

MISSING CHILD PROTOCOL AND POLICE LIAISON STRATEGY

Prepared on behalf of: Zeeshan Deen

Site address: 12 St Ronans Road, Reading, RG30 2QE

Application type: Full Planning Permission

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1.0 Introduction

This Missing Child Protocol and Police Liaison Strategy has been prepared in connection with the proposed children's home at 12 St Ronans Road, Reading, RG30 2QE. It sets out the clear, structured procedures that will be followed to prevent instances of children going missing and to respond promptly and effectively in any instance where a young person cannot be located.

2.0 Safeguarding Framework

The home's missing child procedures are embedded within its broader safeguarding framework, which operates in accordance with Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2026), the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015, the Children Act 1989, and statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from care. The Registered Manager holds designated responsibility for safeguarding, including the management of missing episodes.

3.0 Prevention Measures

The most effective response to missing episodes is their prevention through high-quality, person-centred care. The home will invest significantly in developing and maintaining strong, trusting relationships between staff and young people, as research consistently identifies the quality of care relationships as the primary protective factor against missing episodes. Individual risk assessments will identify any history of missing episodes and will include specific preventative strategies tailored to each young person's circumstances.

Each resident will be supported to develop safety plans with their Key Worker, identifying trusted adults, safe places and coping strategies. Daily routines will be structured and meaningful, reducing the conditions of boredom, anxiety or unmet need that are frequently associated with missing episodes.

4.0 Definition of Missing

For the purposes of this protocol, a young person is considered missing if they are absent from the home without the prior knowledge or authorisation of the home's staff, or if their whereabouts are unknown. Any young person who has not returned to the home by the time agreed with staff, or who cannot be contacted within a reasonable period and whose whereabouts are unknown, will be treated as missing and the procedures in section 5.0 will be activated immediately.

5.0 Response Procedure

In any instance where a young person is suspected to be missing, the on-duty member of staff will immediately inform the Registered Manager or on-call manager. Attempts will be made to contact the young person by telephone and to establish their whereabouts through known contacts. If the young person cannot be located within a short period, a referral to Thames Valley Police will be made without delay. The Registered Manager will also notify the placing local authority's Emergency Duty Team or allocated social worker.

A missing person report will be completed in full and a search of the immediate area will be conducted by available staff, in accordance with any guidance provided by the police. The young person's individual risk assessment will be used to inform the response, including any intelligence about known addresses, associates or risk factors associated with that young person.

6.0 Police Liaison

The home will establish and maintain a proactive and positive working relationship with Thames Valley Police. Prior to the home opening, the Registered Manager will make contact with the relevant local policing team to introduce the home and establish clear lines of communication. The home will provide the police with relevant information about the home's operation and the general profile of residents in a manner consistent with data protection requirements, to support effective joint working.

In any missing episode, the police will be treated as the primary operational lead in locating the young person. Staff will provide the police with all relevant information promptly and will maintain close communication with the attending or allocated officer throughout the episode.

7.0 Return and Follow-Up

On the return of any young person following a missing episode, staff will ensure that the young person is safe and well, and will conduct an initial welfare check. A Return Interview will be arranged within 72 hours of the young person's return, conducted by a person independent of the home in accordance with statutory guidance. The outcome of the Return Interview will be used to inform the review of the young person's risk assessment and care plan, and to identify any additional support or safeguarding actions that may be required.

8.0 Recording and Review

All missing episodes will be recorded in full in the home's incident recording system, including the timeline of events, actions taken, agencies contacted and the outcome of any Return Interview. Records will be reviewed regularly by the Registered Manager to identify any patterns or trends that may require a revision of individual risk management strategies or the home's wider missing episode procedures.

9.0 Conclusion

The missing child protocol set out in this document demonstrates that the proposed home will manage the risk of missing episodes through a robust, proactive and multi-agency framework. The procedures described are consistent with statutory guidance and best practice, and will be implemented rigorously by a trained and experienced staff team working in close partnership with Thames Valley Police and the placing local authorities.