



## Severn Mentoring – Missing Persons Policy

*(Community Mentoring & Alternative Provision – September 2025)*

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### 1. Policy Statement

At **Severn Mentoring**, the safety and welfare of every young person in our care is our highest priority.

We recognise that some learners we support may be vulnerable, disengaged from education, or experiencing personal and social challenges that increase their risk of going missing or absconding.

This policy establishes clear procedures for preventing, responding to, and investigating incidents where a young person goes missing during or following engagement with Severn Mentoring staff.

We are committed to:

- Responding swiftly and effectively to any incident of a missing person.
- Working closely with parents/carers, referring schools, local authorities and the police.
- Recording, reporting, and reviewing all incidents to reduce future risk.

This policy applies to all Severn Mentoring staff, contractors, and volunteers working with young people in any capacity.

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### 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Protect children and young people from harm.
- Provide a clear internal and external escalation strategy.

- Ensure all missing person incidents are responded to promptly, proportionately and professionally.
- Ensure learning from incidents informs future risk management and safeguarding practice.

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### **3. Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy:

- A **missing person** is anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be at risk of harm.
- A **young person** refers to any child or young adult under the age of 18 (or up to 25 if receiving continued support through education or EHCP involvement).
- A **Severn Mentoring session** includes all activities organised or supervised by Severn Mentoring staff, including mentoring, tuition, outreach, or off-site trips.

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### **4. Preventive Measures**

Severn Mentoring reduces the risk of missing incidents through:

- Detailed **risk assessments** before all off-site or one-to-one sessions.
- Clear attendance and contact records for every learner.
- Agreements with parents/carers and referrers about expected travel, collection, and supervision arrangements.
- Staff training on dynamic risk assessment, supervision, and emergency response.
- Maintaining up-to-date emergency contact information for every learner.

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### **5. Immediate Actions When a Young Person is Missing**

If a young person is found to be missing, **time is critical**. Staff must follow the escalation procedure immediately.

#### **Stage 1 – Internal Escalation (Immediate Response)**

##### **1. Check the surroundings and contact points**

- Search the immediate area where the young person was last seen (site, building, vehicle, etc.).
- Contact the young person's mobile number (if appropriate).

- Check with peers, staff, or family if they have been in contact.

## 2. Notify management

- Inform your **Line Manager** and **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** immediately.
- Provide:
  - Name and description of the young person
  - Time and place last seen
  - Any known risks or behaviours of concern
  - Actions already taken

## 3. Escalate to Severn Mentoring Senior Management Team (SMT)

- If the young person is not located within **10 minutes** of the initial search, the incident moves to external escalation.

All internal communication must be via phone or in person — not email or text alone.

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## **Stage 2 – External Escalation (When the young person remains missing)**

If a young person remains missing after initial checks:

### 1. Contact the Police – Dial 999

- Report the individual as missing.
- Provide:
  - Full name, age, and physical description
  - Clothing worn
  - Medical needs or vulnerabilities
  - Last known location and time
  - Any known risks (e.g. self-harm, exploitation, county lines, family conflict)
- Request an incident number.

### 2. Notify the Parent/Carer

- Inform the parent/carer immediately after police contact (unless the police advise otherwise).
- Record the time and details of the conversation.

### 3. Notify Referrer / Local Authority (if applicable)

- Contact the referring school, local authority officer or social worker (if the young person is open to services).
- Where appropriate, also inform the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) if staff conduct or decision-making may be under review.

#### 4. **DSL Safeguarding Notification**

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will log the incident on the Severn Mentoring Safeguarding Record System and make a safeguarding referral if required.
- The DSL will maintain contact with the police and local authority until the young person is found safe.

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#### **Stage 3 – Once the Young Person is Located**

- Confirm the young person's safety immediately with parents/carers, police, and referrers.
- **Do not** transport or leave the young person unsupervised until their wellbeing and safety are confirmed.
- The staff member must submit a **written incident report** to the DSL within 24 hours.
- The DSL will update all agencies and record actions taken.

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#### **6. Communication and Recording**

All missing person incidents must be:

- **Reported verbally** to a manager/DSL immediately.
- **Recorded in writing** using the Severn Mentoring Incident Report Form.
- **Logged on the safeguarding system** within 24 hours.
- **Reported to external partners** (school, council, social worker) as appropriate.

The report should include:

- Name and date of birth of the young person.
- Time and place last seen.
- Who was notified, when, and how.
- Reference numbers (police, case file, etc.).
- Actions taken and by whom.
- Outcome once the person was located.

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## 7. Investigation and Post-Incident Review

After every missing person incident, Severn Mentoring conducts a full **post-event investigation** to identify lessons learned and prevent recurrence.

### 7.1 Internal Investigation

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), supported by the Senior Management Team, will:

- Review the risk assessment and session plan for that day.
- Obtain statements from all staff involved.
- Identify whether policy or procedure was followed appropriately.
- Assess whether additional training, supervision, or control measures are required.
- Record all findings in the **Missing Persons Investigation Report**.

If any procedural failure or staff conduct issue is identified, disciplinary or training action will follow in line with Severn Mentoring's internal HR and Safeguarding procedures.

### 7.2 External Partnership Review

Where appropriate:

- The DSL will liaise with the local authority, police, and referrer to contribute to any **multi-agency review**.
- Any emerging safeguarding themes (e.g. exploitation, neglect, mental health crisis) will be discussed at the next safeguarding meeting.

### 7.3 Family and Learner Support

Once the young person is found:

- A **debrief session** will take place with the young person to understand what led to the incident and how they can be supported to prevent recurrence.
- Parents/carers will be offered follow-up contact to discuss safety planning.
- Relevant support services (e.g. counselling, mentoring review, early help referral) may be recommended.

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## 8. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
All Staff	Remain vigilant, follow the escalation process, record accurately and immediately.

Role	Responsibility
<b>Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)</b>	Coordinate the response, liaise with police and external agencies, maintain records, and lead post-incident investigation.
<b>Senior Management Team (SMT)</b>	Oversee policy compliance, review outcomes, and ensure learning informs future risk management.
<b>Mentors / Tutors</b>	Follow procedures, maintain contact details, complete incident forms, and participate in reviews.

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## 9. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All records relating to missing person incidents are:

- Stored securely in compliance with the *Data Protection Act 2018* and *UK GDPR*.
- Shared only with authorised individuals and safeguarding partners on a need-to-know basis.
- Retained for the appropriate safeguarding record retention period.

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## 10. Monitoring and Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed **annually** or following any incident requiring significant external involvement.

Learning outcomes will be discussed at management and safeguarding meetings and used to update training and procedures.

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## 11. Linked Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Lone Working Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Risk Assessment Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

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## 12. Policy Ownership

**Policy Lead:** Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Rich Kear

**Deputy Lead:** Deputy DSL / Operations Manager – Jack Fowler + Josh Carter

**Approved by:** Severn Mentoring Senior Management Team

**Review Date:** 01/09/2025

**Next Review Due:** 01/09/2026

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### **Summary of Escalation Pathway**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
<b>Stage 1</b>	Internal search and notification to DSL/Manager	Within 0–10 minutes	Staff Member / Line Manager
<b>Stage 2</b>	External escalation: Police (999), Parents/Carers, Referrers	After 10 minutes or if risk is immediate	DSL / SMT
<b>Stage 3</b>	Incident reporting, communication, post-incident review	Within 24 hours	DSL / SMT