Children Missing from Education Policy

Author	Written/Reviewed	Approved by Governors	Next Review
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Shenstone Lodge School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and requires all staff to act in the best interests of our pupils at all times. Our overriding principle is 'Every missing episode is potentially serious'.

Our aim is to reduce the incidence of all pupils going missing and if they do, to reduce the risk of them suffering harm and recover them to safety as soon as possible. We do this through partnership working, information sharing, problem solving, and performance management.

Shenstone Lodge School has adopted the term 'missing' to describe a child who is absent from the School or Residential provision without permission for any length of time.

The fact that the pupil may have gone missing on a number of previous occasions does not reduce the risk.

No child shall be deemed low or no risk missing who is:

- at risk of/experiencing child sexual exploitation
- an unaccompanied asylum seeking child (UASC)
- under 12.

The length of time a child has been missing should be a contributory factor to the assessment of risk.

The Children Missing Education and Children Missing from Education Policy, 2016, state the following;

'All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. Children missing from education (CMfE) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET later on in life'.

Roles and Responsibilities

The designated senior member of staff with overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the Policy at Shenstone Lodge School is the Executive Head Teacher. The day to day management of the policy is the responsibility of the Head of School or the Head of Care (for after school hours residential students). This responsibility will transfer to their deputies/ assistants as appropriate in their absence.

The role of the Head of School/ Head of Care is to:

- Check any risk management plans which may already exist
- Ensure that all pupils, staff, parents and governors are aware of Shenstone Lodges School's Policy and procedures;
- Take a lead role in managing missing-from-school incidents in accordance with local protocols and Shenstone Lodge policies;
- Ensure effective recording, reporting and information-sharing procedures approved within this document are implemented;

- Offer advice, guidance and support to senior staff in circumstances where they may be responding to incidents;
- Co-ordinate and/or host multi-disciplinary meetings in response to incidents e.g. a multi-agency risk management, strategy or planning meeting;
- Monitor, analyse and report on the levels and frequency of incidents to Shenstone Lodge School's Leadership Team
- Provide advice, guidance and support to staff involved in / affected by incidents;
- Provide advice, guidance and support to pupils involved in / affected by incidents;
- Liaise with Shenstone Lodges School's Designated lead about all safeguarding concerns, as soon as reasonably possible.

Schools' responsibilities as outlined in the Children missing from Education Sept 2016

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

Schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or have missed ten school days or more without permission. Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

Maintained schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty19 for their pupils. Further information about schools' safeguarding responsibilities can be found in the *Keeping children safe in education* statutory guidance.

The role of all staff

It is the responsibility of all professional staff to familiarise themselves with the procedures approved within this document; and to report and record any suspicions or concerns to a senior member of staff.

It is imperative that all Shenstone Lodge staff adopt a pro-active approach to supervising and monitoring the location and behaviour of young people at all times, particularly within residence, trips off site and when young people are unsettled. Knowledge of individual young people is all-important in terms of the likelihood of running away and their influence on other more vulnerable pupils. Information on these issues may be found through a number of sources including a pupil's single page profiles, Risk Assessments or Behaviour Management Plans. In the event that a pupil does attempt to run away the staff response should be influenced by a number of factors, including:

- the age, ability and understanding of pupil(s) involved;
- the frame of mind, vulnerability and perceived risk to the individual and others;
- location and circumstances of the incident; and

- the number/experience of staff and young people present.

When conducting an Offsite trip, staff should maintain appropriate levels of vigilance and supervision at all times.

If a pupil is believed to have run away from a School trip or transport, it is important that staff act to prioritise the welfare and good management of the group. Failure to do so may provoke a large-scale incident involving greater risk-taking and more young people. Irrespective of the circumstances, it is essential that senior staff are informed as soon as possible. On being notified of an alleged incident Senior Staff should establish the facts and ensure the protocols are followed.

Police definitions (Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, RMHFC, 2014)

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.

12. The police classification of a person as 'missing' or 'absent' will be based on on-going risk assessment. Note that 'absent' within this definition would not include those defined as "away from placement without authorisation" above: a child whose whereabouts are known would not be treated as either 'missing' or 'absent' under the police definitions. Guidance on how police forces will apply these definitions to children was issued by ACPO in April 2013. Paragraph 19 below explains how local protocols for safeguarding young runaways or children missing from home or care should reflect these definitions.

When a child goes missing, risk assessment

The police will prioritise all incidents of children categorised as 'missing' from home or care as medium or high risk. Where a child is categorised as 'absent', the details will be recorded by the police, who will also agree review times and any on-going actions with child's family, carer or responsible local authority.

A missing child incident would be prioritised as '*high risk*' where:

- ☐ the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the child is in danger through their own vulnerability; or
- ☐ the child may have been the victim of a serious crime; or
- ☐ the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger.

The high risk category requires the immediate deployment of police resources. Police guidance makes clear that a member of the senior management team or similar command level must be involved in the examination of initial enquiry lines and approval of appropriate staffing levels. Such cases should lead to the appointment of an Investigating Officer and possibly a Senior Investigating Officer and a Police Search Advisor (PolSA). There should be a media strategy

and / or close contact with outside agencies. Family support should be put in place. The UK Missing Persons Bureau should be notified of the case immediately. CEOP and local authority children's services should also be notified.

A missing child incident would be prioritised as '*medium risk'* where the risk posed is likely to place the subject in danger or they are a threat to themselves or others. This category requires an active and measured response by police and other agencies in order to trace the missing person and support the person reporting. This will involve a proactive investigation and search in accordance with the circumstances to locate the missing child as soon as possible.

Where a child is categorised as 'absent' within the police definition, the details will be recorded by the police. Review timings and any on-going actions will be agreed as set out in the RMFCH protocol. The case will remain the subject of constant review, particularly in the light of new information and changes in circumstances.

Return Procedure

When the pupil is located, their return to Shenstone Lodge/Brades should be managed by senior staff in order to minimise disruption to other young people and Shenstone Lodge protocols followed.

Statutory guidance states that a Return Home Interview should be carried out by an independent person within **72 hours** of return.

Interviewing a pupil on their return from a missing episode is necessary to understand why they went missing or ran away in the first place and will enable appropriate support to be put in place, reducing the occurrence of repeat incidents. This could take the form of a risk management plan.

Sandwell LA commission Barnardos to complete Return Interviews. School should contact Louise_Morris@sandwell.gov.uk to make the necessary arrangements. If the student refuses to be interviewed school may ask questions but will need to inform Louise Morris.

It is important that any relevant information obtained is shared with all partner agencies, to ensure effective future safeguarding. Information and intelligence should be shared via local processes with the host and home local authorities and the police.

Missing Pupils Protocol

Day Pupil	Residential Pupil
As soon as a student is identified as being absent from the right place, supervising staff make initial enquiries/ search Staff should make a note of the time.	As soon as a student is identified as being absent from the right place, supervising staff make initial enquiries/ search Staff should make a note of the time.

If the whereabouts of a student is not established, A search of the immediate vicinity should be undertaken. If within 20 minutes* the student is not found a member of the leadership team needs to be informed and the next steps are considered
This will take into account:
  a) The circumstances of the absence
  b) The age and competence of the student
  c) The location of the group/ student
	If the whereabouts of a student is not established, A search of the immediate vicinity should be undertaken. If within 20 minutes* the student is not found a member of the leadership team needs to be informed and the next steps are considered
	This will take into account:
	  a) The circumstances of the absence
	  b) The age and competence of the student
	  c) The location of the group/ student

The Parent/carer is to be contacted to make them aware of the situation and that Police may be informed if the student is not located within the next 30 minutes** It may be appropriate at this point to alert the police straight away. Missing persons form completed (Appendix 1) and phone calls logged. The area should continue to be searched if appropriate.	The Parent/carer is to be contacted to make them aware of the situation and that Police may be informed if the student is not located within the next 30 minutes** It may be appropriate at this point to alert the police straight away. Missing persons form completed (Appendix 1) and phone calls logged. The area should continue to be searched if appropriate.
When the police are informed the member of staff making the call will note the incident number to be recorded on missing persons form.	When the police are informed the member of staff making the call will note the incident number to be recorded on missing persons form.
A member of SLT should be available to coordinate procedures if required.	A senior member of the Care Team should remain available to coordinate procedures and relay information to the 'On Call' person.
If the child missing status continues into the evening school all details about the situation should be passed onto the 'on call' person for that evening and the Care Team informed through the Head of Care.	The whole SLT team to be informed at the start of the school day if there has been no resolution.

- If at any time the child re-appears, all parties should be notified immediately.
- Check if the pupil has a Risk management/supervision plan in place
- Following the resolution of the 'missing from care' situation. SLT must have all the details presented to them on the missing student record (appendix 1). A discussion will take place with the staff and student involved as soon as appropriate to prevent as far as possible further incidents occurring

* **These are guide timings. There are occasions when these may be reduced or increased dependent on the vulnerability of the child and the circumstances.**

**depending on the circumstances the parent may assume responsibility for the child at this point and as long as there are no extenuating safeguarding concerns the school will discontinue its actions.

Appendix 1

(Shenstone Lodge School logo)	**Shenstone Lodge School and The Brades Lodge**	

Missing Student Record

Incident Form Number……………………………………………………….

Name …………………………………………….

DoB   ……….. /………./…………

Date of Incident. ……….../………./…………

	Precise Time	By Whom Signature / Print
First reported missing		
Last time Pupil seen		
School searched		
Police Informed		
Parents/Carers Informed		
Description of clothing etc.		
Pupil Located (Where)		
Returned Home / School		
Other information (Ofsted to be notified if in residence)		
Record completed and filed		

Brief Details of events leading up to incident

Pupil's reason for going missing

Outcome (with significant times and dates)

Signed…………………………………………..   Date …….. / …….. / ……..

Print name…………………………………….

Appendix 2 – return interview

Return Interview Offered	YES	NO
Date Offered		
Return Interview Accepted	YES	NO
Return Interview		
Date of Interview		
Was the Young Person Seen?	YES	NO
Place of Interview		
Was the Return Interview held within 72 Hours	YES	NO
Screening Tool Completed (Following a missing episode)	YES	NO
Reason for Missing Episode		
Details		
Primary Push Factor		
If Other, please give details		
Secondary Push Factor		
Primary Pull Factor		
Secondary Pull Factor		
MARF Completed	YES	NO
Suffered Harm?	YES	NO
Committed Crime	YES	NO
Police Information Sharing Tool Completed	YES	NO
Is the Young Person known to Be?	YES	NO
If Yes, please give details		
Is the Child known to Social Services?	YES	NO
If Yes, which Authority?		
Describe the Young Person's Normal Friendship Groups and Patterns (inc. reference to gangs)		
Is the young person happy where they are living, or are they worried/upset about anything? Are they afraid of anybody?		
Why were they reported missing? What events/incidents happened? Where was the young person and who were they with? Did they return themselves? Who returned them home?		

Did they feel safe and looked after? Any concern regarding assault/abuse, threats to harm them? What might have made them safer when they were missing?	
What happened when the child got home?	
What does the young person want to happen now – short term/long term?	
Parents/carers view of the incident?	
Additional Information	
The interviewer should provide the child with information about how they can access further or on-going support services. Record the information here:	
The interviewer should provide the child with information about how they can access further or on-going support services. Record the information here:	
Level of Risk of the Young Person Repeating the Runaway	

Health	
Actions	
Summary	

Form Completed by:

. . . .

Appendix 3

Associated resources

General guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013) clarifies the core legal requirements on individuals and organisations to keep children safe, including the legal requirements that health services, social workers, police, schools and other organisations who work with children must follow. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children

- Joint statutory guidance, DCLG and DfE 'Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation' (April 2010) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provision-of-accommodation-for-16-and-17-year-olds-who-may-be-homeless-and-or-require-accommodation

Missing children guidance, strategy and police resources

- Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2011/201103CRIIMP02.pdf

- Missing Children and Adults strategy (2011) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/missing-children-and-adults-strategy

- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) website http://www.ceop.police.uk/

Prevention and supporting missing children and their families

- Railway Children Reach model, which looks at before, during and after incidents (RMFHC) http://www.railwaychildren.org.uk/our-solution/where-we-work/uk/reach-model/

- ChildLine (telephone: 0800 1111) http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/home.aspx

- Safe@Last, working with and on behalf of children and young people at risk through running away http://www.safeatlast.org.uk/

- What to do if a child goes missing: a guide for those working in education and youth work (2013) from the Children's Society http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/pro_guide_to_runaways_-_online_versionfinal_0.pdf

- What to do if your child goes missing: practical advice for parents and carers (2013) from the Children's Society http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/runaways_parents_guide_2013_final_six-page.pdf

- Developing local safeguarding responses to young runaways. Planning guide for professionals (2013) from the Children's Society http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources

- Missing People research: reports on various related issues https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/missing-people/about-the-issue/missing-people-research

Child sexual exploitation

- Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation (2009) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people-from-sexual-exploitation-supplementary-guidance

- Tackling child sexual exploitation action plan (2011) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation-action-plan

- What to do if you suspect a child is being sexually exploited. A step-by-step guide for frontline practitioners (June 2012) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-you-suspect-a-child-is-being-sexually-exploited

- National Working Group website, a UK network of over 1000 practitioners working on the issue of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and trafficking within the UK. includes relevant resources for practitioners www.nationalworkinggroup.org

- Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (PACE) http://www.paceuk.info/

Child trafficking

- Safeguarding Children Who May Have Been Trafficked Guidance (2011) https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-who-may-have-been-trafficked-practice-guidance

- NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC) http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/ctail/ctail_wda84866.html

- London Borough of Hillingdon resources for trafficked children at http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/16450/Child-trafficking-sub-group

- On the Safe Side: Principle of Safe Accommodation of Child Victims of Trafficking (ECPAT UK, 2011) link available here: http://www.ecpat.org.uk/sites/default/files/on_the_safe_side.pdf

- Conducting good return interviews for young people who run away (2014) from the Children's Society http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/8pp_a5_runaway_return_interviews_final.pdf