



EMERSONS GREEN TOWN COUNCIL

Missing Young People Policy

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1. Introduction

The Town Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all young people accessing its youth services.

We recognise that young people who go missing, leave sessions unexpectedly, or whose whereabouts become unknown may be at increased risk of harm, including child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, abuse, neglect, mental health concerns, substance misuse, and other safeguarding risks. This policy sets out the actions staff and volunteers must take to safeguard young people where concerns arise regarding their whereabouts.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Promote the safety and welfare of young people.
 - Prevent missing incidents wherever possible.
 - Ensure a swift and proportionate response when concerns arise.
 - Provide clear guidance for staff and volunteers.
 - Ensure appropriate communication with parents, carers, police and safeguarding agencies.
 - Support young people upon their return and reduce the likelihood of future incidents.
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3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Open access youth sessions.
 - Detached youth work.
 - Outreach activities.
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- Trips and visits.
- Holiday activities.
- All Town Council youth staff and volunteers.

This policy applies to young people aged 11-19 years and up to 25 for those with additional needs accessing Town Council youth services.

4. Definitions

Missing Young Person

A young person whose whereabouts cannot be established and where there are concerns for their safety or welfare

Absent Without Authorisation

A young person who leaves a session, activity or agreed meeting place without informing staff and whose whereabouts are unknown.

Authorised Absence

A young person whose absence has been communicated and accepted by staff, parent/carers, or in accordance with agreed arrangements.

5. Responsibilities

Youth Workers and Volunteers

Must:

- Remain vigilant to safeguarding concerns.
 - Follow this procedure immediately if a young person is unaccounted for.
 - Report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
 - Complete incident records.
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Designated Safeguarding Lead

Must:

- Oversee all missing person incidents.
- Assess risk.
- Liaise with police and safeguarding agencies.
- Ensure records are completed.
- Review incidents and lessons learned.

Youth Services Manager

Must:

- Monitor incidents and trends.
 - Ensure staff are trained.
 - Review risk assessments and procedures.
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6. Prevention

The Town Council will seek to minimise risk by:

- Maintaining accurate registration records.
- Holding emergency contact information.
- Ensuring clear sign-in and sign-out systems are used where appropriate.
- Completing risk assessments for activities.
- Identifying vulnerable young people.
- Promoting positive relationships with young people.
- Providing safeguarding training to staff and volunteers.

Regularly reviewing incidents and emerging risks.

7. Procedure Where a Young Person Is Missing

Open Access Session

If a young person is believed to be missing:

1. Remain calm.
2. Confirm the young person is not elsewhere within the building or activity area.
3. Search toilets, check CCTV if available, outdoor spaces and other accessible areas.
4. Ask staff, volunteers and peers if they have seen the young person.
5. Attempt to contact the young person by telephone if appropriate.
6. Inform the DSL or session lead immediately who will take appropriate action.

Assess the level of risk.

Detached Youth Work

Detached youth work takes place in public spaces where young people are generally free to come and go.

Staff should:

- Assess whether the young person has simply chosen to leave engagement.
- Consider age, vulnerability and known safeguarding concerns.
- Attempt contact where appropriate.
- Escalate concerns where there is reason to believe the young person is at risk of harm.
- Inform the DSL as soon as possible.

A young person choosing to leave a detached session is not automatically a missing person incident unless there are safeguarding concerns. However, all concerns should be recorded and risk assessed.

Contacting Parents/Carers

Parents or carers should be informed as soon as practicable where:

- The young person's whereabouts remain unknown.

- There is a welfare concern.
- Staff believe the young person may be at risk.

A record should be kept of all communications made.

Contacting the Police

Police should be contacted immediately where:

- The young person is vulnerable.
- There are concerns regarding exploitation.
- There are concerns around mental health or self-harm.
- The young person is very young.
- The young person has been absent for a concerning length of time.
- There is immediate risk to the young person or others.

Where a search has been conducted but the young person cannot be located, the police should be informed without unnecessary delay.

8. Safeguarding Considerations

Staff should be alert to indicators that a missing incident may relate to:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).
- County Lines.
- Trafficking.
- Grooming.
- Gang association.
- Radicalisation.
- Substance misuse.
- Mental health concerns.

- Domestic abuse.

Any safeguarding concerns must be reported in accordance with the Town Council Safeguarding Policy.

9. When the Young Person is Found

Staff will:

- Welcome the young person back in a supportive and non-judgemental manner.
- Check their immediate welfare.
- Determine if medical treatment is required.
- Inform parents/carers where applicable.
- Inform police if they were previously notified.

Record the circumstances of the return.

10. Return Conversation

The DSL or appropriate youth worker should offer a welfare conversation with the young person to understand:

- Carry out a welfare or “safe and well” check.
- Why they left.
- Any concerns or risks experienced.
- Whether they felt unsafe.
- What support may be needed.
- How future incidents can be prevented.

Risk assessments and support plans should be updated where necessary.

11. Recording and Reporting

All missing person incidents must be recorded and include:

- Name of young person.
- Date and time.
- Circumstances.
- Actions taken.
- People notified.
- Police reference number where applicable.
- Outcome.
- Follow-up actions.

Records should be retained in accordance with data protection and safeguarding procedures.

12. Monitoring and Review

All incidents will be reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead to:

- Identify patterns and trends.
- Review effectiveness of procedures.
- Update risk assessments.
- Identify additional support requirements.
- Improve safeguarding practice.

This policy will be reviewed annually or following a significant incident.