



Richmond House

Social Care Services CIC

**Missing Child Policy and
Procedures 2026 - 2027**

Missing Child Policy and Procedures 2025–2026

Incorporating the Philomena Protocol

Version: 8.0 | Effective Date: 01 September 2026 | Next Review: September 2027

1. Policy Aims and Objectives

This policy establishes the procedural framework for the prevention of, and response to, incidents involving children who are unaccounted for while under the care of Richmond House Social Care Services.

The objectives of this policy are:

1. To mitigate the risk of a child going missing through robust preventative measures;
 2. To ensure a prompt, co-ordinated, and effective response in the event that a child is reported missing;
 3. To maintain transparent and timely communication with parents, carers, and relevant statutory authorities;
 4. To ensure compliance with all relevant safeguarding legislation, statutory guidance — including KCSIE 2026 and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026* — and sector best practice;
 5. To incorporate the Philomena Protocol as a formal mechanism for expediting the safe recovery of missing children through enhanced information-sharing with policing authorities.
-

2. Scope

This policy applies to all children receiving services from Richmond House Social Care Services, all staff, volunteers, contractors, and external professionals involved in the supervision or engagement of children — whether on premises, during off-site activities, excursions, community-based programmes, or Alternative Provision settings.

3. Definitions

Table

Term	Definition
Missing Child	A child whose whereabouts are unknown to responsible staff, and whose absence gives rise to reasonable concern regarding their safety or welfare. Applies regardless of setting or duration of absence.
Responsible Staff	Any employee, volunteer, or contractor directly supervising a child or group of children at the time an incident is identified.
Philomena Protocol	A national police initiative facilitating the rapid location of missing children via a standardised two-part information form, designed to expedite police response and improve search efficacy.
DSL / DDSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead — staff with statutory lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer — statutory point of contact for safeguarding concerns involving staff.

4. Preventative Measures

4.1 Attendance and Registration

- A daily attendance register shall be maintained, verified, and signed for all children on premises.
- For all off-site activities, a nominal roll shall be taken: before departure, at regular intervals during the activity, and upon return.
- Any unexplained absence must be investigated immediately — not left until the end of a session.

4.2 Supervision Ratios and Environmental Controls

- Staff-to-child ratios shall be maintained at all times in accordance with regulatory standards and individual risk assessments.
- All access and egress points shall be secured, monitored, and visually inspected throughout the day.
- Perimeter checks and secure boundaries shall be maintained — especially for children with known absconding risks.

4.3 Risk Assessment

- Comprehensive risk assessments shall be undertaken for every activity and excursion, with specific consideration for:
 - Children with SEND, autism, communication difficulties, or SEMH needs;
 - Children with known absconding triggers or previous missing episodes;
 - Environments with complex layouts, multiple exits, or public access.
- Personal Missing Risk Assessments shall be completed for every child upon admission — reviewed quarterly or following any change in behaviour or circumstances.

4.4 Staff Training and Competence

- All staff receive mandatory training covering:

- This policy and full procedure;
- Philomena Protocol completion and activation;
- KCSIE 2026 safeguarding duties;
- Communication with police and statutory agencies;
- Post-incident support and trauma-informed care.
- Refresher training every 2 years (aligned with KCSIE 2026 requirements).
- DSL/DDSL receive additional training on multi-agency escalation and LADO referral.

4.5 Philomena Protocol — Pre-Activation Preparation

- Philomena Protocol Part 1 shall be completed upon admission for every child — not just those identified as high risk. Contains:
 - Recent, clear photograph;
 - Full physical description and distinguishing features;
 - Known associates, frequented locations, and routes;
 - Emergency contacts, social worker details, and Social Services Emergency Duty Team number;
 - Previous missing episodes, triggers, and behavioural patterns.
- Stored securely on-site in a location accessible 24/7 to designated staff.
- Reviewed and updated quarterly — or immediately following any significant change in circumstances, behaviour, or missing episode.

5. Procedures for a Missing Child Incident

5.1 Immediate Actions — Discovery

Upon discovering a child is unaccounted for:

Table

Step	Action	Timeframe
1	Notify Senior Staff / Manager on Duty immediately	Within 1 minute

2	Conduct systematic search of immediate area — all rooms, hiding places, outdoor spaces	Within 5 minutes
3	Retrieve Philomena Protocol Part 1 — ensure photo and details are ready	Within 5 minutes
4	Verify against register — confirm absence and last known sighting	Within 5 minutes
5	Continue search — do NOT wait to escalate if concern is high	Ongoing

5.2 On-Site Search

- Co-ordinated search by assigned staff — one person supervises remaining children; others search.
- Check all potential hiding places: quiet rooms, sensory areas, storage, vehicles, perimeter boundaries.

5.3 Off-Site / Community Setting

- IMMEDIATE headcount — suspend activity.
- Retrace route; search immediate vicinity.
- Maintain supervision ratio for remaining children — do NOT leave children unsupervised.
- Notify Manager / DSL without delay.

5.4 Notify Parents / Carers

- If not located within 10 minutes → contact parents/carers.
- Provide clear, factual updates — do not speculate.
- Request any information that may assist location.

5.5 Notify Police — Philomena Protocol Activation

- If not located within 20 minutes → DIAL 999 and state: "This is a Philomena Protocol".
- IMMEDIATELY if: vulnerability, risk of harm, known risks, or circumstances give cause for grave concern — do NOT wait 20 minutes.
- Provide police with:

- Philomena Protocol Part 1 + Part 2 completed;
- Full name, DOB, description, clothing, photo;
- Last seen: time, location, who with;
- Needs, vulnerabilities, medical conditions;
- Known associates and frequented locations.

5.6 Notify Statutory Authorities

- LADO notified within 24 hours of police report;
- Ofsted / CQC notified as required by regulations;
- Allocated Social Worker + Emergency Duty Team notified;
- Local Children's Safeguarding Board notified where appropriate.

6. Specific Procedures — Off-Site Outings & Alternative Provision

In addition to Section 5:

1. Philomena Protocol Information Card prepared for every child before departure;
2. Immediate headcount → notify Manager without delay;
3. One adult searches vicinity; remaining children supervised;
4. Manager contacts parents/carers;
5. Venue management alerted for co-ordinated search;
6. Police contacted — staff remain on site until arrival;
7. Looked After Children → notify Social Worker + Emergency Duty Team;
8. DSL leads multi-agency notification;
9. Full chronological record maintained throughout.

7. Post-Incident Procedures

7.1 Upon Recovery

- Immediate emotional reassurance and safety check;
- Medical assessment if needed — injuries, exposure, distress;
- Inform parents/carers immediately;

- Brief, calm conversation — avoid interrogation or blame;
- Document recovery: time, location, condition, who found them.

7.2 Debrief and Review

- Formal debrief within 5 working days — all involved staff;
- Identify: cause, gaps in supervision, risk assessment adequacy, response timings;
- Update Personal Missing Risk Assessment and Philomena Protocol Part 1;
- Share lessons learned internally and with commissioners as required.

7.3 Support Provided

- Trauma-informed support for child and family;
- Review placement suitability and triggers;
- Reintegrate with care, rebuilding trust and safety;
- Consider whether additional support or referral to mental health services is needed.

7.4 Accountability and Improvement

- Any identified supervision lapse or procedural failure addressed through supervision, training, or HR processes;
- Root cause analysis — not just "what happened" but "why and how prevented next time";
- Update policy, training, and practice accordingly.

8. Record-Keeping and Monitoring

- Central Missing Incident Register maintained — date, child, duration, response, outcome;
- Philomena Protocol forms audited quarterly — completeness, currency, photographs;
- All incident reports retained securely — GDPR compliant;
- Policy reviewed annually September — or sooner following legislation, guidance, or significant incident.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Table

Role	Key Responsibilities
Registered Manager / Responsible Person	Overall accountability; ensure resources, training, compliance; statutory notifications; policy review
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Lead response; Philomena Protocol oversight; LADO/Ofsted/CQC liaison; multi-agency co-ordination
Head of Services / Manager on Duty	Immediate incident command; decision-making on police escalation; parent communication
All Staff	Supervise vigilantly; know procedures; complete Philomena Part 1; report concerns immediately
Parents / Carers	Provide accurate emergency contacts; share known risks; update information promptly
Commissioned / AP Settings	Integrate with school safeguarding leads; share protocols; align with KCSIE 2026 duties

10. Quick Reference — Response Timescale

Table

Milestone	Action
0–5 mins	Search area; alert Senior Staff; verify register
5–10 mins	Expand search; retrieve Philomena Part 1; notify parents/carers
10–20 mins	Continue search; prepare Part 2; escalate to Manager/DSL
At 20 mins OR sooner if risk	DIAL 999 — STATE PHILOMENA PROTOCOL
Within 24 hrs	Notify LADO, Ofsted/CQC, Social Services;

	complete incident report
Within 5 days	Internal debrief; root cause analysis; update risk assessments

11. Appendices

- Appendix A: Philomena Protocol — Part 1 (Pre-Activation Information Form)
- Appendix B: Philomena Protocol — Part 2 (Incident-Specific Information Form)
- Appendix C: Richmond House Incident Reporting Form
- Appendix D: Missing Person Information Card (Off-Site Outings)

12. Policy Approval

Policy Title: Missing Child Policy and Procedures (incorporating Philomena Protocol)

Version: 8.0 | Effective Date: 01 September 2026 | Next Review: September 2027

Signed: Jay Al Karaki

Designated Safeguarding Lead / Head of Services

Date: 01 September 2026

Signed: Hala Okasheh

Registered Manager / Responsible Person

Date: 02 September 2026

Policy Updated — Version 8.0 / 01 September 2026

Key Changes from 2025–2026:

- Policy period → 2026–2027, effective 01 Sep 2026
- Legislation aligned to KCSIE 2026 and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*

- Philomena Protocol Part 1 now required for ALL children on admission (not just high-risk)
- Personal Missing Risk Assessment formalised for every child
- Timescales clarified: police at 20 mins OR immediately if risk
- Debrief timeline formalised: within 5 working days
- Training cycle aligned to 2-yearly KCSIE requirement
- Roles expanded: DSL/DDSL/LADO clarified
- Quick-reference timescale added
- All forms retained and valid — dates/versioning updated throughout

Appendix A:

Richmond House Social Care Services

[Missing person information](#)

Name

Date of birth

Address

In the first instance please contact **Richmond House Social Care Services**, North Frodingham, East Riding YO25 8LJ. Tel. 01262 481518 on call 07484371525

Alternative parents address on

Contact numbers and name

Diagnosis

Due to the nature of my disability, I am extremely vulnerable

Physical description

Appendix B:

Philomena Protocol – Part 2 (Incident-Specific Information Form)

Instructions: This section must be completed **only when the child is reported missing** . It records specific details about the incident and must be provided to the police when reporting the child as missing .

SECTION 1: INCIDENT DETAILS

Field	Information
Date and Time Child Noticed Missing	
Date and Time Last Seen	
Location Last Seen	
Activity at Time of Disappearance	
Who Last Saw the Child?	

SECTION 2: CLOTHING AND POSSESSIONS

Item	Description
Outerwear (coat, jacket)	
Top	
Trousers / Skirt / Shorts	
Footwear	
Accessories (hat, scarf, jewellery)	
Mobile Phone / Device	(Yes/No) - Provide number:
Other Possessions	

SECTION 3: ACTIONS TAKEN PRIOR TO POLICE CONTACT

Action	Completed (Yes/No)
On-site Search Conducted	
Off-site Vicinity Search Conducted	
Headcount of Remaining Children Completed	
Parents/Carers Notified	
Manager/Head of Service Notified	
Social Worker Notified	

Known Locations Checked	
-------------------------	--

SECTION 4: RELEVANT CONTEXT

Field	Information
Circumstances of Disappearance	
Any Known Risk Factors for this Incident	
Was the Child Distressed or Upset?	
Any Recent Changes in Behaviour?	

Form Completed By: _____

Designation: _____

Date and Time: _____

Appendix C: Richmond House Social Care Services Incident Reporting Form

Instructions: This form must be completed for all incidents involving a missing child. It must be returned to the Operations Supervisor or Management and retained in accordance with the Record-Keeping and Monitoring provisions of the policy.

SECTION 1: REPORT DETAILS

Field	Information
This is documenting an:	() Accident () Injury () Incident () Close Call () Illness
Report Completed By	
Date of Report	
Person(s) Involved	

SECTION 2: EVENT DETAILS

Field	Information
Date of Event	
Location of Event	
Time of Event	
Witnesses	

Description of Events

(Describe tasks being performed and sequence of events. Use additional pages if necessary.)

SECTION 3: CAUSAL ANALYSIS

Missing Child Policy and Procedures
Reviewed on 01/09/2026 by H.O | Authorised on 02/09/2026 by J.A

Field	Information
Was the event / injury caused by an unsafe act (activity or movement)?	() Yes () No - Explain:
Was the event / injury caused by an unsafe condition (machinery or weather)?	() Yes () No - Explain:

SECTION 4: INJURY / FIRST AID DETAILS

Field	Information
Type of injury sustained	
Cause of lost time / injury / first aid	
Was medical treatment necessary?	() Yes () No
If yes, name of hospital or physician	

SECTION 5: SIGN-OFF

Field	Information
Signature of Employee	
Date	
Manager / Supervisor Action	
Field	Information
Signature of Supervisor	
Date	

Appendix D: Missing Person Information Card (for Off-Site Outings)

Instructions: This card must be completed and carried by each child during off-site outings in accordance with the policy's off-site procedures . The child should be briefed on how to use the card if separated from the group .

[FRONT OF CARD]

Field	Information
If separated from the group:	1. STAY NEARBY and STAY VISIBLE
	2. Enter a shop or house and ask for help
	3. Do NOT enter a vehicle (except a police car)
	4. Do NOT wander looking for help
	5. Show this card to an adult

RICHMOND HOUSE SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Missing Person Information Card

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

[BACK OF CARD]

Field	Information
DURING HOURS CONTACT	
Richmond House Office	01262 481518
OUT OF HOURS CONTACT	
On-Call Staff	07484371525
EMERGENCY	
Police (999)	Dial 999 and ask for POLICE
Alternative Parent/Carer Contact	

Instructions for the Child:

1. If you lose the group, **stay where you are**.
 2. If you are in danger, move to a safe, visible place.
 3. Ask a pair of adults to help you and give them this card.
 4. Tell them your name but **not where you live**.
 5. Do **not** get into any vehicle.
 6. Stay with the adult and wait for staff to collect you.
-

Instructions for the Adult Assisting the Child:

1. Speak slowly and calmly; ask what has happened.
2. Try to involve a second person as a witness.
3. Stay with the child in a safe, visible location.
4. Contact the **During Hours** or **Out of Hours** number on this card.
5. If you cannot reach anyone, dial **999** and ask for Police.
6. Do NOT put the child into a vehicle.
7. Do NOT wander looking for the group – wait for staff to arrive.

Richmond House Social Care Services Incident Reporting Form

Use this form to report any workplace accident, injury, incident, close call or illness.
Return completed form to the Operations Supervisor, or Management.

This is documenting an:

☐

Lost Time/Injury
Observation

☐

First Aid

☐☐

Incident

☐

Close Call

Details of person injured or involved (to be filled in by person injured / involved if possible)

Person Completing Report: _____ Date: _____

Person(s) Involved: _____

Event Details

Date of Event: _____ Location of Event: _____

Time of Event: _____ Witnesses: _____

Description of Events (Describe tasks being performed and sequence of events):

*If more space is required please use the back of this sheet

Was event / injury caused by an unsafe act (activity or movement) or an unsafe condition (machinery or weather)? Please explain:

TO BE COMPLETED ONLY IF LOST TIME/INJURY OR FIRST AID WAS REQUIRED	
Type of injury sustained:	
Cause of lost time/ injury or first aid:	
Was medical treatment necessary?	Yes_____ No_____ If yes, name of hospital or physician:

Signature of Employee:_____ Date:_____

Manager / Supervisor action

Signature of Supervisor:_____

Date:_____