



# Missing Child/Absconsion Policy

## Engage MAT

**Date of ratification: February 2018.....**

**Date of review: February 2019.....**



## **Missing Child Policy**

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### **Policy Statement**

The safety and security of the children in our care at the Engage Trust is paramount. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all staff and we ensure that all of our pupils are accounted for at all times when they are in our care.

As per government guidelines these times include their journeys to and from school, during school visits/ trips and during any residential opportunities. As part of our safeguarding procedures, our staff are vigilant, around recognising absconsion and taking timely action.

This policy includes absconsion from taxis to or from school, during the school day, and during school visits.

### **Procedures**

All pupils on arrival at school is registered first thing in the morning in their form room by their Key Worker/ Form tutor within the time frame of that school base. All schools will have registered pupils by 9.30am.

Staff maintain the appropriate high level of supervision throughout every session and are aware of the location of the pupils in their care at all times, including during break and lunchtime. The register is taken again every afternoon.

When on offsite school excursions/trips/visit, staff implement strategies to maximise the safety and security of the pupils in accordance with the school's trips policy. Full risk assessments are carried out. A register of all the students is carried by the trip leader which will include names, contact details and any medical requirements. The pupils are split into small groups according to the appropriate staff/student ratios for the age of the pupils and the purpose of the trip or activity. Each group is managed by a separate member of staff. The number of pupils is checked regularly by frequent roll calls.

In the unlikely event that a pupil has absconded from site, a trip, or from a taxi or other transport to or from school, the following procedure will be adhered to;

### **Procedure to be followed in the event of a missing child**

1. Try to maintain visual contact with the child and go to step 3. If this is not possible, establish when pupil was last seen – time, place, clothing, by whom. This may include questioning pupils and any others who may be present.
2. Based on this information, one or more members of staff will investigate last known whereabouts. Other staff to stay with remaining students. At least one other member of

## Missing Child Policy

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staff will search the immediate vicinity or school grounds, going to places at which the pupil was last seen and tracing the routes that they may have taken.

3. If staff are able to speak to the pupil, the member of staff must encourage the pupil to return to school, taxi or the meeting place on the trip. If the pupil does not return as instructed, the member of staff should take all reasonable action to keep eyes on the pupil, including following the pupil to ensure that they are safe. The member of staff should have a mobile phone so that they can contact the base to request assistance from other staff and to get up-to-date information about the current risk assessment for the pupil. The base must contact parent/carer at this point and notify them that the pupil has absconded and provide the latest information about the whereabouts of the pupil, requesting assistance from the parent/carer as appropriate. It may be necessary to inform the police using 101 at this point if it proves difficult to maintain visual contact with the pupil.

When the pupil returns to the base, provide counselling if necessary and establish what happened. Inform other agencies as appropriate.

Other staff with the remaining group of students must keep them calm and continue with activity if appropriate.

4. If pupil is not easily found after a 10 minute window, or visual contact is lost with the pupil, the following process must be adhered to:

I. Contact Police on 101, ensuring that the police are notified of any safeguarding and risks concerns we have about the pupil.

II. Contact an XLT member or Assistant Lead at the base.

III. Phone the parent/carer and inform them of the situation. Notify parents that the police have been informed. Inform the social worker if the pupil is under child protection (S47) or child in need (S17).

IV. Ask the pupil's peers if they know of the whereabouts of the pupil.

V. Follow police guidelines and share information as required including contact details, photographs and any other information required.

VI. Obtain witness statements from all staff and pupils involved.

## **Missing Child Policy**

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5. When the situation has been resolved, the member of staff should complete a SIF detailing the incident. The senior DSL on the base will decide if a RoC needs to be completed about the incident based on the level of risk the pupil was placed in. The Head teacher and XLT will review the incident in full and a report issued, detailing any revision to guidelines. Individual risk management plans will be revised and dated with details of associated incident. These will then be signed by pupil, parent/ carer and member of XLT.

6. When the situation has been resolved, the Head teacher and XLT will review the reasons for this event happening and revise measures if necessary.