



MISSING CHILD (LEARNER) POLICY

**42 – 46 Harmer Street
Gravesend
Kent
DA12 2AX**

1. Procedures in the event of a learner going missing from school

In the event of a member of staff fearing that a learner has gone missing while at Pierview Academy:

The member/s of staff who noticed the missing learner will immediately check with colleagues around them and work in collaboration to locate the learner. They will use the radios to enquire of colleagues as to the whereabouts of the learner thought to be missing. Colleagues are expected to respond with confirmation that the learner has or has not been sighted in their area, and available staff are expected to respond immediately and provide physical assistance to locate the learner and support to return to school and to their day. The Headteacher and/or a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) will be aware of the situation and monitor it via the radio, adding support as required.

The member/s of staff who noticed the missing learner will promptly but calmly ensure the safety of other learners under their supervision, moving to a more suitable area if required. A member of staff will either: attempt an engagement activity to keep the remaining group occupied or, if deemed appropriate, learners will continue with their daily routines. Staff will then count and name-check all the learners present against the register while the group is assembled in one place.

At the same time all other available staff will conduct a thorough search of the premises / surrounding areas as previously set out, communicating via the radios to ensure full coverage.

A thorough check of all exits shall be made to ensure all doors were locked and there was no other way a learner could have left the school. If something of concern is discovered this needs to be drawn to the attention of the Headteacher/SMT immediately.

Available staff, communicating via radio, will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school,

If the learner has not been found after 10 minutes from the initial report of them as missing, parents/carers should be notified.

The member of staff reporting the learner as missing will need to write a description of what the learner was wearing and any distinguishing features. The school office will need to be ready to provide a recent photograph of the learner, asking parents/carers for one if necessary. If the missing learner has any special medical or learning needs then these need to be noted, to be disclosed to police or other agencies.

If when phoning the parents/carers they have had no contact from the child, the police will be contacted by the Admin Office by dialling 999.

The police will want to know:

- Where you are (address of setting/venue).
- The learner's next of kin.
- A detailed description of the learner, including age, sex, working down from head to toe including as much clothing description as possible.

- The circumstances of the incident, including anything that may have triggered the disappearance, how long have they been missing, where were they last seen.
- Details of who is looking for the child, where are they, whether they have a mobile with them (if out of radio range) and the number.

The incident should be relayed to other important agencies:

- Other relevant educational establishments, e.g. where they are on roll, if not with Pierview.
- The relevant Local Authority.

In the event of a serious incident that attracts media attention, the policy line to be taken by ALL staff is:

“At this moment in time I have no comment on the incident but refer you to the Executive Board, Thank you”.

When the learner is found, members of staff will care for and talk with the learner, bearing in mind that he/she may be unaware of having done anything wrong, and / or could be afraid and distressed and may now be in need of comfort before other support around their actions.

Other adults present will take the opportunity to speak to the remaining learners to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the premises and why.

After the incident the member of staff involved and Headteacher/SMT will sensitively discuss with the learner’s parents/carers the events surrounding their disappearance.

If appropriate, a short meeting will be held at the end of the session/start of the following session or a note sent home with the learners to provide parents/carers with brief, accurate information about the incident.

Liability should not be discussed until the incident has been fully investigated by the school.

Staff and parents/carers should be asked to refer any enquiries they have, or any enquiries from the media, about the incident to the Executive Board

The Investigation

The Headteacher is now to undertake a full investigation taking statements from all the staff present at the time – Appendix 2.

The key person/staff write an incident report detailing:

- the date and time of the report;
- which staff/learners were present
- when the learner was last seen.
- what had taken place in the group. Possible contributory factors.
- the time it is estimated that the learner went missing.

A conclusion is drawn as to how the incident happened and used to inform future best-practice and Risk Assessments.

2. Procedures for the event of a learner going missing on a school trip or visit.

If the event of a member of staff fearing that a learner has gone missing while off school premises on school trips or visits:

The relevant processes outlined above should be followed. In addition:

The trip leader must ensure the safety of the remaining learners.

That person will promptly but calmly round up all pupils to a pre-arranged area and a designated member of staff will attempt an engagement activity to keep the group busy or it may be deemed appropriate for learners to continue with their activity.

One or more adults should immediately start searching for the learner.

The information contained in every Risk Assessment should be followed.

Safety and Emergencies

It is important to continually reassess risks during a visit. This includes variable factors such as other people and changes in the weather, all of which need to be monitored.

Considered changes to the itinerary may introduce new hazards not covered in the original risk assessment. These should be with good reason, thought through by all staff present, risk assessed and the Headteacher or SMT contacted, beforehand, if guidance is required.

Regular briefings of staff and learners, reminding of expectations and head-counting of learners should take place, particularly before leaving a venue. Learners should do what they can to make themselves readily identifiable, whilst protecting their identity (safeguarding).

Emergency procedures for Pierview Academy staff, learners and volunteers undertaken in the event of an accident or situation specifically involving Pierview Academy.

The trip leader/organiser in discussion with other staff will be responsible for making decisions relating to the trip.

All learners will immediately return to their group leaders. Group leaders will count their groups.

If a member of a group is missing the group leader will immediately alert the trip leader/organiser that a learner is missing. A member of staff will then take control of the incident and locate the learner if in close proximity. If the learner is missing and cannot be found the school must be called.

In the event of an accident or other serious incident the school must be called. The school will ring any emergency telephone numbers they feel are appropriate. (If immediate attendance by the emergency services is required the staff on site will make this contact directly before then contacting the school.)

The police must then be called on 999. The school must be constantly kept informed of the situation. If hospitalisation is required TWO staff minimum must go in the ambulance. The school will notify parents with advice and support.

In the event of an accident happening whilst on a coach, train, car or other form of transport. Learners will collect in their groups, with their group leader, away from the accident. The above procedures are then followed.

Emergency procedures for Pierview Academy staff, learners and volunteers undertaken in the event of a major emergency or disaster.

In the event of a major emergency or disaster, the school-party will be placed under the jurisdiction of the emergency services co-ordinating the situation.

All learners will immediately return to their group leaders and be supported to remain calm and quiet whilst waiting further instruction. Group leaders will count their groups.

If a member of a group is missing the group leader will immediately alert the trip organiser/leader. A member of staff will then take control of the incident and locate the learner if in close proximity; liaising with the emergency services co-ordinating the situation as necessary.

All staff have a duty of care to make sure the learners are safe. They also have a common-law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Staff will not leave learners at any time.

The school must be contacted - the Headteacher/SMT or a member of the Executive Board.