St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Child missing Policy & Protocols

Updated September 2026

Our Mission - A Statement of Values and Principles

At St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School staff, parents and children work together to live out our Catholic mission,

…to ensure a loving and faithful learning community in which our children can become the person God created them to be. A community where we celebrate the dignity, worth and uniqueness of every individual. Where we grow and learn together with joy, in the love of Jesus. In this love, we strive to be courageous stewards of creation.

At St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, our priority is the safety, happiness and well-being of our children. We take our role as safeguarding and child protection officers very seriously and we will always deal with safeguarding and child protection cases quickly, following full Lancashire County Council procedure and protocol.

Missing definition:
When a pupil's whereabouts cannot be established in school or out of school whilst in the care of the school.

Introduction:
This policy has been written and should be read in conjunction with the school Health and Safety Policy and the Safeguarding Policy.

Purpose and aims of the policy statement
The purpose of this policy statement is to give all staff a clear understanding of how to respond and who to inform should they discover a child is missing.

The aims of this policy are to:
- Provide a clear procedure which is understood and effectively implemented by staff.
- Enable the missing child to be located as quickly as possible.

Preamble:
Whilst the school premises are secure and all gates are locked at the end of the morning

registration period and kept locked until 3:20pm to allow for collection at the end of the school day. Staff need to be mindful that a child can go missing at any time of the day. These are examples of occasions which could provide opportunities for a child to go missing:

Occasions when a child goes missing:

- Travelling to and from Church.
- On a school trip
- Other times such as at the start or end of the school day

Therefore, members of staff will undertake periodic head counts especially at the transition points between sessions & coming from outside to indoors. If for any reason a member of staff cannot account for a child's whereabouts during a session the following procedure will be activated.

Procedures to be followed if a child is missing from the school or church:

1. Once a pupil is identified as missing by any member of school staff, the Headteacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed.
2. Staff will use professional judgement and risk asses the urgency of the situation to help inform the timeframe required in establishing the pupils' whereabouts before notifying the Police. Timeliness should be on a case by case basis.
3. Designated Safeguarding Lead should, together with the class teacher, assess the child's vulnerability.
4. Children and staff should also be questioned as to the last sighting of the missing child.
5. The Headteacher will coordinate a thorough search of the school and all TA's will be deployed in the search.
6. School staff will try to locate the pupil and try to establish the whereabouts of the child.
7. If it is established that the child is not on the premises and cannot be seen. Both parents and the police must be informed. The Headteacher will phone the parents and another member of staff will call the police.
8. TA's who drive will be deployed in pairs to scout the surrounding areas. If the child can be seen, the child must be kept in sight until the parents, the Headteacher or the police can attend. TA's will take mobile phones with them and the non-driver will maintain contact with the school.
9. If the child cannot be seen in the surrounding areas, school staff should return to school and allow the police to take over the search.
10. Every effort should be made to return the child to school.

Procedures to be followed if a child is missing from a school trip.

1. Establish the last sighting of the child and report to venue staff.
2. Deploy volunteers and other staff to conduct a search.
3. If the child cannot be found. The visit leader must instruct another member of

school staff to inform the base contact for the trip – usually the Headteacher who will inform the parents.

4. The visit leader must call the police.

Notifying the Police

The information required by the Police to assist in locating and returning the pupil to a safe environment is as follows:

- The pupils name/s; date of birth; status (for example looked after child); responsible authority.
- Where and when they went missing.
- Previous missing episodes and where they went.
- Who, if anyone, they went missing with.
- What the child was wearing plus any belongings they had with them such as bags, phone etc.; include mobile number.
- Description and recent photo (school to provide Arbor photo).
- Medical history, if relevant.
- Time and location last seen.
- Circumstances or events around going missing with relevant safeguarding information.
- Details of family, friends and associates.
- Contact details of safeguarding lead if it was out of school.

Post Incident review

When such an incident has occurred, as part of the school's own safeguarding monitoring system it will be investigated and reported to the Chair of Governors and the LA Education Safeguarding Officer. If the Child is in Apple Class (EYFS) Ofsted will also be notified.

Circumstances leading up to and including the egress incident will be reviewed and adaptations made to current practice if appropriate. For children at risk of absconding an individual risk assessment must be completed and a reactive strategy put in place.