The Griffin Federation
Nurture to Flourish

Child Missing During the School Day Policy

1. Policy Statement

This policy sets out the procedures to be followed when a child's whereabouts become unknown during the school day. The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all pupils and recognises that a missing child is a potential indicator of risk of harm.
All staff must respond promptly, following the procedures in this document, to ensure the child is located quickly and safely.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Children Missing Education (CME) Procedures
- Behaviour policy
- Educational Visits Policy

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All pupils on roll
- All staff, volunteers, and visitors
- All school activities, including off-site visits and clubs

3. Definition of a Missing Child

A child is considered **missing** when:

- They were present earlier or expected to be present, **but their whereabouts cannot be established**, and
- The absence is **unexplained**, out of character, or raises concern for their safety or welfare.

This includes situations where:

- A pupil does not return from break or lunchtime
- A pupil leaves a lesson without permission
- A pupil is unaccounted for during transitions
- A pupil is missing during an off-site activity

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Head

- Ensures the policy is implemented and reviewed annually.
- Ensures staff are trained in missing child procedures.

Head of School

- Leads the response when a child is missing.
- Assesses risk and determines escalation to parents, police, or local authority.
- Records safeguarding actions and outcomes.

All Staff

- Maintain accurate registers.
- Supervise pupils appropriately.
- Act immediately if a child is missing.
- Follow the procedures in this policy.

Office/Administration Staff

- Support communication with parents and external agencies.
- Assist with checking attendance records and contact details.

5. Preventative Measures

The school reduces the risk of a child going missing by:

- Taking accurate registers at the start of the day and after lunch, and a note of taken of any missing children after transitions.
- Ensuring pupils are supervised during breaks, transitions, and off-site activities.
- Maintaining secure entry/exit points during the school day.
- Ensuring the school holds **at least two emergency contacts** for each pupil.
- Conducting risk assessments for pupils with known vulnerabilities (e.g., SEND, medical needs, history of absconding).

6. Procedure When a Child Is Discovered Missing

Step 1 — Immediate Checks (within minutes)

The staff member noticing the absence must:

- Confirm the last known location.
- Check with the class teacher, support staff, and peers.
- Search the immediate area, including toilets, corridors, and outdoor spaces.
- Inform the school office and SLT immediately.

- Office staff go to each classroom and notify them that we are initiating the child missing protocol all radios to channel 12.

Step 2 — Senior Leadership Response

The senior leader will:

- Coordinate a wider search of the school site.
- Check CCTV if available.
- Assess the level of risk, considering:
    - Age and developmental stage
    - SEND or medical needs
    - Emotional state
    - Known safeguarding concerns
    - History of going missing
    - Lock down the site – if gates are open and locking down not possible a member of staff must be stationed at both gates.

Step 3 — Contacting Parents/Carers

If the child is not located promptly:

- Parents/carers will be contacted by SLT to check whether the child has:
    - Returned home
    - Made contact
    - Given any explanation
    - Parents must be informed asap.

Step 4 — Escalation to Police (within 10 minutes of first reporting missing or immediately if known to have left the site)

The police will be contacted **without delay** if:

- The child cannot be located after an initial search, or
- The child is considered at **high risk**, or
- There is reason to believe the child has left the school site.

Information provided will include:

- Child's name, age, and description
- Last known location
- Any known risks or vulnerabilities
- Actions taken so far

Step 5 — Ongoing Communication

- Staff will continue searching until advised otherwise by SLT or police.
- All staff should set radios to channel 12
- Parents will be kept informed throughout by SLT

7. Procedure When the Child Is Found

When the child is located:

- Staff must ensure the child receives immediate reassurance and support.
- The SLT will conduct an **interview** with the child to determine:
    - Why the child went missing
    - Whether they were harmed or at risk
    - Whether further support or referrals are required
- Parents will be informed by SLT

- A risk assessment will be updated if necessary.

8. Off-Site Visits and Activities

If a child goes missing during an educational visit:

- The visit leader must initiate an immediate search of the area.
- Venue staff or security should be informed.
- One staff member must remain with the group while others search.
- The DSL and Headteacher must be contacted.
- Police and parents will be contacted by SLT if the child is not located promptly or risk is high.

9. Record Keeping

The school will maintain a detailed written record of:

- The incident
- Times and locations searched
- Staff involved
- Communications with parents and external agencies
- Decisions made and rationale
- Outcome and follow-up actions

10. Monitoring and Review

- The senior leadership team will review any missing child incidents to identify patterns or improvements needed.
- This policy will be reviewed annually or following a significant incident.