

NSB Safeguarding Newsletter

Children Missing Education

Recent cases of Child Sexual Exploitation and a number of high profile inquiries have highlighted the vulnerability of children who go missing and the associated risks of sexual exploitation. Missing children may also be vulnerable to other forms of exploitation including violent crime, gang exploitation, or drug and alcohol misuse. Local authorities are responsible for protecting children whether they go missing from their family home, from local authority care or from education.

Why children go missing

Children may run away from a problem or to somewhere they want to be, or they may be coerced to run away by someone else. Whatever the reason, it is thought that approximately 25% of children that go missing are at risk of serious harm.

The following are common risk factors that can precede a missing incident:

- Arguments and conflicts;
- Conflict within a placement;
- Poor family relationships;
- Physical and emotional abuse;
- Boundaries and control; and
- Step parent issues.

The immediate risks associated with going missing include:

- No means of support or legitimate income that can lead to high risk activities;
- Involvement in criminal activities;
- Becoming a victim of abuse;
- Becoming a victim of crime, for example through sexual assault and exploitation;
- Alcohol or substance misuse;
- Deterioration of physical and mental health;
- Missing out on education; and
- Increased vulnerability.

The longer term risks include:

- Long term drug or alcohol dependency;
- Crime;
- Homelessness;
- Disengagement from education;
- Child Sexual Exploitation; and
- Poor physical and/or mental health.



What to do if you are concerned

In the first instance, contact a member of the safeguarding team.
If you are unable to contact the team or if you feel the child is in immediate danger call 999

