

Missing Child Policy

Updated February 2022

POLICY STATEMENT

The Safety of any child that we work with is paramount, so UK Guardians ensures Children's safety is always maintained as the highest priority. Every attempt is made through carrying out any outings, excursions, and activities. In the unlikely event of a child going missing, our missing child procedure is followed.

PROCEDURES

- **Call the student's mobile phone**
 - **Contact Emergency number: 07833115915 or 01425 529118 (24/7)**
 - **Contacting the missing student's school, host family & friends**
 - **Checking social media**
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- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing you must alert the emergency number **07833115915** or speak with Helen Herridge – UKG Director or if not available the lead person on duty.
 - The Lead person calls the police and reports the child as missing.
 - The Lead person will carry out a thorough search of the buildings and then of the local area where the child had last been known to be.
 - The Leader talks to all relevant people to find out when and where the child was last seen and records this.
 - The Leader will co-ordinate a thorough search of the locality making sure that the other children are safe and supervised.
 - Local staff and host families will be called to help with the search making sure the response is rapid and no time is wasted.
 - Once a proper search has been co-ordinated the parents of the child should be notified.

CHILD GOING MISSING ON AN EXCURSION

This describes what to do when students are out on an outing, leaving the lead person or Helen Herridge. If the lead person has accompanied children on the outing, the procedures are adjusted accordingly.

- As soon as it is noticed that a child is missing, staff carry out a headcount to ensure that no other child has gone astray. One staff member searches the immediate vicinity but does not search beyond that.
- The Office is contacted immediately by phone (if not on the outing) and the incident recorded.
- The Office contacts the police and reports the child as missing.

- Staff take the remaining children back to the setting, leaving a member of staff in the area of the outing.
- The Lead person will co-ordinate a thorough search of the locality making sure that the other children are safe and supervised.
- Local people will be called upon to help with the search making sure the response is rapid and no time is wasted.
- Staff keep calm and do not let the other children become anxious or worried.
- The lead person speaks with the parent(s).
- The lead person carries out a full investigation taking written statements from all the staff in the room or who were on the outing.
- The key person/staff member writes an incident report detailing:
 - ***The investigation***
 - The date and time of the report.
 - What staff/children were in the group/outing and the name of the staff designated responsible for the missing child.
 - When the child was last seen in the group/outing.
 - What has taken place in the group or outing since the child went missing.
 - The time it is estimated that the child went missing.
 - A conclusion is drawn as to how the breach of security happened.
 - If the incident warrants a police investigation, all staff co-operate fully. In this case, the police will handle all aspects of the investigation, including interviewing staff. Children's social care may be involved if it seems likely that there is a child protection issue to address.
 - The insurance provider is informed.
 - Missing child incidents are very worrying for all concerned. Part of managing the incident is to try to keep everyone as calm as possible.
 - The staff will feel worried about the child, especially the key person or the designated carer responsible for the safety of that child for the outing. They may blame themselves and their feelings of anxiety and distress will rise as the length of time the child is missing increases.

WHEN A CHILD IS FOUND

The attitude of professionals, such as police and social workers, towards a student who has been missing can have a big impact on how they will engage with subsequent investigations and protection planning. However, 'streetwise' they may appear, they are children and may be extremely vulnerable to multiple risks. A supportive approach when a student returns, actively listening and responding to their needs, will have a greater chance of preventing the student from going missing again and safeguarding them against other risks.

ACTIONS TO BE FOLLOWED BY STAFF ONCE THE PUPIL IS FOUND

- Staff will talk with, take care of and comfort the student.
- Staff will speak with the other students to ensure that they understand why they should not leave without obtaining permission and notifying the UK Guardians office.
- The DSL will speak with the parents/agent to report the incident, and then record an account of the incident by writing a letter to the parents.
- The DSL will carry out a full investigation involving, if appropriate, the Police and the appropriate Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- The written report of the incident will record details of time, place, members of staff, the circumstances in which the student went missing, an outline of what was understood to have happened, the length of time during which the student was missing and an initial explanation of how the incident appeared to have arisen. Written statements may be invited from all.
- Any media questions will be referred to a partner / DSL at Head Office
April Miller – DSL
april@ukguardians.co.uk
Tel: 07534258132
- All relevant procedures will be reviewed in the light of the incident.

Review Date: February 2023