

Child Missing / Absconding Policy – September 2025

Policy Title:	Child Missing / Absconding
Effective Date:	March 2025
Review Date:	September 2026 (reviewed annually)
Version:	2
Policy Lead:	Edward Thatcher
Authorised by:	Jane Haywood
Role:	Safeguarding Lead, Board of Trustees
Authorised:	September 2025

Ed Thatcher

CEO



September 2025

Dave Poulson

Chair of Trustees



September 2025

1 Policy Statement

Endeavour is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people who access our services. We recognise that when a child goes missing or absconds, they are at risk of harm, including exploitation, abuse, or injury.

2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, volunteers, and trustees.
 - All children and young people engaged in Endeavour activities, both on and off site, including during residential and outdoor activities.
 - All settings in which Endeavour operates.
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3 Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
 - Children Act 1989 and 2004
 - Education Act 2002
 - Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
 - Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
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4 Definitions

Missing Child

A child whose whereabouts are unknown and where there are concerns for their safety or welfare.

Absconding

When a child deliberately leaves a supervised setting without permission or notification, placing themselves potentially at risk of harm.

Persistent absence

A pattern of absence over time that can be a warning sign for neglect, child sexual or child criminal exploitation.

5 Prevention

Endeavour will:

- Prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the child or young person at all times, staff will maintain an awareness of all young people's locations during sessions and activities.
- Hold on file emergency contact number(s) for young people attending the alternative provision.

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- Record attendance through local authority recording mechanisms in a timely manner (for both morning and afternoon sessions).
 - Update risk assessments following any incidents of absconding or persistent absences, to reduce such incidents in future.
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6 Reporting and Recording Persistent Absences or Incidents of Absconding

Endeavour recognises that going missing may be an indicator of abuse, exploitation (including criminal or sexual exploitation), neglect, mental health issues, or other significant risks; this is covered in more detail in the **child criminal exploitation policy**.

Endeavour will:

- Treat all incidents of absence or absconding as potential safeguarding concerns, identifying patterns in absences and sharing any concerns with schools and the local authority.
 - Contact parents or carers in a timely manner, in the case of unexpected absences, and ask for reasons.
 - Communicate absences with schools and the local authorities in a timely manner.
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7 Support for Young People who are Persistently Absent / Abscond

Endeavour will:

- Support children to improve their attendance, with bespoke transition arrangements or strategies if necessary, and discuss the factors that may contribute to incidents of absconding with young people.
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8 Training and Awareness

- All staff will receive training on recognising the factors that may lie behind persistent absences or incidents of absconding as part of their overall safeguarding induction and annual updates.
 - Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) and Deputy DSLs will undertake enhanced safeguarding training to ensure effective oversight and response.
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9 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective, compliant with statutory guidance, and reflective of best safeguarding practice.

10 Key Contacts

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Edward Thatcher
Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Hannah Shaw
Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL): Will Hopkins
Safeguarding Trustee: Jane Haywood