Beachborough School

Missing Child Policy

Updated: September 2026

Date of next Review: September 2027

Policy Lead: Ms S J Lapper (Deputy Head Pastoral - DSL)

Reviewed by: Mrs S Mitchell (Head)

Introduction:

The welfare of all of our children at Beachborough School is our paramount responsibility. A child being absent from education, for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including abuse or neglect, child sexual and/or criminal exploitation and county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. This includes the importance of effective information sharing to ensure our children are safe and receiving suitable education. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child being absent in the future. The school recognises that children who are persistently absent, severely absent or who demonstrate patterns of unexplained absence may require additional safeguarding consideration and support. Attendance concerns will be considered alongside other safeguarding information when assessing risk.

The school recognises its responsibilities in relation to Children Missing Education (CME). Where a child has been absent from education and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will work with the local authority and other agencies as required by statutory guidance and local procedures.

The school recognises that some pupils may be more vulnerable if missing, including pupils with SEND, medical conditions, mental health needs, communication difficulties, previous missing episodes, child protection concerns or known safeguarding vulnerabilities. Response procedures may therefore be escalated according to individual risk.

Duty to Report:

The school monitors attendance of its pupils closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance. Where attendance becomes a concern, the school will work in partnership with pupils, parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies, where appropriate, to understand barriers to attendance and provide support at the earliest opportunity.

The school will make all required notifications to the local authority relating to attendance, children missing education and admissions register changes in accordance with current statutory guidance and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

For the purpose of this policy, the term 'missing' refers to a pupil being not present without authorisation or explanation.

On occasions when a staff member identifies a pupil as missing from their expected location, immediate action is required as outlined in the procedures below. Communications with parents and the appropriate services (particularly the police) are an integral part of the procedure and all instances of missing pupils will be reported to the Head so that appropriate investigations may be made. The Head will maintain and review a log of instances of missing pupils and will raise any concerns regarding pupils missing on repeat occasions to relevant agencies. The DSL will review incidents of unexplained absence, repeat missing episodes and attendance concerns where safeguarding risks may be present.

Beachborough School is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Further details are available in the school's Equal Opportunity Policy document.

Beachborough School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document.

Patterns of absence will be considered within the wider context of safeguarding and wellbeing. The school will consider whether repeated absence may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation, emotional wellbeing concerns or other safeguarding risks.

Procedures:

A. Child not attending registration (Unauthorised absence)

1. Registration check – Tutor /class teacher notes absence.
2. Immediate office check – Office staff confirm if absence is authorised, check trips / LAMDA / Music timetables.
3. Parent contact – Parents called within 10 minutes after registration closes to ascertain reason for absence.
4. Escalation – If no explanation, child marked as unauthorised, and parents / secondary contact are contacted again later in that day. DSL notified.
5. Continued absence – Follow attendance procedures, refer to LA if threshold met.

B. Child missing from a lesson (during the school day) – Appendix 2

1. Teacher identifies absence whilst taking register at the start of a lesson.
2. Teacher checks LAMDA, trips and Music timetables if possible.
3. Teacher asks other pupils if they know the child's whereabouts.
4. Teacher emails the office secretary@beachborough.com and ELT elt@beachborough.com
5. Office action
   - Check medical / emergency notes / sign out sheet
   - Double check LAMDA, Wellbeing centre, LZ, Music lessons, medical centre.
   - Check trips / fixture register
   - Contact last member of staff who taught the pupil

Where a safeguarding concern exists, or where the child's absence is unexplained, the DSL (or Deputy DSL) must be informed immediately and involved in decision-making regarding further safeguarding action.

6. Escalation if still missing – Incident logged by the office, staff switch to channel two on walkie talkies
7. Missing child email / teams notice sent to all staff
8. Site search by ELT, PSAs and all available staff
9. If still not found, sound fire alarm
10. Search local roads
11. If still not found, call parents and then police.
12. Chair of Governors informed.

Where there is reason to believe a child may be at immediate risk of harm, abduction, exploitation, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, self-harm, mental health crisis or any other significant safeguarding concern, the police will be contacted without delay and the DSL informed immediately.

Procedure for a Missing Pupil from Early Years:

- The teacher in charge will calmly inform a member of the SLT and the office staff.
- The office staff open a written record of the incident which will log all specific actions taken.
- The remaining pupils will be gathered together into one group, for an activity and with a designated member of staff.
- The pupils will be sensitively asked by the class teacher whether they have seen the pupil who is missing, as will all adults who were with the child, so that it can be established who was last to see the missing child, when and where.

- The teacher in charge of the class or a member of SLT will then carry out a thorough search of all the rooms in the immediate vicinity and the outside perimeter of the school
- A register will be taken of the remaining pupils in the class and sent immediately to the office.
- The remaining available staff will then search for the missing pupil.
- Doors and gates are checked to see if there has been a breach of security whereby a pupil could wander out.
- All teaching staff available should be notified and assist in the search.
- Send a 'missing' notice by email to all staff with the name of the pupil, date and time of first noted absence.
- The Head (or delegated senior leader) will ensure that parents are informed without undue delay and that police involvement is sought immediately where appropriate based on risk assessment and safeguarding considerations.

<u>If the pupil is found, or the incident is otherwise resolved</u>:

- The Head and parents of the missing pupil will be directly informed by the school office.
- The Police and Chair of Governors will be informed if they have been involved.
- A notice cancelling the emergency situation will be posted on the Staff Room Notice Board and an email sent to all relevant staff.
- The written log kept by the school office will be signed off.
- The Head will initiate a full inquiry and provide a written report for the Chair of Governors. This report and the incident log will be kept on the pupil's file. Incident records will be retained and stored securely in accordance with the school's Safeguarding, Data Protection and Records Retention policies. Records will include the chronology of events, actions taken, decisions made, individuals involved, communications with parents and external agencies, outcomes and any lessons learned.
- An outline report on missing pupil incidents will be made to the Local Governing Body at each of its meetings.

Actions to be followed by staff if a child goes missing on a trip / outing:

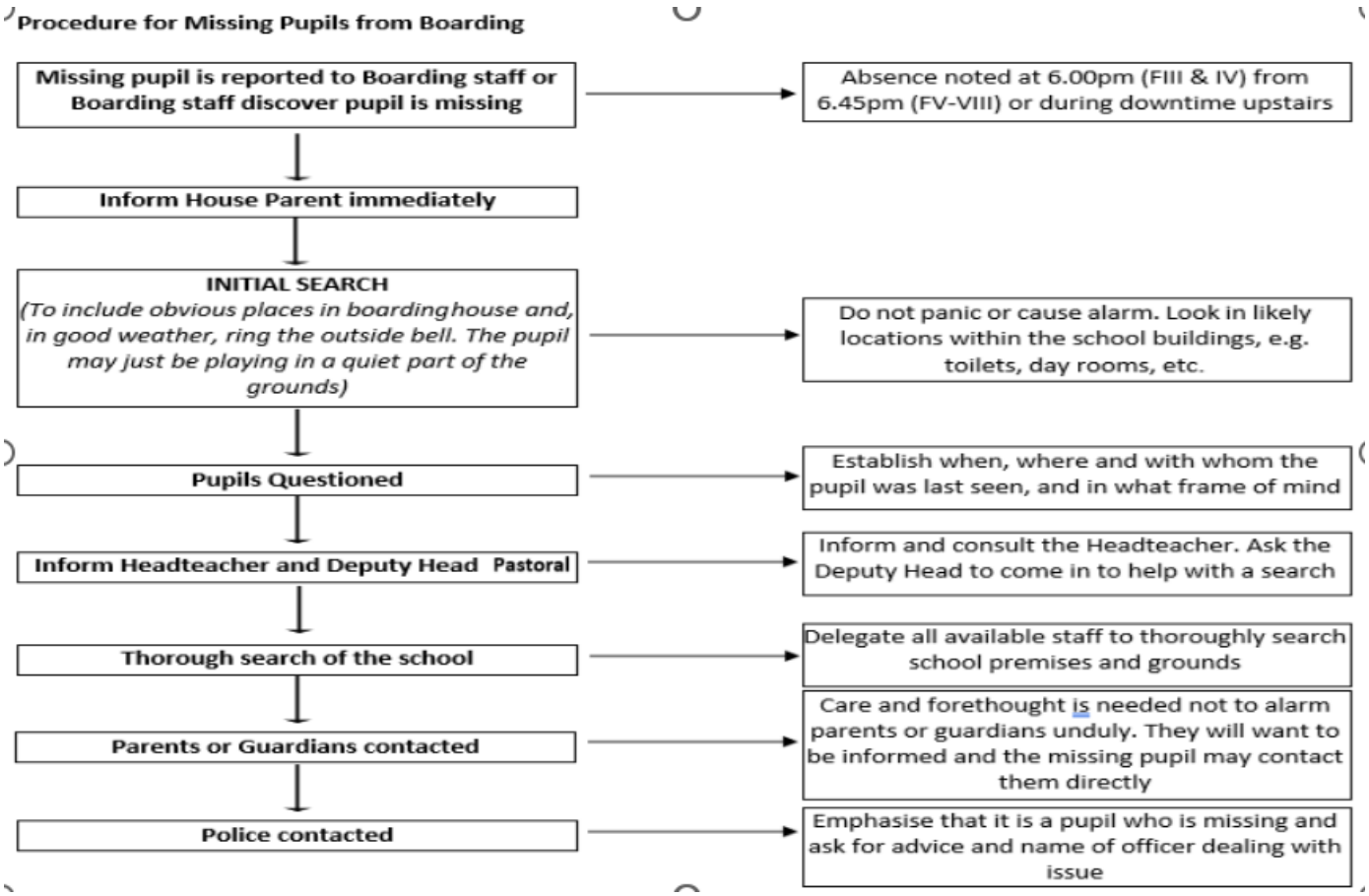
- An immediate head count would be carried out in order to ensure that all the other children were present
- An adult would search the immediate vicinity If the child is still missing, the following steps would be taken:
- The remaining children would continue to be supervised by appropriate staff
- The pupils would be taken back to school if deemed appropriate or necessary
- Inform the Head or Head of Boardman by mobile phone
- Contact the venue Manager and arrange an 'active search'
- Designated Safeguarding Lead to be informed
- On the result of the 'Active Search' being negative:
- The trip leader will assess risk immediately and, where the child cannot be located promptly or there are safeguarding concerns, contact the police without delay and notify the school and DSL.
- A senior member of staff would then telephone the child's parents and explain what has happened, and what steps have been set in motion. Ask them to come to the venue or Beachborough School
- Efforts would continue at the site to locate the child until found or until all reasonable expectation of finding the child has been exhausted and the matter is in the hands of the police
- A full record of all activities taken up to the stage at which the child was found would be made for the incident report. If appropriate, procedures would be adjusted.

After the Incident:

- The Head will discuss with the child's parents the events surrounding the disappearance of the child.
- The Head will carry out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff present at the time.
- The incident report will detail:
  1. The date and time of the report

2. What staff/children were in the group/class
3. When the child was last seen in the group/class
4. What has taken place in the group/class house since then and what the time it is estimated that the child went missing.

- A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened and, if appropriate, procedures (including risk assessments and training) may be updated.
- Any notification to ISI, Ofsted or other relevant regulatory bodies will be made in accordance with current EYFS statutory requirements and regulatory expectations at the time of the incident
- Following any significant missing child incident, the DSL and Head will review the circumstances, identify lessons learned and consider whether changes are required to supervision arrangements, risk assessments, staff training or safeguarding procedures.



Dealing with children not collected from school at the end of the school day or school activity:

Beachborough school recognises that it has a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils and that this duty extends to having arrangements in place for dealing with children not collected from school at the end of the school day or school activity.

The school will endeavour to keep contact details of parents on iSAMS up to date by reminding parents of the need to notify the school of any changes to this information. The school agrees to care for a pupil who has not been collected in the school's front hall/reception area until such time as the pupil is collected by a parent/guardian, or appropriate alternative arrangements are made to ensure the pupils safety.

In line with NMS 11.2. Boarders know on which nights they are boarding and who is picking them up the next day. If this changes the Houseparent's will inform them. The school will make arrangements, with parents and carers, which

are clear about who is responsible for the collection and transport of boarders (including arrangements for international pupils) at the start and end of the school term and where there is any temporary absence from school.

The School's DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) will keep a record of incidents where parents do not collect a pupil from school, are late in doing so, (for no good reason) or where this is a repeat occurrence. Any pupil welfare concerns arising out of such incident (s) will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

In all cases, school should discuss with the parent (s)/guardian(s) at the earliest opportunity in order to address the issues and prevent any further incident.

Procedure:

In the event of a pupil not collected by a parent or guardian, this will be brought to the attention of the Head of the Boardman or the Deputy Head Pastoral who will then make every effort to contact the parent or guardian or named alternative contact as per the pupils contact details on iSAMS. The Deputy Head Pastoral will be notified if all forms of contact are unreachable.

If the pupil has not been collected and no contact has been made with the pupils' parent(s) or guardian(s) by 7.15pm the child will go to the boarding house and be supervised by the boarding staff whilst the member of ELT on duty will consult with the Head, before contacting the police and providing the following information:

Brief circumstances of the incident:

- Pupil's details
- Name(s)
- DoB
- Address
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Language spoken
- SEN/behavioural difficulties/medical needs

Parent/Guardian details:

- Name (s)
- Address(s)
- Home/work/mobile telephone number(s)

Other:

- Any current or previous child protection concerns
- Any previous incidents of not being collected from school

The DSL will also consider whether referral to Children's Social Care is required where there are safeguarding concerns regarding the child's welfare, supervision or care arrangements.

Major Incidents:

If an incident occurs that results in a large number of pupils not being collected, it may be necessary to accommodate the pupils in the boarding House or another suitable space until an appropriate adult/guardian/contact is located.

This policy applies across the whole school including Boarding and EYFS and will be reviewed and updated regularly. *Linked Policies and read in conjunction with:* *Attendance, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour, Equal Opportunities and Boarding.*

Appendix 2: **Missing Child Flow Chart – Missing during school day**

Teacher identifies absence whilst taking register at the start of a lesson.



Teacher checks LAMDA, trips and Music timetables if possible.



Teacher asks other pupils if they know the child's whereabouts.



Teacher emails the office secretary@beachborough.com and ELT elt@beachborough.com



Office action

- Check medical / emergency notes / sign out sheet
- Double check LAMDA, Wellbeing centre, LZ, Music lessons, medical centre.
- Check trips / fixture register
- Contact last member of staff who taught the pupil



Escalation if still missing – Incident logged by the office, staff switch to channel two on walkie talkies



Missing child email / teams notice sent to all staff



Site search by ELT, PSAs and all available staff
If still not found, sound fire alarm



Search local roads



If still not found, call parents and then police.



Chair of Governors informed.