

# Missing Student Policy (and procedures when a child is not collected from school)



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## Policy Statement

When a child goes missing or runs away they are at risk. Safeguarding children includes protecting them from this risk. Children's safety is maintained as the highest priority at all times both on and off the premises. In the unlikely event of a student going missing, our missing student procedure is followed.

This policy follows:

- Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care – DfE Jan 2014
- Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities – 26 November 2013, Last updated 5 September 2016
- Working Together to Safeguard Children and related statutory guidance 26 March 2015, Last updated December 2023.
- The Missing Children and Adults Strategy (2011);

## Students registered absent from a lesson

- Students of compulsory school age must register at Reception at the start of the school day and also at the start of afternoon lessons (and sign out at the end of the school day).
- All students are registered electronically for each lesson within the first 10 minutes of the start of the lesson.
- If a student is missing from a lesson, office staff will immediately telephone
  - the student
  - the matron of the boarding house if the student is a boarder, or homestay family
  - parent or other emergency contact.
- If the parent of a child of compulsory school age is not able to explain where the child is, the office staff will telephone again at the end of the day to check the child has been found.

## If a student is judged to have 'gone missing' from school:

The fact that the student is missing will be reported to the school office who will inform the Vice Principal (Boarding/Operations) or one of the Senior Management Team (SMT) who will coordinate the procedure (The Coordinator).

- Attempts will be made to contact the student by mobile phone.
- The Coordinator will arrange a thorough search of the buildings and immediate grounds.
- The Coordinator will arrange a visual search of the surrounding area.
- Registers will be monitored to ensure that no other students are missing.
- Staff and the student's peers will be questioned to establish where and when the student was last seen and / or to understand why the student may have gone missing.
- If the student is not found within 30 minutes the parents/carers will be informed by the Vice Principal (Boarding/Operations) or one of the SMT to try to establish the whereabouts of the student.
- The Coordinator will liaise with the Principal.
- If the missing child is subject to a child protection plan or is a looked after child, the social worker for the child will be immediately informed.

- If the student may be at serious risk or is missing in suspicious circumstances, the Vice Principal (Boarding/Operations) or another member of the SMT will contact the police to report the student missing immediately. This applies to all boarding students if they have been missing for more than 60 minutes.

**If a student goes missing from an outing:**

As soon as a student is reported to be missing, staff will ask students to stand with their designated adult in charge and carry out a head count. Staff will carry out a search of the immediate area and try to contact the student by mobile phone.

- The trip leader will be informed and they will inform the school office who will alert the Vice Principal (Boarding/Operations) or another member of the SMT (the Coordinator) who will coordinate the response.
- If appropriate the leader will contact security staff of the location (if relevant) for help in locating the student.
- The Coordinator will inform the Principal and parents/carers.
- If the student is missing for more than 60 minutes the trip leader will contact the police and will remain in phone contact with the police and the Coordinator.
- If possible the remaining students will be taken back to school or to a safe area.

**If a student goes missing from a boarding house:**

The fact that the student is missing will be reported to the House Staff.

- The House Staff will arrange a thorough search of the boarding house, the school building and immediate grounds. Attempts will be made to contact the student by mobile phone.
- The House Staff will arrange a search in the immediate surrounding area.
- Registers will be taken in the house to ensure that no other students missing.
- Staff and the student's peers will be asked if they have seen the missing student, to establish where/when the student was last seen and understand why the student may be missing.
- If the student is not found, the parents/carers will be informed by the House Staff. It will be established whether they know the whereabouts of the student.
- If the missing student is subject to a child protection plan or is a looked after child, the social worker for the child will be immediately informed.
- The Principal will be informed (if not done already).
- If the student is missing for 60 minutes the House Staff or Senior Manager will contact the police to report them missing. This must be earlier if the student is felt to be vulnerable, may be at serious risk or is missing in suspicious circumstances.

**If a student goes missing from a homestay accommodation:**

- The Host will arrange a thorough search of the house and immediate grounds. Attempts will be made to contact the student by mobile phone. The host must inform Bath Academy if a contact with the student is not established or in suspicious circumstances  
01225334577 - 8.15 – 17.15 from Monday to Friday  
007400618999 – out of hours emergency number provided by VIP Guardians
- Bath Academy Staff and the student's peers will be asked if they have seen the missing student, to establish where/when the student was last seen and understand why the student may be missing.
- If the student is not found, the parents/carers will be informed by the Bath Academy Staff. It will be established whether they know the whereabouts of the student.
- If the missing student is subject to a child protection plan or is a looked after child, the social worker for the child will be immediately informed.
- The Principal will be informed (if not done already).
- If the student is missing for 60 minutes the Bath Academy Senior Manager will contact the police to report them missing. This must be earlier if the student is felt to be vulnerable, may be at serious risk or is missing in suspicious circumstances.

**When the student is found:**

- A member of staff will care for the student and establish what happened. The student may be distressed and need to be comforted and the health and welfare of the student will be the immediate concern. Medical treatment will be arranged where appropriate.
- If the student is subject to a child protection plan or is a looked after child their social worker will be involved immediately to care for their welfare.
- The parents/carers, staff and any organisations that have been alerted will be informed that the student has been found as soon as is practicable.
- Children's Social Care will arrange for the transportation of the student if necessary.
- Where a missing child is over 16 years, discussion should take place between Children's Social Care and the Police regarding the legal powers to enforce a return.
- In light of what the student says about returning to their home or boarding house, and in relation to any previous knowledge and/or strategy meeting, the decision as to whether it is safe for the student to return to their home or boarding house must be made and the reasons for the decision recorded. If it is not deemed safe, the Police must contact Children's Social Care, or where a looked after child the child's social worker or manager or where outside working hours the emergency duty service manager for a joint police/social care decision to be made regarding immediate placement arrangements.
- Where appropriate a strategy discussion with involved agencies will occur within one day.

**After the Incident:**

- The Duty Staff will discuss the events surrounding the disappearance of the student.
- Where a child indicates or there is suspicion that a criminal offence has taken place either during the absence or leading to the absence the Police must be notified.
- The student will meet with an appropriate member of staff (Vice Principal – Boarding/Operations), Student Welfare and Accommodation Officer). They will discuss the incident and ensure that appropriate support is put in place (e.g. problem solving, counselling)
- If the Police and Social Services were involved in the incident then they will conduct a return home / to boarding interview within 72 hours.
- If appropriate a letter will be sent home outlining the circumstances of the incident.
- If a student shows a pattern of going missing from school or, under some circumstances following a single incident, the Welfare Officer or Vice Principal (Boarding) may put in place a risk assessment for that student. This will be distributed to those with pastoral responsibility and the Educational Visits Coordinator who will be responsible for ensuring that members of staff who plan trips are made aware.
- Staff will talk to all students to ensure that they understand that they must not leave the group/building.
- The Coordinator (day incidents) or House Staff (boarding incidents) should complete a Missing Student Form and submit it to the Vice Principal (Boarding). This should include statements taken from students and staff involved in the incident. All incidents should be recorded on ISAMS along with any completed forms.
- Any appropriate agencies should be contacted by a member of the SMT depending on the nature/severity of the incident. OFSTED, RIDDOR etc.

**Procedure when a child is not collected from school**

If a child is not collected within half an hour of the agreed collection time, we will call the contact numbers for the parent or carers. If there is no answer, the Vice Principal (Pastoral) will begin to call the

emergency numbers for this child. During this time, the child will be safely looked after. If there is no response from the parents' or carers' contact numbers or the emergency numbers, the member of staff will make emergency arrangements for the child and will arrange for a visit to be made to the child's house and will check with the Police. We will make a full written report of the incident. We undertake to look after the child safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care, until such a time as s/he has been collected by a parent, guardian or carer, or until appropriate, alternative care arrangements have been made with Social Care and/or the Police in order to prioritise the child's safety. The school's DSL will keep a record of incidents where parents/carers do not collect a child from school or are late for no explained or good reason, or where there are repeated incidents. If any concerns about the child's safety and welfare result, these will be dealt with in accordance with the school's child protection policy and procedures detailed in its staff behaviour and child protection policy.

Appendix : Missing Student Incident Form

Name of student	Date of incident	
<b>Part 1</b> Details of circumstance where student went missing		
Actions of staff on duty - who informed		
Immediate support provided on student being located		
Staff completing part 1 of form Print	Date	Signed
<b>Part 2</b> Details of investigation of incident		
Further support provided		
Further actions as a result of the incident		
Date recorded on Missing Student list		
Senior staff completing record		