# ERA EDUCATION
## COMPANY

**Absent or Missing child's Policy**

September 2020 (next review Sep.2021)

This policy is designed to be implemented in cases where students are believed to be absent or missing from the care of Era Education company. The purpose of the policy is to locate the student by the safest and fastest means possible.
**Absent** – a child or young person is not at a place where they are expected or required to be and there is no apparent risk
**Missing** – a child or young person whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.

**Supporting Reference Documents:**

Children Missing from Education statutory guidance
NPCC publications
WTTSC 2018
Safeguarding Children and Young People from CSE 2009
Scoping Report on Missing and Abducted Children – CEOP
Local Safeguarding Children Board Protocols – Reporting children who go missing from care
Statutory Guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care – Department of Education 2014

This policy sets out the steps that Era Education Guardians should take to prevent children from going missing and to protect them when they do go missing.

### Minimising the likelihood of a child going missing

By following the guidelines laid down by Era Education in the Host Family Handbook and the Student Handbook it is anticipated that the likelihood of a child going missing whilst under the care of Era Education is minimal. These guidelines suggest the best ways for host families to keep young people safe by providing age-appropriate supervision schedules and curfews alongside encouraging host families and their student guests to have open and frank conversations if there are wellbeing concerns. The Student Handbook reminds students of the importance of communicating openly and honestly with their host family, keeping them fully informed of any plans and taking responsibility for themselves during their stay.

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## Pupils missing from host families

Host families should consider the pupil missing if they are not home by curfew time or meal times.

• Host family (HF) to first call the pupil and if no response continue to call at ten minute intervals;
 • Call their listed Mobile Number. Leave a message stating the time of your call and instruct them to contact you immediately.
• Send an email to their listed address(s). Sometimes Students will pick up emails swifter than calls.
• HF to telephone the emergency number one hour after the curfew time elapses;
• Homestay should try to make contact where possible with the pupil's friends
• Check the student's room for any clues as to where they have gone;
 • Check local hospitals for admittance;
 • The parents/carers/guardians will be alerted after exhaustive searches and interviews and the decision for timing of this action will be taken by the DSL (Vitalija Abare)
 • In the unlikely event that the host family is unable to contact a DSL or child's guardian then the host must contact the police themselves if the student is still missing after two hours.

## Informing other agencies

A DSl will make the decision as to when the Police should be telephoned and an official Missing Person Report made depending on their assessment of the situation. At this point, if there are existing safeguarding concerns about the pupil, the Emergency Duty Team at Oxfordshire Children's Services may also be contacted. The non-emergency number 101 should be used unless there is a positive reason to believe that the child is in immediate danger in which case 999 should be used. From the point at which the police are contacted the Thames Valley Police Missing Children Joint Protocol should be followed
(see http://www.bucks-lscb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/BSCBProcedures/Missing_Children_Joint_Protocol.pdf)
Staff might find it helpful to consider these questions before speaking to the police to ensure that all necessary information is passed on effectively:
 • What is the specific concern that has caused you to call the police?
• What has been done so far to trace the individual?
 • Is this significantly out of character?
• Do they need urgent medical attention or essential medication that is not likely to be available to them?

• If under 18 are they currently at risk of child abuse including child sexual exploitation?

• Are they likely to be subjected to any other crime?
• Are they likely to be the victim of any other form abuse?
• Are they likely to attempt suicide?
• Do they pose a danger to other people?
• Is there any other information relevant to their absence?

Once the police are involved, they will take the lead in searching for the missing child, and the College will provide all necessary cooperation.
• If a child is found after the police have been involved, a Safe and Well Check will be conducted by the police. A Return Home Interview must also be conducted within 72 hours of the child's return. If this is the first such incident, it should be conducted by the Designated Safeguarding Lead and a record made, otherwise, the MultiAgency Safeguarding Hub's advice should be sought. A copy should be sent to the missing child administrator missing.pupils@oxfordshire.gov.uk
and Thames Valley Police missing child coordinator:
oxfordmispers@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk
In all cases: The following questions will help you build a risk assessment so that you can judge the seriousness of the situation and therefor take appropriate action.
Questions to be asked:
 • When was he/she last seen?
 • Who was he/she with?
• Where might he/she have gone?
 • Is there a School activity that he/she might be on?
• Has he/she been ill or injured and gone to hospital?
• What emotional state did he/she appear to be in?
• Has anything upset him/her recently?
• Did he/she speak to anyone about leaving?
• Who are his/her main friends at the school or in the area?
• Does he/she have a special friend?
 • Is there any reason to believe he/she might have been abducted? (E.g. family custody dispute; very wealthy/prominent parents.)
Other action to consider taking
 • Check his/her room for indications of how he/she is dressed, where he/she might have gone.
• Check his/her desk and waste paper bins for scribbled notes.
• Check she/he has left any note in his/her bedroom.

Police response The Police treat all missing person reports as serious. Each risk is assessed and the following are trigger factors to be considered:
• Boy/Girl in an emotional or depressed state of mind
• Unusual behaviour prior to disappearance

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• Boy/Girl needs essential medicine or treatment
• Suspicion of abduction x Suspicion of self-harm/suicide
• Involvement in a violent confrontation prior to disappearance
• Previously disappeared and suffered or was exposed to harm whilst missing

**Record keeping** Era Education company will keep a full written record of any incident of a missing student including:
• the student's name
• relevant dates and times (e.g. when it was first notices that the student was missing)
• the action taken to find the student including the time that each action is taken
• whether the Police or Social Services were involved
• outcome or resolution of the incident
• any reasons given by the student for being missing
• any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident
• a record of the staff involved A full written record of the incident will be kept on the student's file and in the Missing Person File.

**Follow up:** A DSL of Era Education will call a host family and a child after 24 hours after accident to check how the child is feeling. She also will contact parents straight away when the child was in suspicion of being missing and will email them in 48 hours' time what actions were taken.

**A child or young person who falls into the 'Missing' Category must be reported to the police as soon as possible by telephoning 999, informing them that a child or young person is in immediate danger of harm.**

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**Missing Persons Form**

A precise record of all actions taken should be recorded in chronological order.

| Date: | | Name of the missing student: | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Name of the Lead person: | | | |

| Time | Actions taken |
|---|---|
| | |

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