



Longacre School Missing Child Policy

This policy includes the Early Years Foundation Stage

Policy Reviewed: September 2024

Policy to be reviewed: September 2025

The welfare of all of our children at Longacre School is our paramount responsibility. 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. Where staff have concerns that a child is missing from school, this policy should be followed.

Every member of our staff who works with children has read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. All staff are made aware of indicators, which may signal that children are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from school.

Our staffing ratios are generous and are deliberately designed to ensure that every child is supervised the whole time that he or she is in our care.

This policy was drawn up having had regard to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and Department for Education guidance Children Missing Education (August 2024).

All Longacre School pupils are registered before school starts in the mornings. Registration is taken again after lunch for all pupils. A list of absentees is held on the school's database.

Therefore, 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 a missing pupil must be reported to the Head in the first instance and then a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the appropriate investigations made.

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including those in our EYFS setting. Longacre 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 Opportunities Policy document.

Longacre School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document. This document should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy.

Procedure

A pupil may be identified as missing:

- After an absence at morning registration is not confirmed by the office staff's contact with home.
- By comparing pupils in a class with the day's absence sheet on the school database.
- On reconciliation with the afternoon registration.
- By a report of a missing child by a fellow pupil.
- By head counting on an educational visit.

Try to establish why the child may be absent – check with children in the class:

- Was the child in registration?
- Is the child in the toilet? Send a pupil to check.
- Is the child at a music/drama/Learning Support lesson?
- Was the child sent to the office unwell?
- Do they know where the child may be?

If not:

- **ALERT THE OFFICE FIRST** to check:
- Is the pupil temporarily absent? (Dentist etc.) If not:
- Check with Form teacher on movements when last seen.
- Consider emotional problems and state of mind?
- **Notify Assistant Head (Pastoral)**
- Use any available staff to assist with search.
- One member of staff should stay in the office to co-ordinate.
- All other staff take mobiles or walkie-talkie and search: (NB Not all mobiles have coverage).

Areas to Check:

- Pre-Prep Buildings: toilets, cupboards, under tables, role play areas.
- Palmer Hall: changing rooms, toilets, locker rooms, staff areas, storage cupboards
- Playgrounds including shed, area behind the hall, astro turf, woodland including behind Jubilee Block
- Porta Cabins: large storage cupboards.
- Founders Building: including science lab, art Studio, cupboards, computer suite, toilets, science and art storage rooms.
- Old hall, toilets, large cupboards.
- Quad: stairs by Founders building, out of bounds areas.
- Grounds: Playing fields, trees, path by back gate, back drive, car parks, AstroTurf
- Other Buildings: yurt, green team shed, nearly new uniform store and the bear hut.

If not found: **notify the Head** and search

- Site around the schools immediate location

If still not found after 15 – 20 minutes:

- Call parents
- Call police **999**

After the Incident

- The senior member of staff involved will sensitively 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 since then and 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.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should inform the Assistant Head (Pastoral) if a pupil is absent on repeated occasions to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent any future risk of their going missing in the future.

The School Office will always telephone a parent to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil that has not arrived at school.

Schools responsibility for reporting absences to authorities

- The school must notify their local authority when they remove or add a pupil's name to the admissions register at non-standard transitions.
- If a pupil does not return within 10 days after authorised leave of 10 school days or more, or after 20 school days unauthorised absence the school and the local authority have to have jointly made reasonable enquiries as to the pupil's whereabouts and failed before a pupil can be deleted from the register.