NATIONAL YOUTH MUSIC THEATRE

IN TUNE WITH YOU

MISSING CHILD POLICY

P-MC-2611/1

DEFINITIONS

This policy has regard to the definitions in the main NYMT Safeguarding Policy.

A child is **missing** when their whereabouts cannot be established. They are treated as missing until they are located and their wellbeing is confirmed.

POLICY STATEMENT

The safety and security of the Young Company Members in our care at NYMT is paramount. Every care is taken to ensure that the Young Company Members are accounted for at all times. This policy has specific regard to children in NYMT's care, defined as a person under the age of 18. The procedures in this policy may offer helpful guidance in the event of a Young Company Member of 18 years or older being unaccounted for.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy. The procedures in this policy may be adapted as necessary and as appropriate to the location, Young Company Member age and other factors. The CEO and Head of Pastoral Care have a wide discretion in relation to the procedures in this policy. This discretion never delays contacting the police where a child may be at risk of harm. There is no minimum time to wait before reporting a child missing.

NYMT distinguishes between a child who has gone missing while in the care of NYMT, to which this policy refers, and a child who has not arrived at the start of their stay with NYMT for unknown reasons; in this instance the Pastoral Lead will contact the child's parents or carers straight away.

PROCEDURES

Registers are taken on residential courses at the beginning and end of each day, at the start of each rehearsal or performance session, after each meal break, and before and after any movement from one location to another, including group travel. On non-residential days, registers are taken at the beginning and after each meal break. Staff know the whereabouts of the Young Company Members in their charge, or how to find them, at all times.

At all times staff implement strategies to maximise the safety and security of the Young Company Members in the care of NYMT, particularly conscious of those occasions where locations may not be well known to the Young Company Members or staff.

For every Young Company Member on an activity, the Pastoral Lead can access at all times: full name, date of birth and home address; a physical description; mobile number; medical information and medication; and parent or carer contact details.

IN THE EVENT OF A SUSPECTED MISSING CHILD

In the unlikely event that it is suspected that a child has gone missing, the following procedure is put into action:

1. Staff keep the other Young Company Members safe and supervised.
2. A roll call is taken to confirm who is missing.
3. The Pastoral Lead and the DSL (or a Deputy DSL) are informed. If neither can be reached, this must not delay the next steps.
4. A member of staff starts a written log of times, who has been told and actions taken.
5. **Call 999 immediately** if there is any reason to think the child may be at risk of harm – for example, they need medication, there are concerns about their mental health or possible exploitation, their absence is out of character, it is after dark, or they are in an unfamiliar place.
6. The child's mobile phone is called. Other Young Company Members and staff, including the creative team, are asked when and where they last saw the child and whether they know of any reason for their absence.
7. At least two members of staff, where possible, actively search the last known location and the immediate area, including bedrooms, toilets and dressing rooms. Venue or site staff are asked to help.
8. If these steps do not find the child, the DSL (or Deputy DSL) reports them missing to the police – 999 if they may be at risk of harm, otherwise 101 – without waiting for any set period, and telephones the parents or carers.
9. Staff give the police the information held under *Procedures*, the time and place the child was last seen, and what they were wearing.
10. The DSL leads contact with the police and parents, and agrees with the Pastoral Lead any further steps, such as a full search or evacuation of the premises.

INVESTIGATION & REVIEW

After every incident, the DSL reviews what happened and records it in the incident log, with any changes needed to procedures. Where the police were contacted, or the DSL considers the incident serious, the DSL reports to the Board, the Chair and CEO consider whether to report a serious incident to the Charity Commission (Safeguarding Policy 6.2.6), and this policy is reviewed.

If a child is found after a period of going missing but before it is reported to the police and the child's parents or carers, the Pastoral Lead will always contact the child's parents or carers to inform them about the incident as soon as possible.

APPENDIX A: POLICY UPDATES & REVIEW

This version dated 1 November 2026

Date of next review: November 2027.

The following updates were made since the previous version:

- Added a definition of "missing" from College of Policing guidance
- Clarified that there is no minimum waiting time before contacting the police
- Aligned register points with the Safeguarding Policy and added information held for the police
- Revised the missing procedure: written log, DSL informed immediately, 999 where there is risk of harm, and reporting to the police and parents without a fixed waiting period
- Added information on a child who does not arrive
- Updated Investigation & Review, including Board and Charity Commission reporting and contacting parents when a child is found if parents not already contacted
- Minor corrections to headings and role titles