



Hampden House

Missing Child Policy and Procedure

Adopted by the Management Committee

Signed: _____ Date: June 2018

Chair of Management Committee

Review date: June 2019

Member of staff responsible for review: Head of Care

This policy applies to staff (including volunteers), students and parents at Hampden House.

1. Purpose and Aims

Through the operation of this policy we aim to:

- Protect the health and safety of students at the School;
- Ensure that School staff know how to respond if a student goes missing

This policy should be read in conjunction with Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board's "Children who run away or go missing":

<http://suffolkscb.org.uk/assets/files/2014/SafeguardingChildrenWhoRunAwayOrGoMissing.pdf>

Suffolk's "Children who are missing from Education" :

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/Student-attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-from-education/>

And also Hampden House Safeguarding policy .

2. Responsibilities and Expectations

The Management Committee delegate appropriate responsibilities for the day to day management of the School to the Head Teacher.

In practice, all members of staff contribute to the safety of students at the School by providing appropriate supervision in accordance with the directions of the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team.

Schools are under a general duty to supervise students to the standard of a prudent, careful and responsible parent.

3. Statutory Duties

The school will operate in line with the Procedures of Suffolk Safeguarding Children Board and will give due regard to statutory guidance documents:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2016) (KCSIE)
- Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 (February 2015)
- KCSIE also refers to the non-statutory advice for practitioners: What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (September 2016)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (June 2017) (Children and Social Work Act 2017).
- WT refers to the non-statutory advice: Information sharing (September 2016)

- Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales (September 2016) (Prevent). Prevent is supplemented by non-statutory advice and a briefing note:
- The Prevent duty: Departmental advice for schools and childminders (September 2016)
- The use of social media for online radicalisation (September 2016)

All staff are made aware of these statutory duties and they are referenced in the Safeguarding Policy, which is also available online on the School website.

Parents/carers may request a hard copy from Hampden House or review the policy on the School website.

4. Procedure for Missing Children

If a member of staff or volunteer notes that a student is missing, the adult responsible should contact Reception immediately, who will alert the Head Teacher or most senior member of staff on the premises.

- They should instigate a search of the grounds immediately
- As part of the initial search process, the student's peers will be asked if they have any knowledge of the missing student's whereabouts
- If they saw the child go off site they should note the direction the child was going in.

If the student is not found after 10 minutes, the Responsible person will contact the student's parents at this point, and inform them that their child is off site without permission and that they will be reported to the Police as missing from school if they are not located within a further 20 minutes.

Commented [WMC1]: To whom?

Staff will then search the surrounding area to see if they can see the child and if possible persuade them to return. If they do not see the child, or are unable to persuade them to return, they must return to Hampden House and report the child absent or missing. **Staff must not chase or pursue students** when they go off site in case it encourages them to run away, possibly into dangerous situations e.g. oncoming traffic. If children are followed, the staff member is at risk of allegations against them of unsafe behaviours.

Unless there are serious concerns they should be reported absent/missing after **half an hour**, sooner if staff have serious concerns or the child's risk assessment requires it. Examples of serious concerns are that the child is in immediate danger; has harmed themselves; is vulnerable; has a history of risk-taking; has mental health issues; is suicidal; is ill or injured; may be going off with strangers or unauthorised adults; taking drugs.

The responsible person will report them to the police as absent or missing from school, together with any suggestions as to where the student might be, based on information gained from speaking to staff and other students.

When the school contacts the Police about a student missing from school, the following information should be provided:

- The student's name
- The student's age
- The student's home address and telephone number
- The student's height, physical description and any physical characteristics
- Any disability or special educational needs that the student may have
- Any particular vulnerability they may have
- Any medication that the children may be on
- 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"
- If the police attend the school, they should be given an up-to-date photograph

Suffolk Police: Command and Control Room (CCR) 101 or 999 in an emergency.

5. Procedure for Students missing following a journey to school

If a Student is missing following a journey to school, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will:

- Contact the person transporting the student, for example the taxi driver
- Check whether there were any expected delays or changes to the journey
- Check with other students and ask them if they have any knowledge of the missing student's whereabouts
- Contact parents and proceed as for a missing student

6. Return of Student

When the student returns:

- Reception and the Head Teacher/SLT should be notified immediately.
- Parent/carer contacted and reassured.
- Police informed if they had been called previously
- Independent person (see below) contacted to arrange to speak to the child.

7. Missing Student incident record on sleuth

The School must 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 noticed that the student was missing)
- The action taken to find the student
- Whether the Police or Social Services were involved

An independent person (usually one of the Management Committee) must then interview the child who has been reported missing and complete a return interview form within 48 hours which will contain the following:

- 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.

8. Monitoring

The School is aware that a student failing to attend school regularly or being absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

Students who have been recorded as missing from School are monitored closely and if there is a concern that they are at risk of going missing from education the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be alerted, who will in turn notify the Local Authority CME officer .

Children missing from education

The reasons why a child is missing from education and what you can do next.

A child missing from education is:

- in-between the compulsory school age of 5 - 16
- not at school
- not attending alternative education arrangements

A child may be missing from education because:

- they didn't start at a school
- they left an independent school or college
- they were excluded from school
- their parents took them out of school
- they didn't move from school to another school; for example, moving to another local authority area
- they didn't move into the next school in their life; for example, primary school to secondary school
- their family is part of a mobile community

A child not missing from education is:

- having a school place but are not attending regularly
- being home educated
- attending an alternative educational provider; for example, a pupil referral unit (PRU)

Reporting a child missing from education

If you think a child is missing from education contact the Children Missing Education Officer on **01473 265224** (Monday to Friday 8am - 4pm) or email CME@suffolk.gcsx.gov.uk.

We will aim to find out more about a child's circumstances and hopefully provide the necessary support.

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/pupil-attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-from-education/>

Police Definitions:

Missing: A child whose whereabouts cannot be established, and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be a subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or others.

Where Police decide to deal with an episode as 'missing' a COMPACT record will be created and an officer deployed to take a full missing person report. The officer will also make a full assessment of risk. The level of risk (high, medium, or low) will determine the police response. All children will be initially recorded as high risk until reviewed by a supervisor after which the risk may be downgraded to medium. COMPACT will be updated and an automatic e-mail notification sent to Customer First for the attention of CYPS. Police will submit a referral '848' to the MASH for all missing children as soon as the risk assessment has been completed. 7 A senior police officer will supervise the investigation to locate the missing child. Police will liaise with CYPS and other agencies at all stages of the investigation.

Absent: A child (person) not at a place they are expected or required to be, when the behaviour is out of character and there is no apparent risk.

Children can very often test the boundaries of authority and may absent themselves for short periods of time and then return and are not necessarily at risk. The 'Absent' category can apply to children living at home as well as those in care. It is expected that all reasonable steps should be taken by parents or care to locate the child prior to making a report to the police. Call takers in the Police Command and Control Room are trained in carrying out risk assessments to define a child as 'missing' or 'absent'. This decision will always be ratified by the CCR Inspector/Supervisor. Where ever there is a doubt over the safety of a child, they will be classified as 'missing'. Any child classified as 'absent' will be re-classified as 'missing' if warranted. Police will record all absences on the COMPACT database and agree with the reporting person a time frame for review. This time frame will not exceed 4 hours and may be much shorter depending on the circumstances of the case for example, the time of day and the age of the child.