

# ALP Sittingbourne

## **Missing Child Policy**

April 2026





Statement:	
This statement was approved:	
This statement will be reviewed:	



## 1. Introduction

ALP Sittingbourne is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all pupils. This policy outlines the procedures to be followed if a pupil goes missing during the school day, during off-site activities, or from school transport.

This policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## 2. Definition

A child is considered missing if they are not present where they are expected to be and their whereabouts cannot be accounted for.

## 3. Aims

- Ensure a rapid, consistent and effective response
- Minimise risk and locate pupils quickly and safely
- Clarify staff roles and responsibilities
- Meet safeguarding and statutory expectations

## 4. Roles and Responsibilities

### All Staff

- Maintain accurate registers
- Remain vigilant at all times
- Report concerns immediately

### Class Teacher / Tutor

- Complete registers promptly and accurately
- Inform the school office immediately if a pupil is missing

### Senior Management Team (SMT)

- Take immediate control of the situation
- Coordinate and direct the search
- Allocate staff to specific areas/zones
- Decide on escalation (parents/police)

### Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Assess level of safeguarding risk
- Support decision-making
- Liaise with external agencies where required

## 5. Procedures – Missing Child on Site

### Stage 1: Immediate Actions (0–10 minutes)

- Teacher checks classroom, corridors, toilets, and nearby areas
- Speak to pupils/staff to gather information
- Inform school office and SMT immediately

### Stage 2: Coordinated Search (Led by SMT)

- SMT initiates a site-wide search
- Staff deployed to designated zones (e.g. classrooms, playground, entrances, outdoor areas)
- Use of radios/phones where available to communicate
- Check registers and signing in/out records
- Secure entrances/exits where appropriate

### Stage 3: Escalation (After 10–20 minutes or immediately if high risk)

- **Headteacher and DSL informed immediately**
- Parents/carers contacted
- Police contacted if:
  - The child is not located quickly
  - There are safeguarding concerns
  - The child is considered vulnerable

### High-risk factors include:

- SEND / SEMH needs
- Medical conditions
- Known history of absconding
- Emotional distress
- Environmental risks (weather, proximity to roads, etc.)

## 6. Procedures – Off-Site Visits

- The **Trip Leader** takes immediate responsibility
- Conduct an urgent headcount
- Search immediate area

- Inform venue staff/security
- Contact **SMT at school**
- Contact police if necessary
- Inform parents/carers

Staff must ensure the rest of the group remains supervised at all times.

## 7. Procedures – Transport

If a pupil does not arrive at school:

- Contact transport provider immediately
- Contact parents/carers
- Inform **SMT and DSL**
- Contact police if the pupil's whereabouts cannot be confirmed

## 8. Communication

- Clear communication must be maintained throughout
- Use internal systems (e.g. radios, office communication)
- Parents/carers informed promptly
- All external communication handled by SMT/DSL

## 9. Recording and Reporting

All incidents must be:

- Recorded on the school safeguarding system
- Logged with:
  - Time last seen
  - Location
  - Actions taken
  - Staff involved
  - Outcome

## 10. Post-Incident Review

Following any incident:

- SMT and DSL conduct a review
- Identify strengths and areas for improvement
- Update risk assessments if needed

- Provide support for pupil and staff

## **11. Prevention**

- Accurate registers taken promptly
- Clear supervision routines
- Defined staff responsibilities
- Secure site and controlled access
- Individual risk assessments for vulnerable pupils
- Staff training and awareness

## **12. Safeguarding**

A missing child is a serious safeguarding concern.

Staff must consider:

- Risk of harm or exploitation
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Patterns of behaviour

All concerns must be reported to the DSL immediately.

## **13. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or following any incident.