



Lighthouse | Absconding (Missing Child) Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines the procedures to follow if a child leaves a session without permission (absconds) or goes missing during Lighthouse Tuition South-West provision.

It applies to all tutors and settings, including:

- Home tuition
- Hub sessions (Ivybridge and Plymouth)
- School settings and alternative provision
- Community-based activities (with prior parental agreement)

This policy should be read alongside the Lone Working Policy and Safeguarding procedures

2. Legal Framework

This policy complies with:

- Children Act 1989 & 2004
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974

3. Definition

Absconding refers to a child leaving a supervised setting without permission or going missing from a session.

4. Prevention and Risk Reduction

Lighthouse Tuition South-West will:

- Conduct dynamic risk assessments before sessions
- Ensure environments are safe and suitable
- Use open, visible spaces for sessions
- Work closely with parents/carers to understand triggers and needs
- Put individual risk management strategies in place where required

For children with SEND, tutors should be aware that absconding may be linked to anxiety, sensory overload, or distress.

5. Procedure if a Child Absconds

Immediate Actions

1. Remain calm and assess the situation quickly
2. Do not immediately chase, particularly if this may escalate risk
3. Maintain visual contact if safe to do so
4. Ensure other children remain safe





Communication

1. Contact Sophie Hocking (DSL) immediately
2. Inform parent/carer without delay
3. If the child is at immediate risk, call 999

Escalation

1. If the child is not located quickly, follow police guidance for a missing child
2. Provide clear information: description, last known location, risks

6. Key Principles

- Staff must prioritise safety over retrieval
- Chasing a child may increase risk, particularly for neurodivergent children
- Decisions should be based on dynamic risk assessment
- The child's individual needs and behaviours must always be considered

7. After the Incident

Following any absconding incident:

- A full Incident Report must be completed within 24 hours
- A review will be carried out to identify triggers and preventative strategies
- Risk assessments and support plans will be updated
- Additional safeguarding actions may be taken if required

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Tutors must:

- Follow this policy and safeguarding procedures
- Maintain awareness of exits and risks in all settings
- Report concerns immediately

Lighthouse Tuition South-West will:

- Support tutors in managing risk
- Liaise with parents, schools, and professionals
- Review incidents and implement improvements

9. Policy Review

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





Name of Tutor: _____

Signed by Tutor: _____

Date: _____

Signed on behalf of Lighthouse Tuition (South-West)

Director Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

