MISSING FORM EDUCATION POLICY FOR COMMUNITY ED C.I.C

Policy no.	5
Version	2
Policy holder	Sally Alden & Andrew McGovern
Date of approval	07.09.26
Next Review date	07.09.27

Standard Statement Aim:
Community Ed C.I.C. maintains a culture in which children rarely go missing. If they do, they return quickly so staff can protect them as much as possible and respond positively to them upon their return.

Introduction

The Operational Director strongly emphasises building positive relationships with children and young people while promoting positive choices. This provides a solid foundation for developing and fostering resilience and self-confidence. Community Ed C.I.C delivers a clear, consistent message to everyone involved that they are a valued, important part of our provision.

By developing our ethos and creating an environment where children and young people feel secure and safe, we aim to minimise the risk of them going missing.

Underpinning Ethos / Practice

An essential part of Community Ed C.I.C is our ethos and values: actively enabling children and young people to understand the risks and dangers of running away or going missing. The Operational Director ensures this ethos is evident across our provisions so staff and students can identify how to stay safe and know procedures are in place to protect them. Students receive support and follow daily routines and boundaries; they know how to seek help, and once settled, they enjoy learning in an environment where they feel part of it and valued.

In many instances, staff can adopt a proactive approach to prevent young people from running away or going missing. Staff should be acutely aware of and familiar with individual triggers and group dynamics. They should recognise the benefits of using activities to positively engage with young people, which will help them gain insight into what works for each young person to deter them from going missing.

The Behaviour Management section of the Behaviour Policy identifies individualised interruptive strategies relevant to each child or young person to prevent them from running away or going missing. These plans and procedures should be as comprehensive and extensive as possible.

All students have an individual risk assessment that is updated regularly. Apply individual risk assessments to activity risk assessments to help prevent educational incidents.

Staff must not do nothing. They must understand that they have a duty of care to prevent a child or young person from leaving the building when it can be demonstrated that doing so would put them at immediate risk—for example, by getting into a stranger's waiting car outside. Staff must not use any method to prevent a child or young person from leaving the building that would adversely affect other children or young people at the provision. One inappropriate method would be to temporarily lock the door while other children or young people are inside.

On discovering that a child is missing during school hours, the following procedures will be followed:

- The Operational Director and safeguarding lead will be informed, and an incident form will be opened to record the time and location where the child was last seen.
- Parents/Carers and the partner school will be informed immediately.
- The support staff will go into the community and actively look for the student.
- Ask classmates about the child's whereabouts, and note any relevant information, including where and when the child was last seen.
- Verify with the relevant teacher or teaching assistant, and register the information.
- Check the records for any further information from telephone enquiries.
- Check if the child's individual risk assessment and deemed level of vulnerability.
- A support worker will organise and coordinate a thorough search of the premises.
- A search will be conducted within 5 minutes of the initial absence report. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will extract the child's personal files, and a recent photograph will be available.
- After 20 minutes, the police, the student's school and the Norfolk/Suffolk Children Safeguarding Board will be informed if appropriate.
- If a child is considered more vulnerable, then the police will be informed immediately
- Parents/carers or the person with parental responsibility will be updated,

A complete list of rules regarding missing from education is visible around the building, helping students understand the consequences and encouraging them to make positive choices.

If a child goes missing while off-site:

Staff will stay with student/s while off-site and use mobile phones to coordinate with the school/AP. Should a child go out of sight of a member of staff, that child will instantly be considered missing from education, and the following procedure will take place:

- An immediate headcount will be carried out to ensure that all the other children are present.
- An adult will search the immediate vicinity.
- The remaining children will be taken back.
- Inform the Operational Director and/or Safeguarding Lead by mobile phone.
  The Operational Director will ring the child's parents/carers or the person responsible and explain what happened and what steps have been taken.
- If at a venue, contact the venue Manager and arrange a search.
- If not found in 20 minutes, contact the Police. (If a child is considered more vulnerable, then contact sooner).
- The Safeguarding Lead would inform the Norfolk/Suffolk Children Safeguarding Board if appropriate.
- Community Ed will cooperate fully with any Police investigation and any safeguarding investigation by Social Care.

Students attending the AP: the following procedures also apply.

- When a student attends the AP and their place is commissioned by a school or directly by the Local Authority, the school's DSL or LA representative will be informed and updated accordingly.
- The DSL from Community Ed will maintain close communication with the DSL from the partner school, and they will decide who will contact and update parents/carers.
- The Operational Director will then notify the Chair of Governors to support best practices and modify policies where appropriate.

Children and young people must feel welcomed back after a period of absence. They need to see that the staff are relieved they have returned and are eager to ensure their safety and well-being, responding swiftly to any medical or additional assistance required. Staff should offer the child or young person something to eat and a warm drink.

Monitoring / Review

Community Ed C.I.C. will maintain a central record of all missing child/young person incidents, with a more detailed version kept in each child/young person's file.

An enhanced Individual Risk Assessment and the students' Behaviour Management Plan will be updated, and a plan will be agreed to prevent this from happening again. A professional meeting, including parents/carers, will be sought to establish a way forward using the Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 Legislation to enable an inclusive curriculum for the students concerned.

The Operational Director will ensure monthly and quarterly monitoring of individual children/young people and assessed outcomes is completed.

An incident form will feed into the timetable. This will allow individual targets to be set, as well as one-to-one work and group lessons, helping to address barriers and prevent future incidents.

Absent from school/provision

Attendance is recorded daily at the AP. If a student is absent from the AP, the partner school or LA representative will be informed when the student fails to arrive; the school or LA is then responsible for safeguarding that child.

We will develop action plans, and our enrichment team will be available to support parents and carers in helping students attend our provision regularly. We will analyse patterns of student absences to help address any issues.