

Missing Child and Young Person Policy

This version has been co-produced in April 2025 by the Supporting SASH group and designed to be a more accessible version of the full SASH Missing Child and Young Person Policy.

Who this is for:

This policy is for everyone involved with SASH (Safe and Sound Homes)—staff, hosts, volunteers, students, and especially young people.

What SASH Believes

- Every child and young person deserves to be safe.
 - No one should live in fear, feel unsafe, or be harmed.
 - This guide helps everyone know what to do if a young person goes missing.
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What Laws Support This Policy

- Children Act 1989
 - Children and Young Persons Act 2008
 - North Yorkshire & York Missing Children Protocol (2015)
 - SASH's own Safeguarding Policy
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What Does “Missing” Mean?

There are different types of “missing” situations:

- **Missing Child** – Reported to police by family or carers.
- **Missing from Care** – A child in care who isn't where they should be (like school or home), and no one knows where they are.

- **Away Without Authorisation** – A child is somewhere else (not in danger), but they're not where they're supposed to be.
 - **Runaway** – A child has left home or care on purpose, maybe because they were scared, angry, or influenced by someone.
 - **Police Terms:**
 - **Missing** – Can't be found, and there's concern they might be in danger.
 - **Absent** – Not where they're meant to be, but no serious danger at that moment.
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What to Do Before Someone Goes Missing

- Every young person should have a **Risk and Support Plan**.
 - This plan looks at things like:
 - Are they likely to go missing?
 - Have they done it before?
 - What can help stop it from happening again?
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What to Do If Someone Goes Missing

1. Figure out if they're **Missing** or just **Absent**.
2. Contact the police:
 - Call **999** if it's urgent.
 - Call **101** if it's not urgent.
3. Tell the police:
 - What happened
 - Why you're worried

- Who else needs to know (like their social worker or parents)
 - 4. Update the young person's Risk and Support Plan within 24 hours.
 - 5. Make sure everything is written down in the system (Salesforce) the same day.
 - 6. Tell the right people at SASH (Project Manager and Safeguarding Lead) that the police were contacted.
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When the Young Person Comes Back

- They should get the chance to talk to someone they trust about why they went missing.
- The police and professionals (like their social worker) must be told they've returned.
- Within 3 days, SASH will have a proper conversation (called a debrief) with them to talk about:
 - What happened
 - How they felt
 - What can be done to stop it from happening again
- The police might also do a "Safe and Well" check to make sure the young person wasn't hurt or in danger.