

# **MISSING CHILD POLICY (Academies)**

**The OHC&AT Board of Directors has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies across all OHCAT Academies – 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017.**

Jay Mercer  
Chair of OHCAT Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Mercer", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

# Missing Child Policy & Procedure

## INTRODUCTION

Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHC&AT) is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils and students. The safety and welfare of our pupils and students is of the utmost importance. All staff should be aware of their responsibilities regarding pupil safety, including what to do if a pupil goes missing from Academy supervision or when a 'collected pupil' is not collected from school by their designated person. This policy lays out the procedures that should be followed in the event of either occurrence.

This policy applies to all OHC&AT Academy pupils. There is a separate procedure for managing the welfare of Orchard Hill College students.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, the Risk Assessment Policy and the Educational Visits & Learning Outside the Classroom Policy.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### **OHC&AT Directors will:**

- Monitor updated policies on a regular basis and receive termly reports on safeguarding that include any missing child/vulnerable adult incidents within the College and OHCAT provisions.

### **OHC&AT Executive Senior Leadership Team will:**

- Ensure that this policy and related procedures are regularly reviewed and updated in line with government guidance and other best practice.
- Monitor incidences of missing children/vulnerable adults across the College and OHCAT provisions and provide termly reports to Directors.

### **Heads/Principals will:**

- Ensure all staff within their Academy are aware of this policy and understand the procedure to be followed in the event of a missing pupil.
- Review any incidence of missing pupil to ensure that the Academy takes forward any lessons learned and continues to operate best practice.

### **Staff will:**

- Ensure they are familiar with this policy and adhere to all related policies and procedures, especially, but not exclusively, those relating to Adult Protection & Safeguarding, Risk Assessment, Health & Safety and Educational Visits & Learning Outside the Classroom.
- Ensure that attendance registers are completed accurately and promptly according to guidelines, and return attendance registers to the Academy office promptly each day.

**Parents/carers will:**

- Ensure that the Academy holds up to date contact information, including named emergency contacts in the event that parents/carers are not available.
- Know the procedure for handover and collection of pupils where relevant, particularly where there may be safeguarding issues or concerns, including parental responsibility.
- Sign pupils out of school at the Academy office when collecting them during the school day.

**MISSING CHILD****Procedures aimed at reducing risk of a missing child**

It is important to note that pupils attending OHC&AT Academies cover all age ranges from 2 to 19 and have a variety of additional learning needs, which may be complex and profound. Some pupils attend school using LA transport or are brought to and from school by parents/carers; a smaller number are independent travellers. Pupils also experience time in the community, attending a wide variety of work experience, enrichment and learning opportunities.

This policy therefore seeks to set out the general principles and procedures that should be followed whenever OHC&AT staff suspect a pupil may be considered missing. Such situations might include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to arrive for a scheduled school day or session, whether on Academy premises or in the community
- Absconding from a scheduled school day or session, whether on Academy premises or in the community
- Becoming lost while out in the community e.g. through separation from Academy staff and peers

Everyday measures that OHC&AT Academies take to safeguard pupils include:

- If a pupil is absent and no notification of absence has been received by the Academy within 30 minutes of school starting, staff will contact the named contact/s on the pupil's file to ascertain their whereabouts.
- The Academy will ensure parents/carers are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of the pupil passes from staff to them and vice versa.
- Clear procedures are in place for welcoming pupils into each Academy, including signing in and out.
- Teaching and support staff ensure that pupils go to the relevant classroom or appropriately allocated area.
- Staff mark registers promptly and accurately morning and afternoon.
- If pupils leave the classroom to work in other parts of the school, the class teacher must ensure that a suitable level of supervision is maintained at all times and that all pupils are accounted for on return to the classroom.
- Pupils who travel to and from school using LA transport (minibus/taxi) are escorted by appropriate named staff onto their bus or taxi. A formalised system of checking pupils onto their transport is in place.

- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff/pupil ratios are provided when pupils leave Academy premises.
- Where pupils do not have capacity to consent, permission from parents/carers for educational trips should be obtained generically at the beginning of each academic year and specifically for each trip where that visit is not covered in global permissions.
- Staff mobile telephones are taken on every visit and mobile contact numbers left at the Academy.

### **Procedure to be followed in the event of a pupil going missing**

In the event of a member of staff discovering or suspecting that a pupil has gone missing while at school:

1. If a teacher, TA or other key adult (for example, therapist or lunchtime supervisor) suspects that a pupil is missing from a lesson or activity, they must contact the nearest member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the Head/Principal and office staff immediately. The Head/Principal, SLT member and any teachers and/or TAs/STAs will carry out a thorough search of the building, including classrooms, toilets, storage areas, communal areas, resource rooms, outside areas and Academy grounds, up to a time limit of 10 minutes (see point 6 below).
2. The following lists held in the school office and/or electronically will be checked:
  - a. Attendance registers
  - b. Off-site record (trips and visits)
  - c. Lists of those attending other provisions (e.g. inclusion links, work placements or other alternative provision)
3. Staff will count and name check all the pupils present against the register.
4. A thorough check of all exits will be made, to ensure all relevant gates/doors were secure and there are no other ways a pupil could have left the Academy. If something is discovered this needs to be drawn to the attention of the Head/Principal, Designated Safeguarding Lead and SLT immediately.
5. Staff will attempt to call the pupil on their personal mobile phone, if they have one.
6. If the pupil has not been found within 10 minutes from the time that they have been reported as 'missing', parents/carers should be notified. The Head/Principal or next most senior member of staff on site will decide at which point the police need to be contacted.
7. Staff must try to remember and write down a description of what the pupil was wearing and any distinguishing features. A recent photo of the pupil, for example their ID photo, will be provided to those searching.
8. Any special medical or learning needs relating to the missing pupil should be disclosed to police or other agencies as appropriate.

9. SLT members will speak to all staff members who have had contact with the missing pupil that day, in order to try and build up a clear picture of the pupil's movements.

**Additional procedures in the event of a pupil going missing while off Academy premises:**

1. The teacher or the allocated group leader must ensure the safety of remaining pupils. At least one member of Academy staff must stay with them. The teacher or allocated group leader must make a professional judgement at the time with respect to the size of the pupil group, the needs of that group and the available staff:pupil ratios.
2. One or more staff members should immediately start searching for the pupil.
3. The SLT and Designated Safeguarding Lead must be contacted immediately.
4. The teacher or allocated group leader should immediately contact the Academy to alert them.
5. If the pupil is not found within 5 minutes, the teacher must contact police by telephoning 999.

The teacher or allocated group leader should alert the Academy that the police have been contacted and the Academy will make arrangements to notify parents/carers, after which the procedures described above will be followed.

**PUPIL NOT COLLECTED**

This procedure outlines what should happen when a 'collected pupil' i.e. one who is collected from school by a parent, carer or designated adult, is not collected. The guiding principle in dealing with any situation of this type must be to minimise distress to the pupil and for him or her to remain in familiar surroundings and/or with familiar people for as long as possible.

The Academy will ensure that it is aware of all pupils who are collected by a parent, carer or designated adult, if they are not collected by LA transport and do not travel to and from school independently. The following general principles should be adhered to by all parties:

- Parents/carers who know they are going to be late must inform the main office in advance.
- On occasions when a pupil is due to be collected by someone other than their parent/carers or normally authorised person (e.g. when all of the above are unexpectedly unavailable), parents/carers must advise how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect the pupil. This will normally be through the use of a pre-determined password.

In the event of a 'collected pupil' not being collected at the end of the day, the following procedures will be activated:

**We undertake to look after the pupil safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care.**

- If a pupil is not collected within 10 minutes of the agreed collection time, a member of staff will call the parent/carer or designated adult and use any other emergency contact details available in order to determine the nature and length of delay in collection. If contacts go to voicemail/answerphone, staff members should leave messages giving their name and the Academy telephone number and requesting a prompt return call.
- While waiting to be collected, the pupil will be supervised by a member of staff who will offer them as much support and reassurance as is necessary.
- Pupils awaiting collection will be taken to the school office where they will be supervised by Academy staff.
- If a pupil has not been collected within 40 minutes of the end of the school day, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed and a decision taken as to whether Social Services needs to be called.
- If all attempts within the 40 minute period to contact a parent/carer, designated person or emergency contact fail then the person in charge at the time should inform the Local Authority Social Services department of the situation without delay.
- The duty social worker will take ownership of the situation and decide what happens next, including whether the police need to be involved in helping to trace the parent/carer of the pupil.
- Social Services will attempt to find the parent or relative. Emergency arrangements will be made for the pupil in consultation with the Local Authority Social Services department.
- The pupil will not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file.
- Under no circumstances should staff go to look for the parent/carer or take the pupil home with them.
- The Academy will ensure that there are at least two members of staff present whilst waiting for the parent/carer to collect the pupil.
- Continual incidents of late collection will be recorded in the late collection folder and discussed with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity.

- In the event that transporting the pupil somewhere is agreed to be necessary, staff should not usually transport pupils alone in their own cars and may wish to consider using a taxi or mini-cab (approved licenced drivers only). In this instance, two members of staff will accompany the pupil. However, there may be exceptional circumstances (for example in an emergency) where solo accompaniment of the pupil by an appropriate staff member is necessary. In this instance, the staff member must ensure that a senior leader of line manager (ideally the Head/Principal and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead) is aware of the arrangement and can follow up accordingly.

## **POLICY REVIEW DETAILS**

<i>Version:</i>	1.1
<i>Reviewer:</i>	John Prior, Jackie Van-West
<i>Approval body:</i>	Family Board
<i>Date this version approved:</i>	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2017
<i>Due for review:</i>	Autumn 2020

## **RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy  
Health & Safety Policy  
Risk Assessment Policy  
Educational Visits & Learning Outside the Classroom Policy

**APPENDIX A: Recording form for incidence of missing pupil**

School / Designated Safeguarding Lead \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Name of pupil: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel no: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date, time & location of disappearance:

\_\_\_\_\_

Who was responsible for caring for the pupil at the time he/she disappeared?

\_\_\_\_\_

What was the pupil wearing? \_\_\_\_\_

Any distinguishing features? \_\_\_\_\_

Circumstances surrounding disappearance:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/carer contacted:  Yes  No

Police contacted:  Yes  No

What happens next?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by registered person: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed by Head/SLT: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**APPENDIX B: Recording form for incidence of pupil not collected by parent/carer**

School / Designated Safeguarding Lead \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Name of pupil: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel no: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date & time pupil should have been collected:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of person who should have collected the pupil:

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact made with parent/carer/emergency contact:  Yes  No

Social Services contacted:  Yes  No

What happens next?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Designated Safeguarding Lead: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed by Head/SLT:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_