



## Missing child and late collection procedures

### **Children missing during the school day**

Children who are absent, abscond or go missing during the school day are vulnerable and at potential risk of abuse or neglect. If a child goes during the day a flowchart summarising the actions to be taken can be found in **Appendix A**.

The **Schools and Safer Schools Officers reporting Protocol: Reporting children and young people as missing or absconded during the school day** shall be followed as detailed in **Appendix B**.

Once the child has returned to school the **Pupil/s Identified as Missing During School Day Incident Report Log (MA 1 – Appendix C**, a copy of the form can be found in the Policies folder on the Management drive) should be completed in order to ascertain the circumstances of why the pupil went missing and where they had been and what they had been involved with in the period of absence. All completed MA1 forms will be submitted electronically on a monthly basis during the first week of every calendar month to Sargent Nick Day email: [nicholas.day@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:nicholas.day@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk)

Appropriate support and intervention will be put in place to address any identified needs of the pupil concerned and care and control measures in place to prevent any further missing episodes.

### **Children going missing from school trips**

At Gateways children have rich and broad learning experiences. These often include using the wider school community or outings off the school premises. Careful measures are undertaken to ensure the safety of all children at all times.

The Procedure to be followed if a child goes missing:

- A register of pupils attending the activity or trip will be taken by the member of staff in charge;
- All other children and staff will be accounted for;
- One member of staff will search the immediate environment;
- The Head of Early Years/Head of Prep/Deputy Head of High School will be informed;
- Details will be recorded of the child's name, a description of what they are wearing and the time and place of the incident;

- The Headmistress will be informed who will decide if the police are to be contacted;
- Parents will be informed.

## **Children not collected at an appointed time**

### **EYFS and Prep**

The following steps will be followed if a child is not collected at the end of the school day:

- The child will be taken to Sundowners and settled with a practitioner known to them;
- The school office will be informed and parents will be contacted;
- If contact cannot be established the child will remain with a known practitioner until they can be collected;
- In the event of a child not being collected at the end of Sundowners two adults will remain with the child at all times.

### **High school**

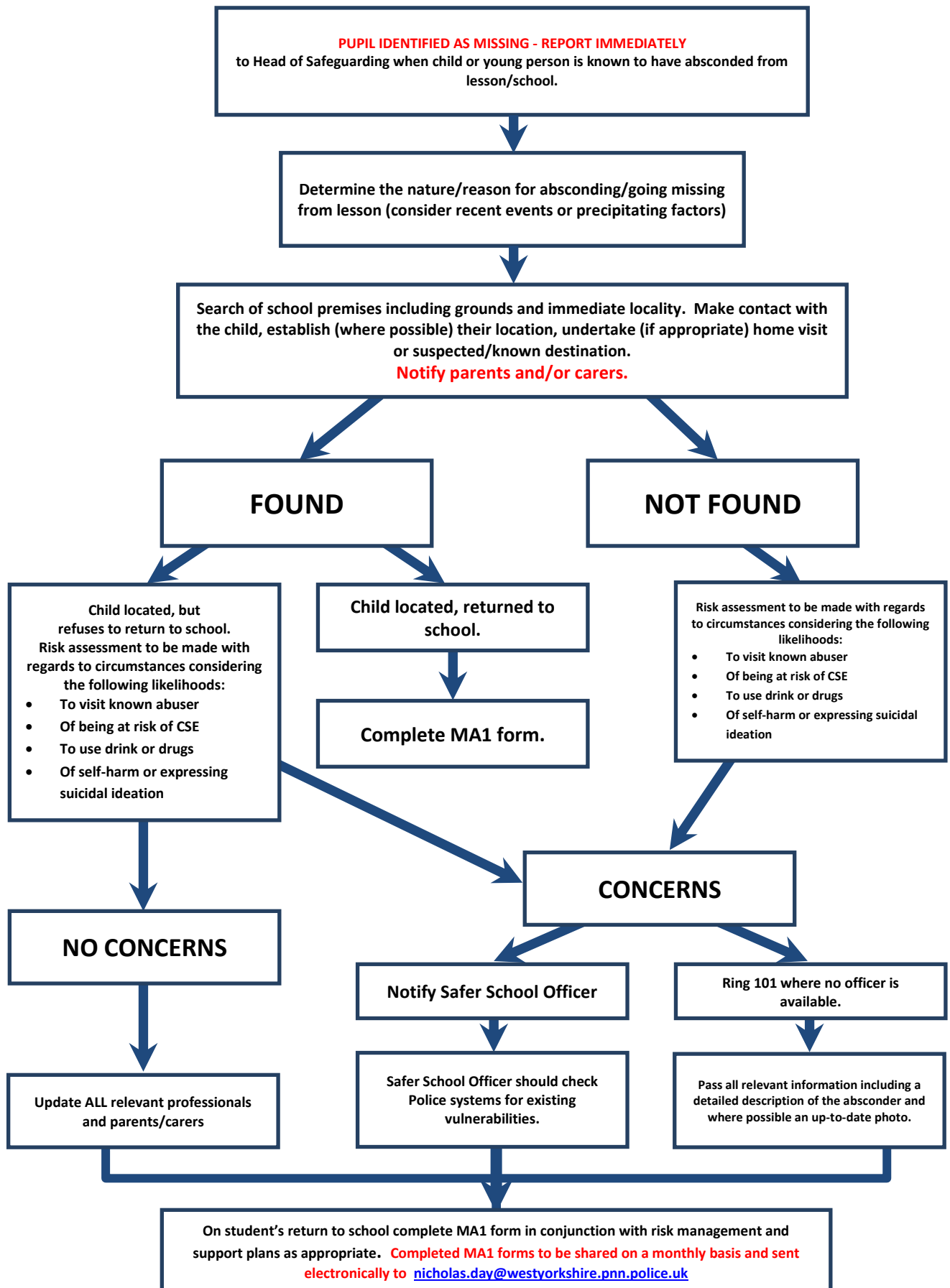
The following steps will be followed if a child is not collected from homework club at the end of the session:

- The child will be taken to Sundowners;
- The school office will be informed and parents will be contacted;
- If contact cannot be established the child will remain with the Sundowners staff member until they can be collected;
- In the event of a child not being collected at the end of Sundowners two adults will remain with the child at all times.

Contact numbers for parents will be updated regularly.

# APPENDIX A

## Referral pathway for reporting children missing/absconded during the school day



## APPENDIX B

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### **Schools and Safer Schools Officers reporting Protocol: Reporting children and young people as missing or absconded during the school day**

#### **1. Police Missing Person Criteria**

A child or young person will be defined as missing if their whereabouts are unknown and there are reasons to believe one or more of the following applies:

- a) There are suspicious circumstances, i.e. the young person may have been the victim of a serious crime
- b) The behaviour is out of character and there is no apparent explanation for their absence
- c) There is significant concern that the young person may have suffered harm
- d) The young person is thought to be at risk of significant harm during the absence
- e) The young person is dangerous and there is a significant risk they will harm another person whilst absent.

#### **2. Prior to contacting the Police**

When a young person appears to have gone missing from school, the school should as far as practicable take all reasonable and practical steps in order to identify whether the child is a missing person by:

- a) determining the nature and reasons for absence (consider recent events or precipitating factors)
- b) ascertaining the likely intentions of the young person
- c) establishing the whereabouts and well-being of the young person

Where there is no apparent risk and the Police Missing Person Criteria (Section 1) outlined above is not met, reasonable and practical steps should be taken before contacting the police and include but are not limited to:

- a) Contact parent(s)/guardian(s) to update them as to the young person being absent from school and to enquire about possible triggers for the absence.
- b) Searching the schools premises, grounds and immediate locality of the school.
- c) Telephoning and sending an SMS (text) message to the young person's mobile phone and checking their Facebook page via a school Facebook account only, if this is accessible
- d) Making enquiries with the young person's friends
- e) Contact professionals who support the young person or their family (e.g. social workers, families' first workers) for further information.

### 3. Informing the police

The Schools and Safer schools/Police Officer reporting protocol outlines the referral pathways for reporting missing episodes to the police.

The police should also be informed if the child/young person hits the criteria outlined above in **Section 1. Police Missing Person Criteria.**

### 4. Initial Reporting to Police

Police will require the following information:

- a) Personal details, family and friends contact details, time, date and location of last sighting, a clothing description (if not in school uniform).
- b) Any previous history of missing episodes, known associates, push/pull factors.
- c) Any known child protection concerns/social care involvement/identifiable risks.
- d) Details of all enquiries to locate the young person conducted so far/individuals (parent/carer) notified.
- e) A current photograph of the missing person wherever possible.

### 5. Professional responsibilities to safeguarding children and young people who go missing during the school day

Following any report of a missing person to police, the school should inform and update parent(s)/guardian(s) and other appropriate agencies. There is a need for all involved parties to co-operate fully and schools should work with all partners to achieve this.

Where appropriate the school will be expected to assist in finding the young person and to work co-operatively with police during any enquiry. The school should make a record of all actions taken throughout the period a young person is recorded as missing in relation to their welfare, and fully update police on those actions at the appropriate time.

The Police will investigate all cases falling within the definition of missing in accordance with the Police Missing Persons Policy and National Guidance.

On the child or young person's return the "Pupil/s Identified as Missing During School Day Incident Report Log (MA 1)" should be completed in order to ascertain the circumstances of why the pupil went missing and where they had been and what they had been involved with in the period of absence. Schools should ensure that there is an appropriate package of support and intervention in place to address any identified needs of the pupil concerned and care and control measures in place to prevent any further missing episodes. All completed MA1 forms should also be submitted electronically on a monthly basis during the first week of every calendar month to Sargent Nick Day email: [nicholas.day@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:nicholas.day@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk) from w/c 5th December 2016. For those schools who have a safer schools officer, they should ask the schools officer to submit the completed form on their behalf.

Identified threats and risks should be discussed with the young person's parents/carers/guardian and consideration should be given to a multi-agency strategy meeting regarding the young person if appropriate.

### 6. Risk Assessments

Schools should consider preparing risk assessments for those young persons that are frequently absent from school, or those young persons that are deemed at risk should they absent themselves.

Risk assessments should consider the following elements.

How likely is it that the young person will go missing:

- Has the young person gone absent before and if so what is the pattern of their previous absent behaviour? Consider where and when young persons have been found and their accounts regarding their absence/ known associates.
- What factors or potential incidents may act as a trigger incident and lead to the young person going absent?
- Are there any other circumstances, behaviour or indicators that suggest that the young person may go absent in the future?
- What actions can the school take with partners, where appropriate to develop an intervention plan to reduce the likelihood of future missing episodes
- Agreement regarding the child being returned to school / and how they will be responded to, if found during school hours
- Does a child sexual exploitation partner checklist need to be completed? Is there a need for an early help plan and does there need to be a referral to children's social work services?
- How the school will work the with independent return interview service to facilitate, where appropriate the completion of return interviews
- How the school will share information /intelligence with the police and other relevant partners

