

Absent or Missing Student Policy

This policy is designed to be implemented in cases where students are believed to be absent or missing. The purpose of the policy is to help locate the student using the fastest and safest means possible and return them to an agreed and approved location. SEE is wholly committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students and this policy should be read by both host families and staff in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy and the government guidance Children Missing from Education (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>).

SEE will respond appropriately to any reports of unauthorised absence or of missing students. After each report, SEE will assess and update (if necessary) this policy to minimise the risks in future. Where criminality is associated with the absent or missing student, this will be reported to the police by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Juliet Cassells

In accordance with the National Policing Improvement Agency, 'Interim Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2013' this policy will help determine whether a student is absent or missing.

Definitions:

Absent: "A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be". The 'absent' category should comprise cases in which people are not presently where they are supposed to be and there is no apparent risk. 'Absent' cases should not be ignored and must be monitored over periods of time with consideration given to escalating to 'missing' if there is a change to the circumstances that has increased the level of risk.

Missing Person: "Anyone 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."

Procedure to follow upon report of an absent or missing student:

SEE Designated Safeguarding Lead, Juliet Cassells, has the responsibility for overseeing incidents of any unauthorised absences or missing students. The Area Manager who looks after the absent or missing student is responsible for ensuring the steps below are followed upon the report of an unauthorised absence. This report may come to the Area Manager in the form of a telephone call, email, social media message or face to face disclosure. The Area Manager must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Juliet Cassells) or the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (Eve Crow) immediately that a report has been received of an absent or missing student on juliet@southenglandexchange.org or 07796997780 or eve@southenglandexchange.org or 07795 842565. These are 24 hr Emergency Phones. In discussion with the DSL the Area Manager should determine whether the student is absent or missing. Any member of SEE staff or a host family member may report a student as absent or missing to the police if there is a genuine concern for their safety. If there is a concern a young person has been harmed the incident should be referred to the police by dialling 101. If the student is considered to be at immediate risk of harm or if it is known that there is an immediate danger to the student, then the incident should be referred to the police and 999 should be

Date: 14 May 2020

24h emergency phone line: +44 (0)7796 997780

Review by: 14 May 2021

Second emergency line: +44 07795 842565

South England Exchange Ltd, 12 Russell Mews, Brighton BN1 2HZ

info@southenglandexchange.org

www.southenglandexchange.org

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called in order to receive an emergency response. Following a risk assessment, the local police force will record a report of absent or missing if there are grounds to do so. In order to make a police report, the following information should be collated to pass to the Police:

- Where you are and where the missing person was last seen.
- A detailed description of the missing person, including age, sex and as much information about their clothing as possible (if known).
- The circumstances of the incident, including anything that may have triggered the disappearance, how long the missing person has been missing, where they were last seen, if there was an argument.
- Who is looking for the child, where were they last seen, do they have a mobile phone with them, what is the number.

The DSL must inform the partner organisation of any report made to the police and update with any developments. The partner will be in contact with the student's parents.

If it is decided the student is **absent** then the Area Manager should then carry out the following;

1. Try to contact the student by phone (leave a message if no answer), text, email and social media. This must be repeated every 30 minutes.
2. If appropriate, speak to friends of the student about the possible whereabouts of the student.
3. If appropriate, request that the host family conduct a search of their house and garden.
- 4. If the student has not been found within 3 hours (before 8pm), within 2 hours (after 8pm) or within 1 hour (after 10 pm), the DSL will contact the natural family or sending agent by phone. The phone call will be followed up by an email.**

If it is decided the student is **missing**, the DSL will inform the partner or natural family **immediately**.

Informing the Media

The police are responsible for advising the media regarding children or young people who are reported as missing. The decision to publicise these matters will always be made in consultation with the parents who have to give their signed consent before the media are able to circulate the details. As such, no member of SEE should release any details to the media and must refer any contact from them directly to the relevant police force.

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Student Return

The police are responsible for ensuring that the student that has been reported as missing has been returned safe and well and has an opportunity to disclose any relevant issues to them in their return interview. Where a student has been reported as absent to the police they will not be given a return interview. In such cases, the Area Manager conduct a return interview with the student is set up to discuss their absence and any reasoning behind it. If there has been an allegation of abuse toward the student, the DSL will report this to the police and the sending agent. Any persons that had been informed of the student being absent or missing must be contacted immediately by the Area Manager and be advised of the student's return.