

Missing from Care



Missing from Care Policy

1. Introduction:

Lilac Alliance, Inc. is committed to safeguarding and protecting the well-being of all children and young people in our care. This Missing from Care Policy is designed to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and guidance, including but not limited to:

- Regulation 34: Policies for the protection of children.
- Working together to safeguard children 2018.
- Missing Children and Adults – A Cross Government Strategy 2011.
- Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation: supplementary guidance 2009.
- Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan 2011.
- The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations – Volume 2: care planning, placement, and case review 2015.
- Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, 2014.
- Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care – Flowchart to accompany the statutory guidance, 2014.
- Joint protocol: children’s homes – procedure for disclosing names and addresses 2013.
- Interim Guidance on the Management, Recording, and Investigation of Missing Persons, 2013.

2. Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear procedures for responding to and managing situations where a child or young person goes missing from our care. It outlines the steps to be taken to locate the missing individual, ensure their safety upon return, and prevent future incidents.

3. Scope:

This policy applies to all staff, including care workers, support staff, and management personnel, who are involved in the care and supervision of children and young people under our care.

4. Legislative Framework and Guidance:

This policy is in full compliance with the legislative framework and guidance listed in the introduction, and any other relevant legislation regarding the safety and protection of children and young people.

5. Response to Missing Children and Young People:

- Initial Response: Staff will act promptly and responsibly upon discovering that a child or young person is missing. The initial response will focus on establishing the circumstances and notifying relevant authorities, such as the police and local authorities. Staff are to follow the missing from care plans of the placement they are supporting
- Risk Assessment: A risk assessment will be conducted to determine the level of risk associated with the missing child or young person. This assessment will guide subsequent actions.
- Search and Notification: A search will be organised to locate the missing individual. The police will be informed, and their support and expertise will be sought as needed.

- Informing Parents or Guardians: Parents, guardians, social care teams and EDT will be promptly informed of the situation, the steps taken, and the expected role they should play in the search and reunification process.
- Records and Documentation: Comprehensive records of the incident, actions taken, and all related communications will be maintained. These records will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. These should give clear records of the following:
 - The time the person went missing.
 - The location last seen.
 - Time police contacted.
 - What they were wearing when gone missing
 - The areas been searched.
 - Who has been contacted? (Including name/times and information obtained or shared)
 - Who has been updated with any information that has been obtained or shared.

6. Reunification and Follow-up:

- Once the missing child or young person is located, the staff will ensure their safety, conduct an assessment of their well-being, and provide any necessary medical or emotional support.
- After reunification, a debriefing session will be conducted to understand the reasons for going missing and to develop a plan to prevent future incidents.
- If the child or young person has been subject to harm, exploitation, or abuse during their absence, appropriate safeguarding measures will be implemented in compliance with relevant safeguarding guidance and procedures.

7. Preventing Future Incidents:

- Staff will support the placement to create and developed for the child or young person to address any underlying issues that contributed to the incident. This plan will be designed to reduce the risk of them going missing again.
- Staff training and awareness programs will be implemented to equip personnel with the knowledge and skills required to prevent and respond to missing incidents effectively.

8. Review and Audit:

This policy will be reviewed and audited regularly to ensure its continued effectiveness and compliance with legislative changes and best practices. Lessons learned from missing incidents will be used to improve prevention and response procedures.

Created on 9/05/2023.

Review date 08/05/2025