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EF ACADEMY - TORBAY

Missing Persons Policy & Procedure



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Document title:	Missing Persons Policy and Procedure
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Author:	Deputy Headteacher (Head of School)
Individuals Involved in Developing the Document:	Head of School Heads of Boarding SLT
Document Purpose:	Sets out the school's approach to meeting its responsibilities under standard 15 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools
Related Documents:	Safeguarding Policy Boarding Practices and Principles Health and Safety Policy Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE) KCSIE 2020 Staff Handbook Boarding Handbook Children Missing Education (CME) Policy
Date of Next Review:	September 2021
Change Log (what changes have been made, by who and when):	October 2017 – Anna Ireland. Added flow chart detail September 2018 – RTA: name changes, CSE reference, updated registration and curfew times, referencing of other handbooks/policies September 2020 – RTA: updated relevant names, positions and contact numbers

Introduction



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The School will apply procedures for registration, attendance and curfew robustly to ensure it knows the whereabouts of all students and to execute its duty of care.

The school requires its students to attend classes as per the published timetable and in line with Immigration rules and regulations. It also requires all students to abide by curfews that are set and agreed by the School Leadership Team.

Persistent absence will lead disciplinary action being taken and if applicable to the removal of a student's visa by the UKVI. Persistent breaking of curfew will lead to disciplinary action being taken.

The School recognises that a child going missing from education could be a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation (CSE), or could signal that a child is at risk of radicalization or may be a sign that the child is suffering from medical or mental health conditions. Therefore, all members of staff will respond promptly to absences or causes for concern that a person is missing by following the guidance contained within the school's Missing Persons Policy and Procedure.

The School's Executive Committee recognises that it should put in place appropriate mechanisms to safeguard children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation, to assist in identifying children that are at risk from radicalisation and to identify children who are or are at risk of suffering from medical or mental health conditions.

POLICY STATEMENT AND PRINCIPLES

Key Points



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1. This policy applies to all students in the School. Any student under the age of 18 will be regarded as a child for the purpose of this policy.
2. All school staff have a responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
3. Any concerns regarding the whereabouts of a student at any point throughout the school day must be reported immediately to the student's Head of Boarding or in their absence to the Duty House Parents or to the school directly.
4. Any concerns regarding the whereabouts of a student outside of the school day must be reported immediately via the Emergency Phone number **07834 753135**.
5. The school conforms to the **National Minimum Standards for Boarding** which state that:-

15.5 Staff know the whereabouts of boarders (or know how to find their whereabouts) in their charge at all times.

15.6 Staff working within the school know and implement the school's policy in relation to boarders going missing and their role in implementing that policy. Staff actively search for boarders who are missing, including working with police where appropriate.

Context

From time to time students are reported as 'missing' and concerns are raised about their well-being. There may be.

- Unusual or unexplained absences from classes.
- Reports of non-return to residence by curfew time.
- Reports of non-return to homestay by curfew time or an usual return time.
- Concern raised by family or friends.

Since April 2013 police forces have been rolling out new definitions of 'missing' and 'absent' in relation to children and adults reported as missing to the Police. These are.

- **missing:** 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; and
- **absent:** a person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.

The police classification of a person as 'missing' or 'absent' will be based on on-going risk assessment. A child whose whereabouts are known would not be treated as either 'missing' or 'absent' under the police definitions.

If the Head of School, relevant Head of Boarding or member of teaching staff/House Parent/Guardian assess that the person is at risk due to any factor/s known to them, then the person should be reported missing without delay.



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Procedure

The procedures set out in the document aim to achieve the following.

1. Determine if a person is missing and if so when and where the person was last seen or recorded as being in attendance at a planned lesson or recorded as being in the school boarding residence.
2. Locate the missing person as quickly as possible.
3. Ensure his/her safety and return them to a place of safety as soon as possible.
4. Avoid raising unnecessary alarm.
5. Ensure that as far as possible, investigations remain confidential in order to protect the privacy of the student.
6. Ensure that parents or guardians are informed of the incident and reassured that the school is taking steps to resolve the situation.

This guidance gives actions to be followed by school staff to ensure that all missing students are found and returned to the supervision of the school as soon as practically possible.

Establishing the Whereabouts of Students

There are a number of key points during the day when the school will conduct checks on the whereabouts of all its students.

All staff play a role in this process, but in particular the following have specific responsibilities.

- Students: Responsible for attending all planned lessons, activities or other sessions arranged by the school at the specified times (see CME Policy for more info), for abiding by accommodation curfew times and for making the school aware of any planned absences (see Boarding Handbook for more info).
- Teachers and coaches: Responsible for accurately completing registers within the first five minutes of the start of each lesson (see CME Policy for more info).
- House parents: Responsible for ensuring that students arrive prior to the commencement of curfew and remain in the home or residence until the end of the curfew and ensuring that they have face-to-face contact with each student each morning before school and by late morning on a Saturday or Sunday.
- Heads of Boarding: responsible for conducting attendance checks during a normal school day.

Procedure during a Normal School Day

A normal school day includes periods when examinations are being undertaken and during term breaks when students are not expected to return to their home country.

Key Registration Check Points



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i.	Pre-school check	7.00am – 8.00am
ii.	AM Register report check	9:15am
iii.	PM Register report check	2:15pm
iv.	Evening registration	7.00pm
v.	Curfew**	Sun – Thur 7.00pm & Fri/Sat 10.00pm

**COVID variances apply from September 2020 and will change throughout Term 1

Pre-School Check – Residence

House Parents will conduct a morning wake-up call between 7am-8am. They must ensure that they **have both seen and heard the student.**

In the unlikely event that a student cannot be located by the House Parent immediate contact must be made with the Emergency Phone Holder prior to 9am.

If a House Parent holding the Emergency Phone needs to report a Missing Student they will make immediate contact with the Head of Boarding .

At 9:15am the school register report will be downloaded from My Academy by Heads of Boarding.

The Head of School will analyse the list of unauthorised absences recorded by teachers and proceed to establish the whereabouts of those students. They will do this through communication with the Heads of Boarding, House Parents, DSL and teaching staff.

The Heads of Boarding must establish the last known whereabouts of the student.

If by 10.30am a student cannot be located, the relevant Head of Boarding will conduct the following actions:

- a. A search of the school premises.
- b. Fully search bedroom/accommodation/outbuildings/vehicles; Search for any important leads (e.g. mobile phone, diaries, letters, email and website activity etc.).
- c. While searches are being conducted - at intervals of 15 minutes calling and texting any mobile phone held by the student and leaving a message asking for contact. **These calls must be logged.**
- d. Confirm the absence on the school attendance register.
- e. An email sent to student's email account.
- f. Contact known friends/ relatives where a student may be; contact friends to gather any available information regarding the student's whereabouts.
- g. Visit locations that the student is known to frequent, if at all possible.



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- h. Speak with other residence students to obtain relevant information about the missing student.

The relevant Head of Boarding must keep a continuous record of the date and times of the actions listed above and any outcomes.

Evening Attendance

All students are expected to return to their Residence in time for the evening curfew, unless alternative and/or prior arrangements have been made and communicated to and agreed by the House Parent or Guardian.

If a student has not returned for the evening curfew, it is the responsibility of the relevant House Parent to attempt to make contact with the student, locate their whereabouts and ascertain arrangements for their safe return to the residence.

Having ascertained the whereabouts of the student and if the assessment of the House Parent or Guardian is that there is no immediate risk to the student, then the student should be asked to confirm their plans for a return to the residence as soon as possible. It is important that incidents of this nature are recorded as unauthorised absences and communicated immediately to the relevant Head of Boarding.

If the House Parent cannot make contact with the student then they should call the Emergency Phone number **07834 753135** and report the incident. The staff member responsible for the Emergency Phone will take the lead responsibility for coordinating actions to locate the student. Working with the house parent, the following actions will be followed:

- a. A search of the residence.
- b. Fully search bedroom/accommodation/outbuildings/vehicles; Search for any important leads (e.g. mobile phone, diaries, letters, email and website activity etc.).
- c. While searches are being conducted - at intervals of 15 minutes calling and texting any mobile phone held by the student and leaving a message asking for contact. **These calls must be logged.**
- d. An email sent to student's email account.
- e. Contact known friends/ relatives where a student may be; contact friends to gather any available information regarding the student's whereabouts.
- f. Visit locations that the student is known to frequent, if at all possible.
- g. Speak with other residential students to obtain relevant information about the missing student.



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The Emergency Phone holder must keep a continuous record of the date and times of the actions listed above and any outcomes.

Curfew

Curfews are agreed annually by the School Senior Leadership Team. For the 2018/19 academic year, curfews for school residence accommodation are as follows:

	Sun – Thurs	Fri & Sat
All students	7:00pm - 7:00am	10:00pm – 7:00am (no extensions)**

**COVID variances apply from September 2020 and will change throughout Term 1

All students are expected to return to their Residence in time for the start of the curfew and must stay within the residence until the end of the curfew, unless alternative and/or prior arrangements have been made and agreed by the House Parent, or Guardian. Curfew extensions will not be granted unless parents (or other close family) are present in Torbay to visit or the student is attending a school-organised event.

If a student has not returned for the curfew or is noticed as missing during the curfew, it is the responsibility of the relevant House Parent to attempt to make contact with the student, locate their whereabouts and ascertain arrangements for their immediate safe return to the residence.

If the House Parent cannot make contact with the student then they should call the Emergency Phone number **07834 753135** and report the incident. The staff member responsible for the Emergency Phone will take the lead responsibility for coordinating actions to locate the student. Working with the House Parent the following actions will be followed:

- a. A search of the residence.
- b. Fully search bedroom/accommodation/outbuildings/vehicles; Search for any important leads (e.g. mobile phone, diaries, letters, email and website activity etc.).
- c. While searches are being conducted - at intervals of 15 minutes calling and texting any mobile phone held by the student and leaving a message asking for contact. **These calls must be logged.**
- d. An email sent to student's email account.
- e. Contact known friends/ relatives where a student may be; contact friends to gather any available information regarding the student's whereabouts.
- f. Visit locations that the student is known to frequent, if at all possible.
- g. Speak with other residence students to obtain relevant information about the missing student.



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Procedure Outside of School Hours - Residence

Outside of school hours, students are granted a greater degree of freedom to use their time to engage in social activities, events and activities organised by the School, House Parents to explore and enjoy the local community. Our responsibility to ensure that we know the whereabouts of students does not change and all staff, House Parents must ensure that appropriate steps are taken to monitor the movements and behaviour of students during this time.

A student will be deemed as “missing” from their home stay or the school residence when the student’s location is unknown or that the reason for the absence is unknown with there being cause for concern for the student because of their vulnerability.

There is an expectation that House Parents will report the student as missing without delay. Failure to report a student missing will be treated as a breach of the schools Safeguarding Policy and could result in the incident being reported to the Torbay Safeguarding Children Partnership (TSCP) and in the case of employees of EF Academy, result in disciplinary proceedings commencing.

The Emergency Phone holder should risk assess the situation and if after 2 hours the student is still not located they will escalate the issue to the Headteacher or other member of the School’s Leadership Team.

A period of two-hours should normally be regarded as the absolute maximum for any student whose whereabouts are not known and who cannot be contacted, to remain categorised as unauthorised absent, rather than being formally reported as missing. In many cases a shorter period will be appropriate.

In liaison with the Senior Leadership Team the Head of School will decide when it is appropriate to pass on the responsibility for the investigation to the Police and to contact the Parent of the missing person. This will only happen when the Emergency phone holder has confirmed the outcomes of the actions listed above.

The Headteacher will then make the decision as to whether the Police 101 should be telephoned and an official Missing Person Report made depending on an assessment of risk.

The Headteacher will then agree a course of action to pursued over the next 24 hours. This will include.



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- a. A further search of the school premises.
- b. Further searches of the student's bedroom/accommodation and outbuildings/vehicles; Search for any important leads (e.g. mobile phone, diaries, letters, email and website activity etc.).
- c. At intervals of 30 minutes calling and texting any mobile phone held by the student and leaving a message asking for contact. **These calls must be logged.**
- d. Contact known friends/ relatives where a student may be; contact friends to gather any available information regarding the student's whereabouts.
- e. Visit locations that the student is known to frequent, if at all possible.
- f. Speak again with other residential students to obtain relevant information about the missing child.

See Appendix 1 for Missing Person Flow Chart – out of school hours

See Appendix 2 for Missing Person Flow Chart – during the school day