Local Procedure Title	**Running Away / Missing**
Site	**Coxlease School**
ACS Policy number and title	ECS 06 Running Away / Missing
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1.   Introduction

Every staff member at Priory Lyndhurst has a Duty of Care to ensure that everything that is reasonable is done to safeguard the pupils from risk of harm or injury. Indeed, ensuring that pupils placed at Priory Lyndhurst remain in the safe care of the school is a fundamental expectation of parents/carers and Placing Authorities.

Priory Lyndhurst recognises that pupils absenting themselves from school care are potentially vulnerable because of their individual levels of complex need. It is recognised that at times of crisis for pupils, their vulnerability may increase, and we know it is never safe to assume that pupils absenting themselves from staff care are making that choice independently, and that their continued absence is a matter of choice.

It is an essential expectation that all staff utilise the de-escalation and preventive skills with which they have been equipped, to prevent pupil unauthorised absence whenever reasonably practicable, bearing in mind always that "the welfare of the child is paramount". (Children Act 1989)

2.   Definition

In April 2013 the police revised their definition for 'missing' and 'absent' in relation to children and adults reported as missing:

- **Missing:** Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person maybe subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another

- **Absent**: A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.

Note that 'absent', within this definition, would not include those children defined as 'away from school without authorisation'. A child whose whereabouts are known would not be treated as either 'missing' or 'absent'.

Note that 'Absconding' or 'Unlawfully at large' are legal terms and refer to children/young people who are not at the place they should be as stated on a court/ legal order for instance on remand or subject to a curfew order. Young people in this category must be reported to the police as a missing person.

3.   Aims

Primary Aim:	To prevent pupils from absenting themselves without authority.
Secondary Aim:	To promote pupils safety by ensuring a prompt effective and appropriate response to pupil unauthorised absence. To promote the pupils safe return.
Tertiary Aim:	To ensure comprehensive staff and pupil debriefs take place in order to gain insight which may inform further preventive actions.

4. Prevention

Priory Lyndhurst equips staff with a variety of de-escalation skills, strategies and techniques through our Pro-Act Skip approach to positive behaviour management. This includes training in the use of appropriate physical preventative techniques.

The key aspects of effective prevention are:

- Effective Risk Assessment.
- Sound understanding of Pupil Needs.
- Effective and appropriate supervision, including clear allocation of responsibility.
- Good communication between staff.
- A confident, competent and assertive response to threatened unauthorised absence.
- Effective staff supervision/line management.
- Reflective practice aimed at challenging and improving practice.
- Effective staff-pupil relationships.

Each individual staff member is responsible for ensuring that they are aware of, and utilise these elements as appropriate to their role and level of responsibility.

5. Procedures

Immediate Notification

The staff member responsible for the pupil when they have absented themselves without authority must immediately inform the SLT, in the order stated below, either in person or by telephone only. They will become the responsible person. This incident must then be recorded (ECS Form 06C V02 - Event Chronology); the chronology of events is then captured on these forms and kept updated as the incident develops.

First Contact:	Clare Priday or Rebecca Sheen
If not available…	Warren Kitley or Nicole Waddington
If not available…	Anthony Merriman or Kayleigh McCarter
If not available…	Jayne Samber, Nick Jones, Gilly Drummond or Mike Harris

6. Risk Assessments and Reviews

Risk levels of students are individually identified within their risk assessments (located on 'S' Drive in school pupil information folder). These are regularly reviewed and updated. Risk levels are agreed and decided upon by all stakeholders that support the individual. Each person will have different complexities that contribute to the associated risk levels; age, learning difficulties, medical, psychological etc.

Students that regularly go 'Absent' or 'Missing' will have an individual missing risk assessment in place alongside their standard risk assessment form (ECS Form: 06 V03).

Risk levels for all pupils are established with parents and placing authorities upon admission. Parents and placing authorities are informed if these change as a result of behaviours exhibited or new developments in the life of the pupil by the head teachers.

7. Agreed Protocol with Hampshire Police

It is accepted that it is not always appropriate to phone immediately after a pupil leaves site. However, if it is likely the child will be sighted by members of the public away from the boundaries of the school and they have not been recently seen by staff, then notification should be made.

The vast majority of pupils who choose to run off will come back of their own free will. If there are no aggravating factors to their departure (i.e. threats of self-harm, CSE considerations etc.) then the most appropriate category of reporting could be 'absent'. This would give the police the relevant information should we receive any reports without a significant drain on resources.

If there are heightened concerns then it would obviously be more appropriate to report them as missing as soon as possible. Regardless of the categorisation, the attached MISPER reporting form should be completed and a photo sent to the email address at the top. As stated, the questions on the form will be asked by the call taker anyway and this form can be emailed to the call taker on receipt of the report. This should make the reporting process far more efficient.

The Responsible Person must ensure the risk category is reviewed at a frequency appropriate to the pupil's needs taking into consideration environmental factors and any new information which emerges while the pupil is absent. The Responsible Person will consult with all members of the SLT.

The Responsible Person then makes and documents all contact with Parents/Carers/Police at every stage of the process on the missing chronology form.

8. Transfer of Responsibility and Communication

All communication relating to Unauthorised Absence must be channelled through the identified Responsible Person co-ordinating the response, to facilitate appropriate documentation.

The handover of responsibility (including time) from one Responsible Person to the next MUST be clearly recorded on the chronology.

9. Return Procedure

On return, whilst appropriate arrangements are made for the pupil's care, the identified Responsible Person will ensure that all necessary telephone calls [Parents/Carers/Local Authorities/Police/significant others] are made and are documented.

The incident must be recorded on DATIX.

<u>Pupil Debrief</u>
After every incident of Unauthorised Absence the pupil will be required to attend a meeting with the head teacher/pastoral manager or Class Tutor to discuss their actions, and to consider measures to prevent future unauthorised absence. The meeting will be held on the day of return, or next working day. Day Pupils who return after their taxis have departed at the end of the school day will be debriefed the following school day by the Class Tutor or other identified Teaching staff. If a pupil is reported as a MISPER (missing person), the Police may also wish to meet with the child following their return. This meeting should be recorded on the pupil debrief form (

<u>Staff Debrief</u>
The "Unauthorised Absence Prevention Report" is only requested when deemed necessary by a Line Manager. The staff member responsible for the pupil at the time of unauthorised absence will then meet with their Line Manager to complete this form. This provides an opportunity to identify any future preventive measures; and to provide time for the staff member to reflect on the situation, offering such support as is appropriate.

10. Local Area Searches

Local area searches must be used once a student is identified as 'missing'. Local area searches may also be used to track the whereabouts of 'low risk' pupils and to prevent disturbances occurring in the local community.

- Staff involved in local area searches should be accompanied by a second staff member where possible. Staff must carry Priory Lyndhurst Identity Cards, and a mobile phone.

- Staff may <u>offer</u> to return pupils to the care of Priory Lyndhurst School if after appropriate risk assessment, they judge it safe for them to do so.

- Staff are <u>not</u> expected or encouraged to intercept and return pupils against their will, as this puts the safety of all those involved at further risk.

- Local sightings should be reported to the Responsible Person co-ordinating the response, who will contact the Police as appropriate.

Contents Checklist (Local Sites may add additional items – this is a core list)			

Local Procedure Review History:

Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Summary of revisions

		Page 5 of 5