

## MISSING PUPIL POLICY

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<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Trust Safeguarding, Lead</b>



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## MISSING PUPIL POLICY

### 1 Introduction

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children missing education (CME) risk underachieving, being victims of abuse, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff in Ascent Academies' Trust have clear and well-communicated procedures in place for dealing with the unlikely event of a child going missing.

The most common reasons for children missing education include the following:

- Failing to be registered at a school at the age of five
  - Failing to make a successful transition
- Exclusion
  - Mid-year transfer of education provision
- Families moving into a new area

As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, we will make a judgement on a case-by-case basis. The following list indicates pupils who are most at risk of missing education:

- Pupils at risk of harm or neglect – where this is suspected, local child protection procedures will be followed; however, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children's social care (and the police if appropriate) as per our safeguarding procedures. The LA officers responsible for CME will check a referral has been made, and will contact children's social care if this is not the case. Should there be a reason to suspect a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the LA will contact the police
- Children of gypsy, Roma and traveller (GRT) families – when a GRT pupil leaves the school without naming their next destination school, the school will contact the LA. If necessary, the school will consult the Attendance and Prosecution Service for advice on the best strategies to ensure minimal disruption to the GRT pupil's education.
- Children of service personnel – the school will contact the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service for advice to ensure continuity of education for these children
  - Missing children/runaways – should the school suspect a child has gone missing/run away, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will consult the DfE for advice on missing children.
  - Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System – in this case, LA youth offending teams are responsible for supervising children (aged 8 to 18). Where a young person is registered at the school prior to custody, the school will keep the place open for their return.
  - Children who cease to attend – where the reason for a child who has stopped attending the school is not known/remains formally unconfirmed, the school and LA will investigate the situation.
  - Children of migrant families – there is an increased risk of a child missing education if they are part of a new migrant family who may not yet have settled into a fixed address, or may



have arrived into an LA area without the authority becoming aware. In this instance, the school will contact the LA to make them aware

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Trust policies, DFE guidance and with individual academy procedures as appropriate:

Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding Adults Policy

Attendance Policy

Educational Visit Policy

Pupil Collection and Late Collection Policy

Keeping children safe in education (September 2021)

This policy will be regularly reviewed and amendments made by the Trust Safeguarding Lead and then approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

This policy applies to the Trust and to all individual academies. This policy should be read by all staff and there should be regular reminders given to all staff during the year.

## **2 Definition**

For the purpose of this policy, a CME is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by an LA, and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere, including where parents have elected to home educate. This definition also includes children who are receiving an education, but one that is not suitable; this could include children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

## **3 Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of each Head of Academy to ensure that:

- All relevant staff are aware of this policy and those to which this policy refers
- Staff are aware of their responsibilities
- Staff know what is expected and the procedures to follow
- The procedures are reviewed in line with the policy review cycle.

Safeguarding pupils is everyone's responsibility and duty to report concerns at the earliest opportunity is essential (please refer to Child Protection and Safeguarding Adult policies and Keeping Children Safe in Education Document 2021). It is the responsibility of all staff to read the policy and act at all times according with the guidance.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure they provide correct and updated contact information on a timely basis and know the procedures for handover of their pupil at the beginning and end of sessions.

It is the responsibility of Trustees to ensure they are aware of the Trusts' procedures and to challenge/support the academies in the review of this policy and practice.

## **4 Procedures aimed at reducing risk of a missing pupil**

### Start of the day

- Ensure parents are fully aware of the need to report any absence expected or unexpected to the Academy where possible before the start of the school day
- Staff meet and greet on the door and record pupils' arrival
- Registers are completed on time by tutors and returned to the office, where academies use SIMS this will be done by the close of register
- Pupil absences are cross referenced against arrival records
- Follow up phone call and text to parents/carers of absent pupils by support or admin staff if the academy has not received confirmation of their absence (see attendance policy)
- Safeguarding lead informed of any vulnerable pupils' absence
- Further follow up using individual academy procedures referenced in the academy Attendance Policy and Appendix 1

### During lesson time

- Where pupils change groups or classes with some independence, staff mark class registers promptly and accurately every lesson and check with office where children are absent
- If pupils leave the classroom independently, teachers and support staff are responsible for ensuring their safety and their timely return
- Pupils must not be sent out of lessons for poor behaviour/being disregulated without supervision
- Teachers should risk assess whether individuals are safe to leave the room independently for a comfort break (toilet or calm space)

### Break times

- Staff are available on the playground before pupils arrive
- Staff supervise identified areas in playground
- Exit/entry doors are supervised by staff ensuring that doors are closed when the last pupil leaves the playground
- Staff meet pupils promptly to collect them after each break and register the group after lunch break

### During the day

- Staff ensure all magnetically locked doors close securely behind them
- Staff check pupils who are unsupervised and ensure that they are safe

### Collection

- Please refer to Pupil Collection and Late Collection Policy
- Pupils are supervised by Academy staff and handed over to adult responsible for taking them home
- Independent travellers to be signed out by staff member

### Visits

- Please refer to Educational Visit Policy
- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff/pupil ratios are provided when pupils leave the school premises, logged and agreed through Evolve and HoA
- Adequate communication contact (e.g. school mobile phone) and a list of pupils/groups to be taken on visits out of school and a visits form completed in office
- Staff know which pupils they are in charge of and keep them all within sight with regular head counts

### After school clubs

- Thorough risk assessment in place for all planned activities
- Register of pupils with contact numbers and details of how the pupils are to go home and who is collecting them.
- If a parent/carer does not come to collect their child staff must follow the appropriate procedure (Pupil Collection and Late Collection Policy)

## **5 Procedures in the event of a pupil going missing**

### In the event of a member of staff fearing that a pupil has gone missing while at school:

- Follow Missing Child Protocol Appendix 1
- Member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will calmly inform the nearest member of the SLT
- Staff will promptly but calmly undertake a thorough but quick search of the premises/area
- A thorough check of all exits to be made to make sure all gates/doors were locked/ bolted and there are no other ways a pupil could have left the academy. If something is discovered this needs to be drawn to the attention of the SLT immediately
- Staff will begin a search of the local outside area immediately on foot and in cars
- The safety and care of other pupils is paramount so the security of the academy and the number of staff remaining to supervise the other pupils in the school must be adequately maintained while the search continues
- For contact with parents and/or police refer to Missing Child Protocol Appendix 1

### In the event of a member of staff fearing that a pupil has gone missing while off school premises:

- **Visit Leader** must follow the risk assessment submitted to and approved by **Educational Visit Co-ordinator (EVC)** and Head of Academy (including



Ascent Academies' Trust CEO if the activity is a category 3 visit such as high risk visit or residential trip abroad)

- Please refer to Educational Visit Policy

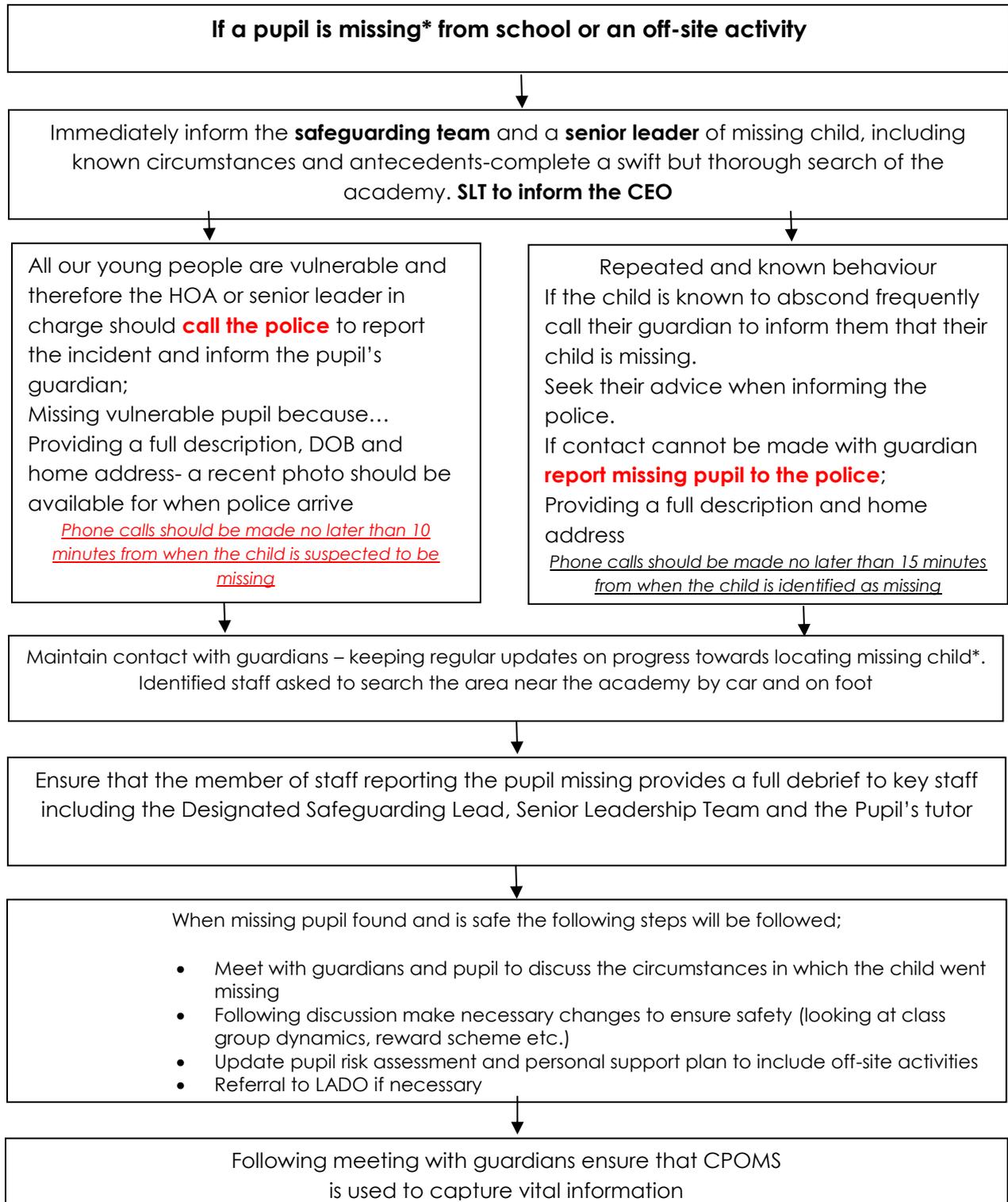
## **6 Investigations**

When a missing pupil has been located and safely returned to school or to their family, the Head of Academy will conduct an investigation into the circumstances of the pupil going missing. This is in order to identify any factors that need to be addressed by the academy or communicated to the parents to prevent a recurrence of the pupil going missing. The policy will be updated to reflect any learning from the situation and staff briefed appropriately.

Depending upon the outcomes of the investigation, there may need to be further action.

## Appendix 1

## Missing Child Protocol



\* Missing refers to a child that has taken themselves off the school site or away from an off-site activity, or has not arrived in school and should have done and cannot be found.