

PIERVIEW ACADEMY

MISSING CHILD POLICY

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1. Policy Statement

Pierview Academy is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all pupils. We recognize that pupils may experience distress, sensory overload, or emotional dysregulation that could lead to absconding or going missing. All staff must act immediately and follow this policy to ensure pupil safety and welfare.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All teaching, therapeutic, support, and administrative staff at Pierview Academy.
- All enrolled pupils.
- Volunteers, external supervisors, and agency personnel during on-site and off-site activities.

3. Definitions

- **Missing Child / Learner:** A pupil whose whereabouts cannot be accounted for, who is unsupervised, or who has absconded from staff supervision.
- **SEMH Risk Profile:** The heightened vulnerability associated with emotional dysregulation, reduced impulse control, or co-occurring special educational needs.
- **SMT:** Senior Management Team.
- **DSL:** Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4. Procedure: Missing Child on School Premises

4.1 Immediate Actions (0–5 Minutes)

1. **Notify SMT & DSL:** The staff member noticing the absence must immediately inform SMT and the Designated Safeguarding Lead via direct radio contact or emergency escalation.
2. **Secure Remaining Pupils:** Staff will gather remaining pupils in a designated safe area, verify the register, and engage them in a low-arousal activity.
3. **Internal & Perimeter Search:** Available staff will coordinate via radio to perform a search of all internal rooms, quiet areas, toilets, external grounds, and secure site perimeters.
4. **Immediate Safeguarding Assessment:** The DSL or Headteacher will evaluate the child's vulnerability, current mental health state, and known triggers. **If high risk or immediate harm is identified, proceed directly to Police (999) contact.**

4.2 Notification & Escalation Protocols (At or Before 10 Minutes)

1. **Contact Parents/Carers:** If the learner is not located within **10 minutes** (or immediately if deemed high risk/vulnerable), the Admin Office or SMT will phone parents/carers.
2. **Contact Police (999):** If the child remains unaccounted for or is believed to be in danger, the Admin Office or SMT will dial 999 immediately.
3. **Information Required by Police:**
 - Full school name and site address.
 - Child's full name, age, physical description, and recent photograph.
 - Time last seen, direction of travel, and clothing worn.
 - Medical, SEND, and SEMH risk factors, including known triggers or coping behaviors.

- Contact details for staff conducting immediate localized searching.

4.3 Media and External Enquiries

In the event of media attention, staff must decline direct commentary and direct all queries using the official statement:

“At this moment, I have no comment. Please contact the Executive Board. Thank you.”

5. Procedure: When the Child is Found

- **De-escalation & Support:** Staff will approach the pupil using trauma-informed, low-arousal de-escalation strategies.
- **Notifications:** SMT, parents/carers, and the police (if notified) will be updated immediately.
- **Documentation:** The observing staff member must complete an Incident Report Form (Appendix A) before the end of the school day.

6. Post-Incident Procedures & Safeguarding Reviews

- **Debrief & Parent Engagement:** Following an incident, SMT and involved staff will meet with the pupil's parents/carers to review the timeline, debrief the event, and agree on initial follow-up support.
- **Internal Investigation & Risk Assessment Update:** The Headteacher and DSL will conduct a thorough review—analyzing staff statements, incident logs, and trigger factors. The pupil's Individual Risk Assessment and Positive Handling Plan (PHP) will be updated immediately to incorporate any new control measures or environmental adaptations.
- **Multi-Agency & CME Escalation:** Unexplained, repeated, or persistent missing/absconding episodes will be formally reported to the Local Authority Safeguarding Partnership, Children's Social Care, and the Children Missing Education (CME) officer in accordance with statutory guidance.
- **Persistent Absconding & Placement Reviews:**
 - Absconding poses a significant risk to pupil safety and constitutes a serious breach of the school's Behaviour Policy. While Pierview Academy utilizes trauma-informed, low-arousal strategies, persistent absconding may result in formal disciplinary sanctions, including temporary suspension, in line with DfE statutory guidance.
 - Where persistent absconding indicates that the school can no longer safely meet the pupil's needs—or that the risk to the pupil or school community is unmanageable despite all reasonable adjustments—Pierview Academy will urgently contact the Local Authority to convene an **Emergency EHCP Review** to formally assess the viability of the pupil's placement and explore alternative educational provision.

7. Procedure: Missing Child During Off-Site Visits

1. **Immediate Action:** The Trip Leader takes immediate command, halts group movement, conducts a headcount, and searches the immediate venue.

2. **Escalation:** If the pupil is not located within **5–10 minutes** (or immediately for high-risk pupils), the Trip Leader will dial **999** and inform Pierview Academy SMT.
3. **Emergency Medical Care:** In the event of an accident or hospital transport, a minimum of two staff members will accompany the child.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
All Staff	Maintain vigilance, supervision, immediate radio alerts, and low-arousal searching.
Headteacher / SMT	Overall incident command, parent escalation, police liaison, and post-incident investigation.
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Safeguarding risk evaluation and statutory local authority reporting.
Trip Leader	Directing off-site search operations and contacting emergency services.
Admin Office	Dialing 999, coordinating information packs and pupil photos.

Appendix A: Missing Child Incident Report Form

MISSING CHILD INCIDENT REPORT

To be completed and submitted to the Headteacher and DSL as soon as possible following an incident.

1. General Information

- **Date of Incident:** _____
- **Time of Incident:** _____
- **Location (On / Off Site):** _____
- **Name of Pupil:** _____
- **Age / Year Group:** _____
- **Staff Member(s) Responsible:** _____

2. Incident Description

- **Last Seen (Time, Location, By Whom):** _____
- **Circumstances / Triggers Leading to Disappearance:** _____
- **Clothing & Physical Appearance:** _____
- **Relevant SEMH / Medical / SEND Factors:** _____

3. Search & Escalation Actions

- **Search Conducted:** ☐ Internal Building ☐ External Grounds ☐ Surrounding Vicinity
- **Was Learner Located?** ☐ Yes ☐ No
 - *If Yes:* Time Found: _____ By Whom: _____
 - *If No:* Police Contacted (999)? ☐ Yes ☐ No (Time: _____)
- **Parents/Carers Contacted?** ☐ Yes ☐ No (Time: _____)

4. Post-Incident Actions

- **Pupil Emotional / Physical State:** _____
- **Follow-up Required:** ☐ Risk Assessment Review ☐ Safeguarding Escalation ☐ Staff Debrief ☐ Parent Meeting

Completed By: _____ **Role:** _____ **Date:** _____

Appendix B: Contact & Escalation Details

- **Pierview Academy Main Line:** 020 3026 9968
- **ALP Schools Executive Board:** 020 3137 3630
- **Emergency Services (Police / Ambulance):** 999
- **Police Non-Emergency:** 101
- **Kent Children's Social Care Front Door:** 03000 41 11 11
- **Nearest Emergency Department (A&E):** Darent Valley Hospital, Darenth Wood Road, Dartford, DA2 8DA (Tel: 01322 428100)