INCLUSIVE LEARNING SUPPORT (ILS)

MISSING CHILD & CHILD NOT COLLECTED PROCEDURE

Version: 1.0

Organisation: Inclusive Learning Support (ILS)
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1. Purpose

Inclusive Learning Support (ILS) is committed to protecting the safety and wellbeing of every child and young person receiving our services.

This procedure sets out the actions ILS will take if:

- A child or young person is believed to be missing during an ILS session.
- A child leaves an agreed learning or activity area without appropriate permission or supervision.
- A child cannot be located following a reasonable search.
- A parent/carer or authorised adult does not arrive to collect a child at the agreed collection time.
- An expected parent/carer or authorised adult cannot be contacted.
- There is uncertainty about who is authorised to collect a child.
- A child is collected by someone who is not authorised to do so.
- A child or young person is found in circumstances that raise immediate safeguarding concerns.

The safety and welfare of the child will always be the priority.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to ILS activities delivered in:

- Children's homes.
- Schools.
- Community venues.
- Libraries or other agreed learning locations.
- Holiday and enrichment activities.
- Outreach and alternative provision settings.
- Other locations where ILS is responsible for the supervision or support of a child or young person.

Where ILS operates within a school, venue or partner organisation, relevant local safeguarding and emergency procedures will also be followed.

3. Key Principles

ILS will:

- Treat every missing-child concern seriously.
- Act promptly and proportionately.
- Prioritise the child's immediate safety.
- Consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of the child.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Contact parents/carers or appropriate professionals where required.
- Contact emergency services where there is an immediate risk to the child's safety.
- Record and review significant incidents.
- Cooperate with schools, parents/carers, emergency services and relevant agencies.

There should never be an assumption that a child has simply “wandered off” or will return on their own.

4. Individual Needs and Risk Factors

ILS recognises that some children and young people may require additional consideration because of their individual needs.

These may include:

- Autism.
- ADHD.

- Learning disabilities.
- Communication difficulties.
- Sensory needs.
- SEMH needs.
- Anxiety.
- Mobility difficulties.
- Medical needs.
- Limited awareness of danger.
- Previous episodes of leaving a supervised area.
- Difficulty communicating their location or needs.

Where relevant information has been appropriately shared with ILS, these factors will be considered when planning supervision and responding to a missing-child incident.

5. Before a Session

Where appropriate, ILS will establish:

- The child's agreed attendance arrangements.
- The expected start and finish times.
- The authorised collection arrangements.
- Relevant emergency contact details.
- Any known individual risks or vulnerabilities.
- Any relevant medical or communication information.
- Who has responsibility for the child during the session.
- Relevant venue emergency arrangements.

Parents/carers should provide ILS with accurate and up-to-date contact and collection information.

6. If a Child Is Missing During a Session

If a child cannot be located, staff or tutors should act immediately.

Step 1 – Raise the Alert

The staff member responsible for the child should immediately inform the appropriate ILS manager, session lead or responsible professional.

The situation should be treated as a safeguarding concern.

Step 2 – Establish the Last Known Location

Staff should establish, as quickly as possible:

- Where the child was last seen.
- When the child was last seen.
- Who last saw the child.
- What the child was wearing, where known.
- Whether the child was accompanied.
- Whether there are known preferred locations or routes that may be relevant.
- Whether there are immediate environmental dangers.

Step 3 – Check the Immediate Area

A proportionate search of the immediate safe area should take place.

This may include checking:

- Learning rooms.
- Toilets.
- Corridors.
- Outdoor areas.
- Other agreed areas within the venue.

Staff must not place themselves at unnecessary risk while searching.

Step 4 – Consider Immediate Danger

If there is reason to believe that the child may be:

- Near a road.
- Near water.
- In an unsafe location.
- At risk of exploitation or abduction.
- Experiencing a medical emergency.
- At immediate risk of serious harm.

Emergency services should be contacted without delay.

7. Contacting Parents or Carers

Parents/carers should be informed promptly where appropriate.

ILS will provide factual information about:

- When the child was last seen.
- Where the child was last seen.
- What actions have been taken.
- Whether emergency services or other professionals have been contacted.

Staff should avoid speculation or making assumptions about what may have happened.

8. When to Contact Emergency Services

ILS will contact emergency services where there is an immediate or serious concern for the child's safety.

This may include circumstances where:

- The child is believed to be in immediate danger.
- The child cannot be located following appropriate initial actions.
- The child is particularly vulnerable.
- There is a known risk of self-harm or serious harm.
- The child may have entered a dangerous environment.
- There is a concern about abduction or exploitation.
- The child's medical needs create an immediate risk.
- Staff reasonably believe emergency assistance is required.

Staff should not delay contacting emergency services simply because they are uncertain whether the situation is sufficiently serious.

9. If a Child Leaves a Session or Venue

If a child leaves an agreed supervised area without permission, staff should:

1. Alert the appropriate responsible person.
2. Establish the child's last known location.
3. Follow the relevant risk assessment and individual safety arrangements.
4. Consider whether immediate danger is present.

5. Contact the parent/carer where appropriate.
6. Contact emergency services where necessary.
7. Follow safeguarding procedures.
8. Record the incident.

Staff should not chase a child into a dangerous environment if doing so would create an unacceptable risk to the child, staff member or others.

10. Child Not Collected

ILS recognises that delays or difficulties with collection can occur.

If a parent/carer or authorised adult does not arrive at the agreed collection time, staff should:

Step 1
Remain with the child and ensure they are appropriately supervised.

Step 2
Attempt to contact the parent/carer using the contact details held by ILS.

Step 3
If the parent/carer cannot be contacted, use other authorised emergency contact arrangements where appropriate.

Step 4
Inform the appropriate ILS manager or responsible professional.

Step 5
If the delay becomes a safeguarding concern, appropriate advice or assistance will be sought.

Step 6
Where there is a serious or immediate safeguarding concern, ILS will contact the appropriate emergency or safeguarding service.

A child must not simply be left alone because a parent/carer has failed to collect them.

11. Collection by an Unauthorised Person

A child should only be released to an individual who is authorised to collect them in accordance with the agreed arrangements.

If an individual arrives who is not authorised:

- The child should not be released until the situation has been appropriately verified.
- Staff should contact the parent/carer or appropriate responsible person.
- Staff should follow safeguarding procedures if there is any concern about the person's identity or authority to collect the child.
- Where necessary, the police or appropriate safeguarding agency may be contacted.

If the person attempting collection becomes threatening or aggressive, staff should prioritise safety and seek emergency assistance where necessary.

12. Children with Additional Vulnerabilities

Where a child has additional vulnerabilities, ILS may use enhanced safety arrangements appropriate to the individual circumstances.

These may include:

- Increased supervision.
- Individual risk assessments.
- Agreed communication methods.
- Known safe areas.
- Relevant information about triggers or behaviours.
- Specific collection arrangements.
- Agreed escalation procedures.

These arrangements should be proportionate and reviewed when circumstances change.

13. Safeguarding

A missing child or failure to collect a child may indicate a wider safeguarding concern.

Staff must consider whether the circumstances raise concerns relating to:

- Neglect.
- Abuse.
- Exploitation.
- Abduction.
- Domestic abuse.
- Mental health or emotional wellbeing.
- Criminal or sexual exploitation.
- Unsafe home circumstances.
- Other safeguarding risks.

Any safeguarding concern must be reported in accordance with the ILS Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

14. Recording the Incident

Significant missing-child and non-collection incidents should be recorded as soon as reasonably practicable.

Records may include:

- Date and time.
- Location.
- Child's name or appropriate identifier.
- Last known location.
- Circumstances of the incident.
- Actions taken.
- People contacted.
- Whether emergency services were contacted.
- Outcome.
- Any safeguarding referral or escalation.
- Follow-up actions.

Records must be handled securely in accordance with ILS data-protection and GDPR requirements.

15. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information relating to a missing child must be treated sensitively.

ILS will only share information where there is an appropriate lawful basis and where sharing is necessary to protect a child or young person or fulfil another legal or safeguarding responsibility.

Where necessary to protect a child from harm, safeguarding considerations will take priority over unnecessary restrictions on appropriate information sharing.

16. After the Child Is Located

Once the child has been located, staff should:

- Confirm that the child is safe.
- Consider whether medical attention is required.

- Inform the parent/carer or appropriate responsible professional.
- Consider whether the Designated Safeguarding Lead or management should be informed.
- Record the incident.
- Consider whether a safeguarding referral is required.
- Review relevant risk assessments.
- Identify any additional support or preventative measures required.

The child should be treated with dignity and reassurance.

Staff should avoid unnecessary questioning and should follow safeguarding procedures if the child discloses a concern.

17. Post-Incident Review

Following a significant incident, ILS may conduct a review to identify:

- What happened.
- Why it happened.
- Whether existing controls were effective.
- Whether supervision arrangements were appropriate.
- Whether communication arrangements were effective.
- Whether additional risk controls are required.
- Whether staff training or guidance should be updated.

Lessons learned will be used to improve the safety of ILS services.

18. Staff Responsibilities

All ILS staff, tutors, volunteers and contractors are expected to:

- Remain vigilant about children's safety.
- Follow agreed supervision arrangements.
- Take missing-child concerns seriously.
- Report concerns immediately.
- Follow safeguarding procedures.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Keep relevant information confidential.
- Complete required incident records.
- Cooperate with investigations and reviews.

No member of staff should knowingly ignore or minimise a missing-child concern.

19. Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- Provide accurate emergency contact information.
- Provide clear collection arrangements.
- Inform ILS of changes to authorised collectors.
- Inform ILS of relevant safety, medical or communication needs.
- Contact ILS promptly if they are unable to collect their child as agreed.
- Cooperate with reasonable safeguarding and safety arrangements.

20. Working With Schools and Partner Organisations

Where ILS provides services within a school or other organisation, ILS will cooperate with the host organisation's safeguarding and emergency procedures.

Where responsibilities are shared, ILS will seek to establish clear arrangements regarding:

- Supervision.
- Collection.
- Emergency contacts.
- Missing-child procedures.
- Safeguarding escalation.
- Incident reporting.

21. Professional and Legal Framework

ILS will operate this procedure alongside applicable legislation, statutory guidance and safeguarding expectations.

This includes consideration of relevant:

- Child safeguarding legislation.
- Health and safety requirements.
- Data protection legislation.
- Government safeguarding guidance.
- Local safeguarding arrangements.
- Venue-specific safeguarding procedures.

ILS will review its procedures when relevant legislation or official guidance changes.

22. Policy Review

This procedure will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where:

- There is a significant incident.
- Relevant legislation or guidance changes.
- ILS services change.
- A safeguarding review identifies improvements.
- A partner organisation identifies a necessary change.

Next Review Date: September 2027

23. ILS Commitment

Inclusive Learning Support (ILS) understands that every minute can matter when a child is missing or cannot be safely collected.

Our approach is based on: ACT QUICKLY • KEEP CHILDREN SAFE • COMMUNICATE • ESCALATE • RECORD • REVIEW

The welfare and safety of children and young people will remain the priority in every situation.

APPROVAL

Approved by: Neo Matsoso-Ndlovu

Position: Director

Signature: NMN

Date: 09/09/2026

Next Review Date: September 2027