# MISSING CHILD PROCEDURE

2026/2027

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| *Date of last review:* | September 2026 |
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## Introduction
### Aims

Unified Academy is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our students. Their safety and welfare is of the utmost importance. All staff should be aware of their responsibilities regarding student safety, including what to do if a student goes missing from school supervision or when a 'collected student' is not collected from school by their designated person. This procedure sets out how we will respond in the event of either occurrence.

### Responsibilities

The Local governing body (LGB) will:

- Review and approve this procedure not less than annually.
- Monitor the implementation of this procedure as part of effective safeguarding within the school.

The Principal will:

- Ensure that this procedure is regularly reviewed and updated in line with government guidance and other best practice.
- Ensure all staff are aware of this procedure and understand what to do in the event of a missing student.
- Review any incidence of a missing student to ensure that the school takes forward any lessons learned and continues to operate best practice.

The Staff will:

- Ensure they are familiar with this procedure and adhere to all related policies and procedures, especially, but not exclusively, those relating to Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding, Risk Assessment, Health & Safety and Educational Visits.
- Ensure that attendance registers are completed accurately and promptly according to guidelines and returned to the attendance officer promptly.

Parents/carers will:

- Ensure that the school holds up to date contact information for at least three responsible adults, including named emergency contacts in the event that parents/carers are not available.
- Know the procedure for handover and collection of students where relevant, particularly where there may be safeguarding issues or concerns, including parental responsibility.
- Sign students out at the school office when collecting them during the school day.

## Missing Child

**Procedures aimed at reducing risk of a missing child**

Students attending Unified Academy cover all age ranges from 9 to 16 and have a variety of additional learning needs. Most students attend school using Local Authority (LA) transport, some are brought to and from school by parents/carers; a small number are independent travellers. Students also experience time in the community, attending a wide variety of work experience, personal development and learning opportunities.

This procedure sets out the process to be followed whenever Unified Academy staff suspect a student may be considered missing. Such situations might include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to arrive for a scheduled school day or session, whether on school premises or in the community.
- Absconding from a scheduled school day or session, whether on school premises or in the community.
- Becoming lost while out in the community e.g. through separation from school staff and peers.

Everyday measures that Unified Academy takes to safeguard students include:

- If a student is absent and no notification of absence has been received by the school, the attendance officer or member of the safeguarding team will contact the named contact/s on the student's file to ascertain their whereabouts as soon as possible/immediately following closure of the morning register.
- The school ensures parents/carers are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of the student passes from staff to them and vice versa.
- Clear procedures are in place for welcoming students into the school, including signing in and out.
- Teaching and support staff ensure that students go to the relevant classroom or appropriately allocated area for both am and pm tutor time.
- AM and PM registers are taken by the attendance officer who ensures that they are both prompt and accurate. Information on attendance is shared daily with the senior leadership team and Arbor is updated to ensure it is accessible to all staff.
- Staff ensure that they know the whereabouts of each student for every lesson.
- If students leave the classroom to work in other parts of the school, the class teacher ensures that a suitable level of supervision, as appropriate, is maintained at all times and that all students are accounted for on return to the classroom.
- Students who travel to and from school using LA transport are escorted by appropriate named staff onto their taxi. A formalised system of checking students onto their transport is in place.
- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff/student ratios are provided when students leave school premises for educational visits or learning outside the classroom, through the EVOLVE system.
- Where students do not have capacity to consent, permission from parents/carers for educational trips should be obtained generically at the beginning of each academic year and specifically for each trip where that visit is not covered in global permissions.
- Staff mobile telephones are taken on every visit and mobile contact numbers left at the school.

**Procedure to be followed in the event of a student going missing on or from the school premises**

In the event of a member of staff discovering or suspecting that a student has gone missing while at school:

1. If a teacher, TA or other key adult (for example, a member of the safeguarding team, pastoral team or member of staff delivering a therapeutic intervention) suspects that a student is missing from a lesson or activity, they must contact the nearest member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)and the Principal immediately. Following an assessment of the circumstances, a senior staff member will coordinate, where necessary, an initial search of the building, including classrooms, toilets, storage areas, communal areas, resource rooms, outside areas and school grounds.

2. The following lists should be held in the school office by the attendance officer and/or electronically and will be checked:
    a. Attendance registers
    b. Emergency evacuation register (updated daily)
    c. Off-site record (trips and visits)
    d. The Inventry system
    e. Lists of those attending other provisions (e.g. alternative learning provision, work placements )

## ABSCONDING PROCEEDURES

In the event of a student looking to abscond from site, staff should follow procedure detailed below:

- Make every effort to persuade the student (s) to return to school using behaviour policy strategies and reference individual personal behaviour support plans and individual risk assessments.
- If appropriate and safe to do so, escort students to a safe place. Radio for support from the pastoral team or member of SLT.
- Should a student depart from site, follow student if safe to do so, observing the student from a safe distance, keeping them in view. At this point, the member of staff must radio to inform reception and SLT, requesting support in necessary. At this point parents/carers will be informed by reception that their child has left the school site. They will be kept up to date about the situation by reception or a member of the safeguarding team and may be requested to try phoning their child to ensure contact.
- Wherever possible, the member of staff following should have the use of a school mobile phone to inform school of location although it may be necessary to use a personal device to contact the school.
- If safe to do so staff to follow the student to the boundary line (fig. 1) making it clear to the student when they have reached it (if possible). The staff member is then to return to school and the missing procedure continued to be followed.
- Reception staff to ensure that they have details collated including appearance and direction of travel.

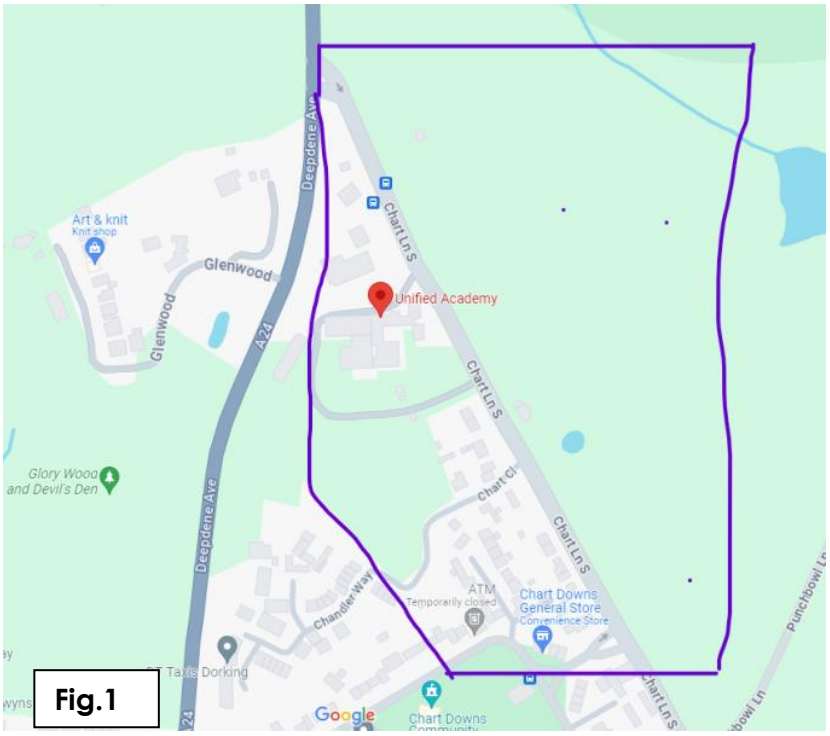


**Fig.1**

- If a student(s) goes out of sight for 10 minutes, or beyond the boundary line then this information will be shared with SLT and safeguarding team.

***At this point, Reception staff will pass the responsibility to the appropriate member of the safeguarding team – who will;***

**a)** Call parent/guardian.
**b)** Inform police
**c)** Any specific special medical or learning needs relating to the missing student should be disclosed to police or other agencies as appropriate.
**d)** Continue to keep family and Police informed of any developments.

- ***Members of staff will continue to look for students, where appropriate.***
- If a student returns to school, parents / carers and police will be informed.
- Incidents of absconding must be reported on the schools reporting system CPOMS.
- Any absconding behaviours will initiate a risk assessment review, and the place where they absconded will be assessed by the Site Manager and a member of SLT.
- Senior staff will speak to all staff members who have had contact with the student to establish preceding events.

**Additional procedures in the event of a student going missing while off school premises:**

The group leader will take charge and will refer to the existing risk assessment

1. Assess the situation;
2. Safeguard the other members of the group;
3. Seek for and then attend to the student(s) involved;
4. Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the incident (Senior staff, including the Principal and/or next most senior staff member, and Designated Safeguarding Lead must be contacted immediately).
5. Unified Academy will make arrangements to notify parents/carers

**Child Not Collected**

This procedure outlines what should happen when a 'collected student' i.e. one who is collected from school by a parent, carer or designated adult, is not collected. The guiding principle in dealing with any situation of this type must be to minimise distress to the student and for him or her to remain in familiar surroundings and/or with familiar people for as long as possible.

Unified Academy staff will ensure they are aware of all students who are collected by a parent, carer or designated adult, if they are not collected by LA transport and do not travel to and from school independently. The following general principles should be adhered to by all parties:

- Parents/carers who know they are going to be late must inform the main office in advance.
- On occasions when a student is due to be collected by someone other than their parent/carer or normally authorised person (e.g. when all of the above are unexpectedly unavailable), parents/carers must advise how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect the student. This will normally be through the home school link worker.

In the event of a 'collected student' not being collected at the end of the day, the following procedures will be activated:

**We undertake to look after the student safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care.**

- If a student is not collected promptly, and regardless, if that time exceeds twenty minutes, a member of staff will call the parent/carer or designated adult and use any other emergency contact details available in order to determine the nature and length of delay in collection. If contacts go to voicemail/ answerphone, staff members should leave messages giving their name and the school telephone number and requesting a prompt return call.
- While waiting to be collected, the student will be supervised by at least two member of

staff who will offer them as much support and reassurance as is necessary.

- Students awaiting collection will be taken to the school office or other designated space, where they will be supervised by members of staff.
- If a student has not been collected within the hour following agreed collection time, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be informed and a decision taken as to whether Social Services needs to be called.
- If all attempts within this period to contact a parent/carer, designated person or emergency contact fail then the DSL or other identified member of the safeguarding team should inform the Local Authority Social Services department of the situation without delay.
- The duty social worker will take ownership of the situation and decide what happens next, including whether the police need to be involved in helping to trace the parent/carer of the student.
- The student will not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on their profile on Arbor.
- Under normal circumstances, staff should look for the parent/carer or take the student home. In exceptional circumstances, if the parent/carer or responsible adult has been contacted but is unable, for a given and accepted reason, to come to the school, the school may escort the student home with that parent/carer or responsible adult's permission. Where this does occur, this should ordinarily happen with two staff members, one of whom is a senior member of staff.
- In the event that transporting the student somewhere is agreed to be necessary, staff should not transport students alone in their own cars and would where possible use a school vehicle. Senior staff may wish to consider using a taxi or mini-cab (approved licenced drivers only – existing school taxi companies). In this instance, one or two members of staff will accompany the student (always having at least 2 adults in the vehicle with the student). However, there may be exceptional circumstances (for example in an emergency) where solo accompaniment of the student by an appropriate staff member is necessary. In this instance, the staff member must ensure that a senior leader or line manager (ideally the Principal and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead) is made aware of the arrangement beforehand and can follow up accordingly.
- Continual incidents of late collection will be recorded and discussed with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity.

## Review of Missing Child

When the situation has been resolved, the Principal and SLT will review the reasons for the event happening and make any necessary amendments to School procedures.

A written record of any student who goes missing from School, the action taken and the reason given by the student for going missing will be held centrally by the safeguarding team via the CPOMs system.

When the situation has been resolved, the Principal and SLT will review the reasons for this event happening and revise measures to ensure that it does not happen again.

**APPENDIX A: Recording form for incidence of missing student**

School / Designated Safeguarding Lead _____ / _____

Name of student: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

_____

Tel no: _____

Name of parent/carer: _____

Date, time & location of disappearance:

_____

Who was responsible for caring for the student at the time he/she disappeared?

_____

What was the student wearing? _____

Any distinguishing features? _____

Circumstances surrounding disappearance:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Parent/carer contacted: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Police contacted: ☐ Yes ☐ No

What happens next?

_____

_____

Entered on CPOMs ☐ Yes ☐ No

Any injuries reported on SheAssure ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signed by registered person: _____ Date:

Signed by Principal/SLT: _____ Date:

**APPENDIX B: Recording form for incidence of student not collected by parent/carer**

School / Designated Safeguarding Lead _____ / _____

Name of student: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

_____

Tel no: _____

Name of parent/carer: _____

Date and time student should have been collected:

_____

Name of person who should have collected the student:

_____

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Contact made with parent/carer/emergency contact: (include relevant details) | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| Social Services contacted: | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |

What happens next?

_____

_____

_____

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Entered on CPOMs | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| Any injuries reported on Sheassure | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |

Completed by: _____ Date: _____

Signed by Designated Safeguarding Lead: _____ Date: _____

Signed by Principal/SLT: _____ Date: _____