be established;
- Attempts to contact or locate them have failed; and
- There is a risk of harm, the absence is out of character, or circumstances suggest danger.

#### 2.2 Children Missing Education (CME)

A learner is considered CME where they:

- Fail to arrive on site for morning registration,
- No valid explanation has been provided, and
- Efforts to confirm their safety have been unsuccessful.

This applies to all Foundation, Engage and L.I.F.E learners.

### 3. Risk Indicators

A learner must be considered high risk and parents/carers and / or police contacted (999) if any apply:

- SEND, disability, EHCP
- Primary-aged vulnerability (Foundation learners)



- Early Help / CIN / CP / LAC status
- Criminal or sexual exploitation risk
- Mental health vulnerabilities
- Missing episodes history
- Unsafe or abusive home circumstances
- Medical needs or essential medication
- Bullying, distress or escalated behaviour prior to disappearance
- Risks related to forced marriage, FGM or honour-based abuse
- Unsafe adults/peer association
- Sudden or unexplained change in behaviour

Where risk is unclear, staff must act with a presumption of vulnerability.

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

##### All Staff

- Monitor learner whereabouts
- report immediately if a learner cannot be located
- Support search procedures

##### Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Leads response and risk assessment
- Contacts parents/carers within 15 minutes
- Notifies referring school (Foundation/Engage learners)
- Notifies LA for L.I.F.E learners as appropriate
- Contacts police within required timeframes
- Records all actions and outcomes
- Liaises with external agencies

##### Local Authority

- Must be informed of significant safeguarding concerns
- Must deliver a Return Home Interview (children) within 72 hours
- Provide CME oversight

#### **5. Procedure: Missing During the Day**

##### 5.1 Immediate Actions

When a learner is identified as missing:

1. Staff must alert the DSL immediately.
2. Conduct an urgent internal search, including:
  - o Teaching rooms
  - o Toilets
  - o Communal areas
  - o Outdoor areas
  - o Any area linked to timetable or known safe spaces
3. Attempt to phone the learner (where applicable).
4. Speak with peers and last known contact.

High-risk indicators override extended searching — emergency services must not be delayed.

##### 5.2 Contacting Parents/Carers

Within 15 minutes, the DSL or deputy will contact:



- The parent/carer of Foundation and Engage learners
- The parent/carer or named emergency contact of L.I.F.E learners

For learners aged 18+, the centre will follow Mental Capacity Act guidance:

- Contact emergency/parental contacts unless the learner has capacity *and* has explicitly declined such contact on enrolment, except where serious harm is likely.

The referring school/SEN Case Officer must be informed for Foundation and Engage learners.

### 5.3 Contacting the Police

The DSL must contact police:

- Within 30 minutes if no positive location can be established
- Sooner if professional judgment indicates escalating risk

Police will be provided:

- Full name, DOB, cohort (Foundation/Engage/L.I.F.E)
- SEND/EHCP status and vulnerabilities
- Last known location
- Description and clothing
- Mobile number (if applicable)
- Relevant safeguarding history
- Photo (where available)
- Known friends/associates
- Information from parents/carers or school

The centre will follow police direction throughout.

### 5.4 When the Learner is Found

If the learner returns before police arrive:

- DSL notifies police
- Welfare check completed
- Parents/carers informed
- Risk assessment updated

If police return the learner:

- Police complete Safe and Well Check
- Centre follows safeguarding and recording procedures

The Local Authority will be informed where appropriate (LAC, CIN, CP, EHCP, or high-risk L.I.F.E learners).

## **6. Children Missing Education (CME) Procedure**

Applies to all learners in Foundation, Engage and L.I.F.E.

### 6.1 First 20–30 Minutes After Failed Attendance

- Contact parents/carers/emergency contacts
- Attempts recorded
- DSL alerted if contact cannot be made
- Referring school notified for Foundation/Engage learners

### 6.2 After 60 Minutes

- DSL conducts risk assessment
- Consider police contact based on vulnerabilities
- LA may be contacted for welfare checks or home visits



### 6.3 Safeguarding Threshold

If a learner cannot be contacted and concerns for welfare exist:

- DSL makes a safeguarding referral
- LA SEND team notified (if L.I.F.E learner with EHCP)
- Police contacted where risk warrants it

All actions are recorded chronologically.

### **7. Off-Site Activities, Transport & Work-Based Learning**

For any off-site session (Foundation, Engage or L.I.F.E):

- Staff must maintain accurate registers
- Missing learner must be reported to the DSL immediately
- The full missing-learner procedure applies

### **8. Recording, Review and Follow-Up**

- DSL ensures all actions are recorded in order
- A multi-agency review is held where required
- Learner risk assessment and support plans updated
- Pastoral check-in for learner on return
- LA completes a Return Home Interview for child learners (Foundation & Engage)

### **9. Learners with Known Missing Risks**

For learners across all cohorts with:

- Prior missing history
- Criminal or sexual exploitation risks
- Emotional dysregulation or distress
- Impulsivity or flight risk
- SEND complexities

A personalised Missing Risk Assessment & Management Plan will be created, including:

- Typical triggers
- Strategies to prevent absconding
- Contact instructions
- De-escalation and safety strategies
- Multi-agency commitments

### **10. Information Sharing**

Information will be shared under:

- GDPR 2018
- Data Protection Act 2018
- The “vital interests” safeguarding exemption
- KCSIE 2024 requirements

For L.I.F.E learners aged 18+, information may still be shared without consent where the learner is at risk of harm or where public protection duties apply.

| Policy              | Missing Person Policy |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Date created        | September 2023        |
| Date Reviewed       | September 2025        |
| Date of Next Review | September 2026        |
| Signed:             |                       |



|                  |            |
|------------------|------------|
| Siobhan Williams | S Williams |
| Jo Garner        | J. Garner  |