



Children Missing Policy

The Odyssey Hub Ltd

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff and volunteers respond promptly and effectively when a child or young person goes missing from The Odyssey Hub Ltd's provision, including off-site activities.

This policy aims to:

- Safeguard learners from harm
 - Ensure a consistent and coordinated response
 - Comply with statutory guidance and local safeguarding arrangements
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2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All children and young people attending The Odyssey Hub Ltd programmes
 - All staff, volunteers, and contractors
 - All off-site activities, including trips, transport, and external venues
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3. Definition

A child is considered missing when they:

- Leave a venue without permission
 - Fail to return from a supervised activity or break
 - Cannot be located within a reasonable timeframe despite attempts to account for their whereabouts
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4. Responsibilities

Staff and volunteers are responsible for:

- Ensuring children are supervised at all times
- Following this policy immediately if a child is unaccounted for
- Reporting incidents to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or senior staff

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / Lead staff:

- Coordinates the response
- Contacts parents / carers and authorities as required
- Documents the incident fully



5. Procedures for When a Child Goes Missing

5.1 Immediate Actions

1. Check the immediate area thoroughly.
2. Inform colleagues and the DSL immediately.
3. Account for all other children to ensure no further risk.
4. Search the premises and nearby areas (if safe to do so).

5.2 Reporting

- Contact the child's parent / carer immediately to inform them of the situation.
- If the child cannot be located within a reasonable time or is at immediate risk, contact the police without delay (999 if urgent).
- Notify the commissioning partner or school, as required by the safeguarding agreement.

5.3 Supporting Staff and Learners

- Remaining learners should be supervised and supported while the incident is addressed.
- Staff involved should have support and debriefing after the incident.

6. Recording & Documentation

- All incidents must be recorded in writing using the Child Missing Incident Report Form.
- Record should include:
 - Child's name, age, and contact details
 - Time and location child was last seen
 - Staff present and immediate actions taken
 - Searches conducted and outcomes
 - Notifications made (parents, police, partners)
 - Follow-up actions and review
- Records should be stored securely, in line with GDPR and safeguarding requirements.

7. Follow-Up & Review

- DSL and senior staff review each incident to determine causes and lessons learned.
- Any safeguarding concerns identified are reported immediately in line with the Safeguarding Policy.



- Adjustments to procedures or supervision levels are implemented as required to prevent recurrence.
 - All incidents are reviewed during staff supervision and training sessions.
 - Reviews will specifically consider whether the missing incident indicates increased vulnerability to exploitation, criminal activity, or radicalisation.
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8. Prevention Measures

To reduce the risk of children going missing:

- Maintain appropriate staff-to-child ratios at all times
- Conduct risk assessments for all venues, trips, and off-site activities
- Ensure delivery staff review relevant student records and risk information in advance of planning activities, including any known history of absconding, boundary-seeking behaviour, or increased vulnerability
- Ensure clear arrival, departure, and sign-in/out procedures
- Train staff in supervision, safeguarding, and missing child procedures

8.1 Risk Reduction: Exploitation and Radicalisation

The organisation recognises that children who go missing may be at increased risk of harm, including child sexual exploitation (CSE), child criminal exploitation (CCE), and radicalisation.

To reduce these risks, staff are trained to recognise indicators of exploitation and radicalisation and to respond in line with the Safeguarding and Prevent policies. Any concerns identified during or following a missing episode are treated as safeguarding concerns and escalated immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), with referrals made to appropriate agencies where required.

9. References

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2023)
 - Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership Procedures
 - This policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding Policy, Prevent Training, and Risk Assessment procedures.
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Organisation: The Odyssey Hub

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Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Alexandra Mery
