

Missing children guidance for Schools.

The purpose of this guidance is to ensure all instances of children missing from school are responded to in the same way across the county. It is the school's responsibility to ensure a child whose whereabouts is unknown and cannot be ascertained, is reported missing to the police. Whilst it is important for parents/carers to be notified of this, it should not be assumed that this is solely the parents/carers responsibility to notify the police.

Please ensure the below process is followed for children whose whereabouts is unknown and cannot be ascertained.

For general advice or guidance surrounding this, please contact the missing children coordinator for Directorate of Health, Wellbeing and Children's Services via Missing.children@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk. Please note: **this inbox should not be used to report children missing. Missing reports should be made via 101 or in an emergency situation 999.**

School staff become aware that child has not arrived at school or has gone missing from the school grounds.

Staff notify relevant safeguarding leads & head teacher in school and make all efforts to contact parents / speak to friends in school to try to ascertain whereabouts of child.

If the child is not found within a short period of time, the police must be called by the Head, Deputy Head or staff member to report the child as missing.

It is critical that the police are informed earlier rather than later. It is better to ring the Police afterwards to say that the child has been found rather than delay and thus endanger the child. The Police refer to the "golden hour" when there is the greatest chance of finding a missing child, but it is best not to leave it to the 59th minute!

Members of staff, who are not supervising pupils, will be sent to search the area in the immediate vicinity of the school.

If child is located by a staff member, police and parents to be notified as a matter of urgency by staff / head teacher etc