

Compass Learning & Education

Missing Learner, Absence and Welfare Check Procedure

Policy and Procedure

Policy owner	Director / Designated Safeguarding Lead
Approved by	Director
Review cycle	Annual, or sooner following a material change, incident or change in guidance
Date of next review	June 2027

1. Purpose and Scope

Compass Learning & Education will respond immediately and proportionately to any learner who is absent unexpectedly, fails to arrive, leaves the site without permission, cannot be located, or whose welfare gives rise to concern. The procedure is designed to support timely safeguarding action and clear communication with the commissioning school, parent or carer and relevant agencies.

This procedure applies to all learners, including dual-registered learners, learners with EHCPs, learners attending part-time placements and post-16 learners. It applies from the point a learner is expected to attend until they have been handed over safely at collection or have left under an agreed independent-travel arrangement.

2. Principles

- The welfare, dignity, safety and best interests of each learner are central to decision-making.
- Arrangements are proportionate to learner age, maturity, SEND, SEMH presentation, medical needs, trauma history and assessed risk.
- Staff must act promptly, record significant decisions and seek advice or escalate concerns where needed.
- This document operates alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Risk Assessment Policy, Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy, and the shared-premises arrangements for the church-house site.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Director / DSL

- Ensure staff understand this procedure and the circumstances in which a safeguarding response is needed.
- Lead or oversee escalation, decision-making and recording where a learner is missing or welfare concerns are significant.
- Liaise with the commissioning school, parent or carer, police, children's social care and other agencies as appropriate.

All staff

- Take an accurate register at the start of every session and complete a headcount at transitions, off-site activities and evacuation points.
- Report unexplained absence, late arrival, a missing learner or welfare concern immediately to the DSL or person in charge.
- Never place themselves at risk when attempting to locate or follow a learner.

4. Prevention and Daily Attendance Arrangements

- The provision will hold up-to-date contact, medical, safeguarding, collection, travel and individual risk-management information for each learner before admission.
- Attendance will be recorded at the start of each session. Any late arrival, early departure, authorised absence or unexplained absence will be recorded accurately.
- Learners will be supervised at all times on site, including during transitions and comfort breaks. The church-house site security risk assessment and individual learner risk assessments will identify any enhanced measures.
- Where attendance concerns are known, an agreed welfare and attendance plan will be developed with the commissioning school and family.

5. Unexplained Absence or Failure to Arrive

Timescale	Action
At the expected start time	Check the register, planned absence information and any communication received from the family or commissioning school.
Within 15 minutes	Attempt contact with the parent or carer, and notify the commissioning school in line with the placement agreement. Record the time, method and outcome.
Within 30 minutes or sooner where risk is elevated	Escalate to the DSL. The DSL will consider known safeguarding information, transport arrangements, mental health, exploitation indicators, weather, vulnerability and any previous missing episodes.
Where contact cannot be established or risk is significant	The DSL will agree escalation with the commissioning school and may contact police, children's social care or other relevant services. The response will not be delayed where there is immediate concern for safety.
Same day	Record the absence and actions taken. Agree next steps, including whether a welfare visit or multi-agency discussion is required, with the commissioning school and appropriate agencies.

6. Learner Leaves Site Without Permission or Cannot Be Located

1. Raise the alarm immediately. The staff member who identifies the concern must inform the DSL or person in charge without delay.
2. Complete an immediate check of the teaching room, toilets directly opposite the teaching room, agreed routes, shared areas and nearby safe locations, while maintaining supervision of other learners.
3. Do not leave remaining learners unsupervised. If necessary, call for assistance from another Compass staff member or emergency services.

4. Contact the learner by agreed methods where appropriate. Contact the parent or carer and commissioning school promptly. The timing and content of contact will be informed by the individual risk assessment and safeguarding plan.
5. Call police immediately where there is an immediate risk of harm, the learner is especially vulnerable, the learner cannot be located promptly, or the DSL judges that police involvement is necessary. Provide a current description, relevant risk information, known destinations and contact details.
6. Continue to share relevant updates with police, the parent or carer and commissioning school. Do not share confidential information with other building users unless necessary to protect life or prevent serious harm.
7. On return, check the learner's immediate welfare, arrange first aid or emergency medical support if needed, and avoid punitive questioning. A restorative return discussion and safeguarding review will take place when the learner is calm and safe.

7. Welfare Checks

A welfare check may be appropriate where a learner has an unexplained absence, significant change in presentation, repeated lateness, known safeguarding vulnerability, concerning communication, or a pattern that suggests the learner may be at risk. Welfare checks will be planned with the commissioning school and, where necessary, children's social care or police.

8. Recording, Review and Return to Provision

- All missing learner incidents, unexplained absences and significant welfare checks must be recorded on the same day, including the timeline, decisions, people contacted, advice received and outcome.
- The DSL will consider whether the learner's individual risk assessment, attendance plan, safeguarding plan, travel arrangements or staffing ratio need updating.
- The commissioning school will receive a factual report in line with the placement agreement. Parents or carers will be updated unless doing so would place the learner at risk or conflict with advice from statutory agencies.
- Patterns will be reviewed termly as part of safeguarding and quality-assurance arrangements.

References and Linked Documents

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (child-centred safeguarding and action on concerns).
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Site Security and Shared Premises Risk Assessment.
- Individual learner risk assessments and placement agreements.