



Hatfield Wick Education – Missing Child Policy

Informed by CARES 360 and Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

1. Policy Statement

At Hatfield Wick Education (HWE), the safety and well-being of every student is paramount. We are committed to ensuring that children are protected from harm and feel secure within our care. This policy sets out procedures to be followed in the event a child goes missing, either from education or from the premises, and is fully aligned with:

- The values of the CARES 360 framework (Compassion, Autonomy, Respect, Empathy, and Support)
- Statutory guidance outlined in KCSIE (as amended)
- This policy also operates in line with statutory guidance relating to Children Missing Education and relevant Department for Education safeguarding guidance.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All pupils on the HWE roll, including those with SEMH needs
- All staff, including teaching, therapeutic, administrative, and support staff
- Visitors and volunteers who engage with pupils
- Pupils who are at risk of becoming Children Missing Education (CME) and supports statutory reporting duties where a pupil is removed from roll.

3. Principles Aligned to CARES 360

Compassion: Every incident is responded to with sensitivity and care.

Autonomy: Students are encouraged to develop responsibility and personal safety awareness.



Respect: Each child's individual needs and background are recognised and valued.

Empathy: Emotional needs and contextual factors are carefully considered.

Support: Timely, appropriate, and trauma-informed interventions are provided.

4. Definitions

A missing child is defined as:

- A pupil who is unaccounted for during the school day.
- A pupil who fails to arrive at school and no contact can be made with the parent/carer.
- A child who leaves the school site without permission.

5. Immediate Actions for On-Site Missing Child

- Raise the Alarm: Inform the DSL and Headteacher immediately.
- Search: Initiate a calm but swift search of the premises including classrooms, toilets, therapy rooms, and outdoor areas.
- Containment: Secure all exits. All staff on duty should maintain awareness and prevent further students leaving the site unsupervised.
- Check Sign-in Systems: Verify arrival/departure status and consult visitor logs and therapy timetables.
- Notify Parents/Carers: Inform them once internal searches have been conducted (within 10 minutes).
- Police Notification: If the child remains missing after 20 minutes, or sooner if deemed necessary based on risk assessment, contact the police. Where there is immediate risk of harm, police will be contacted without delay and before internal time thresholds.

6. Immediate Actions for Off-Site Missing Child

- Conduct a headcount immediately.
- Search the vicinity.
- Alert venue staff/security.
- Contact the DSL and police immediately.
- Inform parents/carers without delay.

7. Safeguarding Considerations (KCSIE Compliance)

All missing child incidents are treated as potential safeguarding concerns:

- The DSL will assess for signs of child exploitation, county lines, forced marriage, radicalisation, or home-based abuse.
- A Cause for Concern form will be completed and a safeguarding referral made where needed.
- If the child is on a Child Protection Plan, their social worker is notified immediately.
- Where required, the Local Authority will be notified in accordance with Children Missing Education procedures and statutory reporting duties.

8. After the Child is Found

- Ensure the child is physically well and offer emotional support in a non-punitive, trauma-informed way.
- A return conversation is conducted by a trusted adult to:
 - Understand reasons for absence or flight
 - Reassure and re-establish safety
 - Identify any unmet needs (mental health, bullying, home issues)
- The therapeutic team will support reintegration where necessary.

9. Preventive Measures

- Daily registration checks including morning and afternoon sessions.
- One Planning & Personal Risk Assessments for high-risk students.
- Enhanced supervision for students with SEMH or known vulnerabilities.
- Positive relationship-building to create trust and emotional safety.
- Mindfulness and self-regulation strategies taught through the CARES 360 curriculum.
- Preventive planning will take into account the needs of pupils with SEND or protected characteristics to ensure equitable safeguarding measures.

10. Monitoring and Review

- All incidents logged in the Safeguarding and Behaviour Management System.
- Information may be shared without consent where required to safeguard a child or comply with statutory duties.



- Termly analysis of trends reported to the Governing Body.
- This policy will be reviewed annually by the DSL and leadership team, or after a significant incident.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

- All Staff: Remain vigilant and respond according to this policy.
- DSL: Lead safeguarding response and liaise with external agencies.
- Headteacher: Ensure policy compliance and review after incidents.
- Parents/Carers: Ensure up-to-date contact details and communicate any concerns.

12. Related Policies

- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.
- Behaviour and Relationship Policy.
- Attendance and Absence Policy.
- Educational Visits Policy.
- CARES 360 Curriculum Implementation Plan.