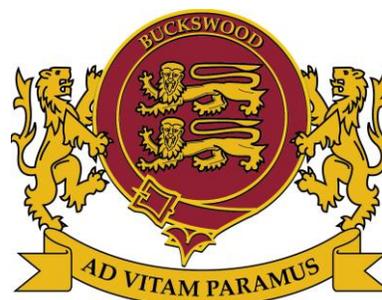


# POLICY STATEMENT



Policy	Missing Student Policy
OFSTED Standard No	
School Department	Safeguarding

Date Written	21/02/2018
Written by	Giles Sutton / DSL
Approved by	SMT
Date of Approval	28/02/18
Next major review date	February 2019
Location and disseminations	A copy of the policy can be found, in the school admin office and on the school website.
The context of the policy and its relationship to other policies	This policy should be considered in conjunction with other written policies on behaviour, health and safety, medicines, school visits, child protection and safeguarding.

## Missing Pupil Policy

This policy addresses ISI Regulatory Requirements (Effective from February 2016), Part 3 - Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils, para 15 and should be read in conjunction with the School's safeguarding policies. In addition, it links with the DFE guidance on children who go missing from home or care, January 2014. National minimum boarding standards.

### 1. Introduction

Safeguarding and student welfare is of the utmost importance at Buckswold school. When a person goes missing, they are at risk and vulnerable.

For the purposes of this policy the term missing person means; Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the content suggests the person

may be subject of a crime or at risk to themselves and others.

This procedure is to be used when searching for, and if necessary, reporting, any pupil missing from Buckswood School. The procedure includes the requirement to record any incident, the action taken and the reasons given by the pupil for being missing. It is vital that clear lines of communication are open during this process, especially when outside agencies are involved. One person needs to lead and take charge of the process, whilst keeping all other agencies updated on a regular basis until the missing person is found and brought back to school.

NB: A child going missing from School or from home is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow this procedure for dealing with children who go missing:

Staff should act to identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation. Consequently the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or in his absence, one of the Additional Safeguarding Leads should always be informed when a pupil is found to be missing from school. The DSL or, (in the case of boarders, the Additional DSL) the relevant Housemaster/Housemistress and or Cover Master/Cover Mistress, will always apply the locally agreed procedure in acting to safeguard any child who is missing from school. In particular, the matter will be referred to other agencies, including children's social care services and the police in cases where a pupil has gone missing for longer than the agreed initial timeframe, or where a single instance of truancy or running away gives rise to concerns of abuse or neglect or other risk of harm, or where there is evidence of a crime. In cases where a student is on a Tier 4 visa and there is a possibility, that they may leave the country, UK boarder force should be informed.

## **2. Missing Child Procedure for Day pupils and Boarders within the school Day:**

### **Children Missing from Education**

The Attendance Officer will check the registers in the morning. When a Day or Boarding student has not arrived by 09:00 and a message has not been received, they will refer to the Deputy Principal of Teaching and Learning and will follow up with a phone call home or to the Boarding House.

### **Subject Teacher**

Subject Teachers have a responsibility to maintain an electronic register for each lesson within ten minutes of the start of the lesson and to alert the Attendance Officer or any member of the SMT if there is an unexplained absence. Procedures will be instituted to look for the missing child.

If a student's absence is not accounted for after relevant phone calls and searching the

parents/carers must be kept informed and the Deputy Principal of Teaching & Learning and the Attendance Officer will action under procedures for 'Children Missing from Education.' The DSL will then become involved.

If the student cannot be traced within an hour of their being reported missing, a member of the Senior Management team along with the DSL and the Attendance Officer will make a Risk Assessed Judgment of the situation (see below) and make a decision as to whether to inform the police immediately; or whether a longer timescale should be created and what other members of staff should do during any such time extension, including key check- points, and a cut-off point after which the police must be contacted. This will always be in agreement with the parent when parents can be contacted, if not then the report will still be made. If Police are contacted, SPOA(Single Point of Advice) should also be informed and they may request a SOR(Statement of Referral) This may trigger multi agency work with ESCC. It is vital that systems of clear communication are open and that the process is led by one person which will be the DSL or DDSL in his absence who informs and updates the other people involved.

The DSL (or, in their absence the Additional DSL) will take control of the situation.

### **3. Missing Child Procedure for Boarders**

If a pupil does not return to the boarding house within a 30 minute period from when their return was anticipated, the duty member of staff should make every effort to communicate with them to ascertain their whereabouts. Should this not prove to be possible then the Housemaster/Housemistress and senior staff (DSL and members of the SMT) should be informed with a view to involving the police.

A suggested timeline is as follows, it is important to note that this is not a strict protocol, but a guideline for the duty member of staff on how to respond. It is recognised that timings may vary in each case.

Indicated return time, e.g. end of supper/commencement of second prep;

0 – 30 'Late return' noted on the register. Try to establish whereabouts of the boarder by speaking to other boarders, house staff and try to make contact by mobile phone; inform DSL.

If unable to contact the student, the housemaster/housemistress should seek to make contact with friends, parents, check for school trips, conduct a basic room search for evidence of reason for being absent, etc. If for any reason there has been a delay in the absence being discovered, the timescale

should be tightened accordingly, but there still needs to be the effort made to ascertain the pupil's whereabouts.

The Housemaster/Housemistress should contact the Head of Boarding (HoM 1) and/or Principals, with the pupil's details and steps taken to locate them, along with the information that the search has yielded to that point. A risk assessed judgement will be made at this point about the level of concern for the pupil, and further action taken in consultation with a senior member of the staff and DSL.

30 -60 minutes late. DSL must be informed and a judgement call made as to police involvement at this stage. If at any time during the investigations there are warning signs that the student is in danger, it is out of context and character, or circumstances suggest that they may be involved in a crime, then the police will immediately be informed. Please ensure you have all the necessary personal detail of the missing person at hand. These can be found on 3sys or from April 2018, SIMS.

#### **4. Making the Risk Assessment Judgement**

A number of contextual factors will be taken into account, including:

- Possible threat factors: time of day; darkness; weather conditions; known local concerns;
- Proximity of School to home, School and boarding house timings (e.g. morning or afternoon registration, house registrations) from which the pupil would not have been absent without good reason, or which are worth waiting until before considering them to be missing;
- Individual pupil circumstances: age, judgement, known personal, pastoral or disciplinary issues, mood and/or communications prior to going missing, previous instances of going missing;
- Any reassurances/likelihood as to their whereabouts;
- Any parental indication of concern;
- Out of context and character;
- Danger to themselves and others.

Specifically:

- In the case of a pupil about whom there are pre-existing welfare concerns, then the time- frame must be compressed and the police must be contacted by the one hour point (see below);
- If the pupil is young (Form 1-4 or young Fifth Form) and staff have received no

assurance as to their whereabouts, then the police should be contacted at the one hour point. All staff should remember that:

- Early contact with the police may help to save a child's life or save them from significant harm;
- Failing to act within a reasonably responsive time frame could prove costly;
- Staff must feel confident in making sensible judgements as to the whereabouts of the pupil, as a normal parent would – but always erring on the side of caution, and believing that 'sooner is better than later'.

## **5. Contacting the Police**

Generally, before the police are called, the DSL, the SMT and the pupil's parents should be informed.

However, where attempts to contact the DSL, the SMT and or the parents are unsuccessful, this should not delay making contact with the police.

When contacting the police to report a missing child, call 101 (not 999). Pass to the police all pertinent details as they request. This will include a physical description and emotional state before the person went missing.

Ask for their direct contact number, so that you can make swift contact should the situation change, please note the name and any extension number of the person that you are dealing with and take any notes.

Where the School contacts the Police during the day or night, the following information should be provided:

- The student's name;
- The student's age;
- Nationality;
- An up-to-date photograph if possible;
- The student's height, physical description;
- Any particular individual features;
- Any disability, learning difficulty or special educational needs that the student may have;
- The student's home address and telephone number;

- A description of the clothing the student is thought to be wearing;
- Any relevant comments made by the student such as "I'm going to run away to Brighton".

Any suspicion or evidence of a crime. The information will then be passed to the various police stations through police channels. If the missing person hold a TIER 4 visa inform UK Boarder Agency as it may be the case they are trying to leave the country. UK sales within Buckswood should also be made aware if this case should arise. All agencies need to be informed and updated on a regular basis until the missing person is found and brought back to the school.

### **Children Missing Education (prolonged absence)**

A child going missing from education is a potential sign of abuse or neglect, particularly on repeat occasions.

Buckswood school has put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect and to help prevent the risks of their going missing again.

The school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the School and the local authority. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

Attendance of day pupils which fall below 95% are referred to the local authority. Parents are expected to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If attendance drops below 95% The attendance officer will have a discussion with the parents/ carers to ascertain the cause of the absence. The school will also refer to ESBAS and work in close co-operation with them and under their guidance. The ESBAS Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents or they can seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Please Refer to Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2016 Annex A for further guidance

### **Pupils sponsored under Tier Four of the Points Based System**

As a licensed UKBA sponsor under Tier Four of the points-based system, the School has an obligation to report certain events/absences of Tier Four sponsored pupils to UKBA within ten

working days. This should be done through the Attendance Officer or Principal's Secretary. To comply with current legislation, the International Admissions maintains up-to-date records 'for the Tier Four pupils during School holidays. These are stored in the Admin Office. A report will be made to the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) department of the Home Office in the cases where a Tier Four pupil is found to have contravened the terms of their visa. These can include:

- Enrolled, but not attended;
- Not enrolled within the enrolment period;
- Withdrawn due to ill health or other circumstances ( including if the student withdraws before they travel to the UK);
- Ceased to be sponsored by the School;
- Ceased studying and stopped attending;
- Been excluded or otherwise required to leave by the School, resulting in the School withdrawing sponsorship;
- Been the subject of an administrative error in student reporting;
- Missed ten consecutive expected contact points without reasonable permission being given by the School leading up to those contact points, resulting in the School withdrawing sponsorship.

The School does not need to make a report if:

- A student has been given clear permission to miss a contact and his or her whereabouts is known and agreed.
- The School has decided not to withdraw sponsorship even though the student has missed ten consecutive contacts. This should be very rare and the School must keep any evidence of any decision of this kind, together with the reasoning behind it and a chronology of events.
- In these cases the school must have clear records around sponsorship and guardians, future destinations, modes of transport, all personal and family details, previous school history, medical records and clear contact details.

## **6. Record-Keeping**

Depending on the incident, the DSL will keep a record of the incident on the individual student file; in the case of a boarder going missing, the Housemaster will also keep a Missing Child Incident folder. As such, as soon as possible following the conclusion of the incident, the member of staff responsible for leading the School's response should provide to the DSL (and in the case of

boarders, the Housemaster/Housemistress) a written record of:

The student's name;

- Relevant dates and times;
- The decisions and actions taken to find the student and the reasons for them;
- Whether the police social services and any other external agency were informed;
- Outcome or resolution of the incident;
- Any reason given by the pupil for going missing;
- Any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident;
- A record of the staff involved;
- Any other salient information.

## **7. Follow-up to a Missing Pupil Incident**

Once a pupil returns from being missing, they will be provided with support and the opportunity to discuss the incident with the DSL, the Head of Boarding and/ or the School Medical team and access to the school counselor They may also be provided with the contact details for external support services (e.g. NSPCC).

It is important to make clear notes at this stage and ask questions around the time the student was missing. Note their physical and emotional state and include this in your notes. Check if the person has money and if you deem it necessary test for drugs and alcohol. Consider weight gain or loss, look for any bruises or odd marks. Note if the person seems nervous or anxious, in control of their emotions. If you have any doubts, it would be worthwhile asking some of the questions again and check for consistency.

The pupil's parents will also be given the opportunity to discuss the incident with the DSL, who will provide advice and support where required.

Any further concerns about the pupil's welfare resulting from an incident will be acted upon and, where appropriate, Children's Social Care Services, and the police will be informed, in accordance with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures.

The school will review procedures following a missing student incident in order to review and consider the lessons learnt and how the system can be improved.