



WHISPERING TREES

MISSING FROM CENTRE PROCEDURES

Absence from Whispering Trees

Parent(s) / carer(s) are asked to let the centre know, by 9 am, if their child is ill and will not be attending Whispering trees. In the case of an emergency, they are asked to make arrangements for informing the centre of their child's absence as soon as possible. They may wish to phone or email.

If the Welfare Manager /Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has not heard from the parent(s) but the participant has not arrived at school by 9.30 am he will phone the parent(s) home/ emergency contact number one. If there is no pick-up, he will leave a message on the parent's answerphone, email them to contact him directly and phone the emergency contact person number two. He will repeat the procedure for the second contact. If there is no reply within the next two hours or, if any elements of the reply give the Head of Welfare/D.S.L cause for concern, the latter will visit / arrange for a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (D.D.S.L) to visit the home the same day to check on the health and wellbeing of the participant.

In cases of unexplained absence from the home, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will notify Social Services.

In the absence of the Welfare Manager/ D.S.L, the Head of Weldon School/D.S.L (Tim Strutz) will pick up the above duties.

The whereabouts of a participant during holidays is less easily addressed by Whispering Trees staff but, in an attempt to maintain routine, consistency and oversight, participants' attendance is more regularly spaced throughout the year. The young people work a shorter week but for 41 weeks per year. There are also opportunities for holiday visits.

Absconding from Whispering Trees

In terms of a child absconding from the centre, whilst on site or on an educational visit, they will be within eye-sight of a member of staff (the toilet of course is the exception).

Said member of staff will follow or ask another staff member, who is physically more able to keep up with the participant or who has improved rapport with that young person, to follow them. The staff member will follow at a distance and with a bearing that cannot be seen as crowding or confrontational but that gives protection.



Before leaving the site, the staff member should make sure that another member of staff is aware of the problem and equip themselves with a phone to update the centre / make a phone call in an emergency.

If the young person is not ready to return to base within 30 minutes, the parent(s) /carer(s) will be informed and a decision made about the next course of action.

Calling the police, before or after the 30 minutes, would be the last resort in the event that it was deemed the young person might cause serious harm to self or others.

If the member of staff pre-empted this reaction or if the student is in a state of panic, staff back-up and /or an earlier phone call to the parents could prove helpful. Highly anxious young people may be more easily reassured by parents but it is a case of knowing the child and their context.

Learning from the incident is important for participant and staff. Our aim is that participants do not feel so uncomfortable they need to physically distance themselves from others to the point of leaving the Whispering Trees site. We have many quiet areas to which they can retire.

Updated from KCSIE 2023

Understanding the information on Children missing from education is different to children absent from education. (part 2) all staff have been provided with the information in their annual safeguarding training.

Reviewed by Lynne Dalby, Welfare Manager

Date of review 05/09/2025

Next review 05/09/2026