



Absent or Missing Student Policy and Procedure

Updated: 08/01/21

About this policy:

This policy is designed to be implemented in cases where students (under the age of 18) are believed to be absent or missing from the care of UK2Learn. The purpose of the policy is to help locate the student by the fastest and safest means possible and return them to an approved location. UK2Learn are wholly committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students in UK2Learn's care.

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.

In order to create a suitable policy to help members of staff and host families in the event of an absent or missing student, UK2Learn has referred to the guidance issued to children's homes when compiling this policy:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

UK2Learn will respond appropriately to reports of unauthorised absence and missing students. After each report, UK2Learn will assess and update if necessary, the procedure to minimise the risks in future. Where criminality is associated with the absent or missing student, this will be reported to the police.

Prevention:

In order to minimise the risk of students going missing whilst under the care of UK2Learn (for example at half term, exeat or during a suspension/expulsion) UK2Learn will:

- Ensure premises that students are staying at when not at school (for example when staying with a host family) are secure and take steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering these premises.
- Ensure that students are supervised closely if visiting places such as the local parks, museums and shops.
- Assessing a student's stage of development to ensure the required level of supervision is in place.
- Teach students about how to keep safe.
- Advise students what to do if they find themselves lost.
- With parental consent, have an up-to-date photograph of each student under UK2Learn's care.

Definitions:

Absent: "A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be."

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."

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.

Procedure to follow upon report of an **absent student**:

UK2Learn Director and DSL, Alex Mackie has the ultimate responsibility for overseeing the report of any unauthorised absence or missing student.

Contact Alex Mackie on 07917820033 or guardianship@uk2learn.com - 24 hours, seven days a week

The on duty UK2Learn Manager is responsible for ensuring the completion of all the necessary stages of the following procedure upon the report of an unauthorised absence or missing student.

Step 1: Complete a UK2Learn 'Absent or Missing Student Risk Assessment' to determine if a child is absent or missing. The decision to record a student, together with the evidence to supporting that decision must be recorded. The absence of a student must be recorded in the student's file.

Step 2: If absent, the duty manager should ensure the following is carried out:

1. If appropriate, review the flight and airport transfer details by communicating with the airline and/or airport and also the transfer company assigned to collect the student.
2. 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.
3. Make contact with the student's house parent to collate any relevant information about the whereabouts of the student.
4. Make contact with the student's agent and parent(s) to collate any relevant information about the whereabouts of the student.
5. If appropriate, request that the school organise a search of the grounds and bedroom of the student.
6. If appropriate, request that the school speak to friends and associates of the student about the whereabouts of the student.
7. If appropriate, request that the host family conduct a search of the house and garden.
8. Review information held on the UK2Learn Guardianship database about the student to ascertain any relevant information about the whereabouts of the student.

Step 3: Any member of UK2Learn staff may report a student as absent or missing to the police if there is a genuine concern for their safety. Following a risk assessment, the local police force will record a report of absent or missing if there are grounds to do so. In cases of missing children or young people, the police will work cooperatively with Children's Social Care staff during the enquiry. In order to make a police report the following information will be asked:

- Where you are and where the missing person last seen.
- Who is the missing person's next of kin.
- A detailed description of the missing person, including age, sex and as much information about their clothing as possible.
- 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 with them, what is the number.

- The police may also ask more detailed questions, all information about the student can be found in the UK2Learn Guardianship student database or in the student's individual hard copy file.

Step 4: The on-duty manager must inform the parent(s) of any report made to the police. The parent(s) should be updated every 3 hours with any developments. The on-duty manager must be contactable at all times.

Step 5: The on-duty manager must inform the school of the student of any report made to the police, as the school remain with the overall duty of care. The school should be updated every 3 hours with any developments. The on-duty manager must be contactable at all times.

Step 6: All Unauthorised Absence and Missing Student reports must be reviewed daily until the incident is resolved.

Procedure to follow upon report of a missing student:

UK2Learn Director and DSL, Alex Mackie has the ultimate responsibility for overseeing the report of any unauthorised absence or missing student.

Contact Alex Mackie on 07917820033 or guardianship@uk2learn.com - 24 hours, seven days a week

The on duty UK2Learn Guardianship Manager is responsible for ensuring the completion of all the necessary stages of the following procedure upon the report of an unauthorised absence or missing student.

Step 1: Complete a UK2Learn 'Absent or Missing Student Risk Assessment' to determine if a child is absent or missing.

Step 2: If the student is missing, it should be immediately reported to the police by telephoning either 101 or 999. If it is known that there is an immediate danger to the student then 999 should be called in order to receive an emergency response.

Step 3: The on-duty manager will ensure that the following information is gathered for the initial police report. All information about the student can be found in the UK2Learn student database or in the student's individual hard copy file.

- What is the name, date of birth and nationality of the student?
- What does the student look like and what were they last seen wearing?
- When was the student last seen and who were they with?
- What is the specific concern for the student?
- Is the student likely to be subjected to crime, become a victim of abuse or at risk of sexual exploitation?
- Is the student likely to attempt suicide?
- Is the student likely to pose a danger to other people?
- What actions have been completed so far to locate the student?
- What are the contact details for the student's family?
- What are the students known associates, telephone numbers and address frequented?

- What is the students' host families' address?
- What are the details of the student's social media accounts?
- Does the student have a previous history or absconding/absenteeism and what were the circumstances?
- Are there and factors that could increase the risk to the child?

It is very possible that the police will ask more questions than listed as they will try to ascertain as much information as possible. As much information as possible must be given to the police.

Step 4: The incident must be recorded in the students file and must be reviewed daily until the incident is resolved.

Step 5: The on-duty manager must inform the parent(s) and school of any report made to the police and if they have any contact with the student, they must contact 999 immediately and also make UK2Learn aware of the developments.

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 UK2Learn should release any details to the media and must refer any contact from them directly to the relevant police force.

The Return:

1. 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 in the return interview.
2. Where a student has been reported as absent to the police, they will not be given a return interview. In such cases, UK2Learn Director, Suzie Mackie or the UK2Learn DSL will conduct a return interview with the student and discuss their absence.
3. If there is a suggestion that the child has been the victim or perpetrator of crime, consideration must be given to securing evidence by police including forensic examination.
4. If there has been an allegation of abuse toward the student, the Local Authority Child Protection Service must be contacted.
5. Any person informed of the student being absent or missing they must be contacted immediately and be advised of the students return.
6. If a student has been absent or missing on more than one occasion UK2Learn Director, Suzie Mackie or the UK2Learn DSL will consult with the students' parents and a formal review of the guardianship level required must be assessed.

Useful information, websites and supporting reference documents:

- HSE Health & Safety Executive: www.hse.gov.uk, info line: 0845 345 0055
- 5 Step to Risk Assessment leaflet available to download from: www.hse.gov.uk/risk/fivesteps.htm
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA): www.rospa.com
- Interim Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2013: <http://library.college.police.uk/docs/college-of-policing/Interim-Missing-Persons-Guidance-2013.pdf>
- ACPO (2009). Collection of Missing Persons Data: A code of practice for the Police Service on collecting and sharing data in missing persons with public authorities [PDF only]. London: NPIA.
- ACPO (2010). Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons (2nd Edition) [PDF only]. London: NPIA.
- DCSF (2009). Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation. London: DCSF.
- Office of the Children’s Commissioner (2012). Briefing for the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education, on the emerging findings of the Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, with a special focus on children in care. London: OCC.
- UK Missing Persons Bureau (2012). Missing Persons: Data and analysis 2010/2011 [PDF only]. London: NPIA.

This Policy Review

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