Absent or Missing Student Policy

Approvers:
Steph Gilbert
Helen Wu

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Related Documents:
Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Anti-Radicalisation (PREVENT) Policy Bullying and Online Safety Policy
Mental Health Policy

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Oxbridge Group Ltd: Absent or Missing Student Policy

Table of Contents

Safeguarding Statement 3
Policy Aims 3
Relevant Government Guidance 4
Definitions 5
Prevention 6
Responsibilities and relevant contacts 6
Procedure: Absent Student 7
Procedure: Missing Student 8
Contact with the Press and Media 10
Procedure once the Child or Young Person is found 10
Appendix 1: Absent/Missing Child Risk Assessment (automatically prompted for on created of a Cause for Concern – Absent/Missing Child) 12
Appendix 2: Flowchart for Absent/Missing Student Procedure 14

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Oxbridge Group Ltd: Absent or Missing Student Policy

Safeguarding Statement

Oxbridge Group Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, volunteers, homestays and any individual working with the organisation to share this commitment. Every young person in the care of Oxbridge Group Ltd should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse or neglect.

Oxbridge Group Ltd believe that:

- Guardians and Homestays can contribute to the prevention of abuse.
- All children have the right to be protected from harm.
- Children need support which matches their individual needs, including those who may have experienced abuse.
- Children need to be safe and feel safe in school and when staying with their guardian or homestay.

Policy Aims

- This policy is designed to give all members of the Oxbridge Group Ltd team a clear list of guidelines in case of an absent or missing child or young person.

- The purpose of the policy is to help locate the child or young person by the quickest and safest means possible and return them to an approved location.

- Oxbridge Group Ltd will respond appropriately to reports of unauthorised absence and missing children and young people without delay. After each report, Oxbridge Group Ltd will assess and update if necessary the procedure to minimise any future risk.

- When a child or young person is absent or missing they may be at risk from all forms of serious harm including abuse, exploitation, radicalisation and trafficking. The Oxbridge Group Ltd Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy clearly states our commitment to protect children and young people from these risks.

- In any case where there is potential that the child or young person may have been trafficked, exploited, radicalised or involved in any form of criminal activity Oxbridge Group Ltd will immediately contact the Police (Prevent) and the Local Safeguarding

Children Partnership.

- 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.
- The policy provides a model and framework for response and dealing with incidents dependent on the risk posed, and encourages partnership working with other agencies to reduce the number of recorded incidents of missing or absent people.

Relevant Government Guidance

Oxbridge Group Ltd will fulfil local and national responsibilities as laid out in the following documents:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges, (2026) Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2026_.pdf
- Working together to Safeguard Children (2026) Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2026_a_guide_to_multi_agency_working.pdf
- Statutory Guidance on Children who run away or go missing from home or care (January 2014) Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- What to do if you're worried a child is being abused (2015)What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf
- Children Missing From Education (2025) Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK
- HSE Health & Safety Executive: www.hse.gov.uk information line: 0845 345 0055
- HSE Risk Assessment leaflet available to download from: Managing risks and risk assessment at work – Overview -HSE
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) www.rospa.com
- Interim Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2018: strategy-and-governance---investigation-of-missing-persons-unidentified-bodieshospers---policy--equality-impact-assessment.pdf (SECURED)

(met.police.uk)

- 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: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/243 597/97 87777146872.pdf
- ACPO Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons (2nd Edition):

  https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public- protection/missing-persons/
- 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:

  Briefing for Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State, on the emerging findings of the Office of the Children's Commissioners Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups (ioe.ac.uk)

Definitions

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

If the student is not in the place they are expected to be, but there are no other contextual factors suggesting apparent risk, generally students would be categorised as 'absent' if not in the place expected for under 1 hour.

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."

If the student is absent from the place they are expected to be for over one hour without contact, we would categorise this young person as 'missing'.

If there are risk factors or external contextual factors which increase the concerns about the student's welfare or safety, this may be categorised as 'missing', even in cases where students have not been absent for over one hour.

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Oxbridge Group Ltd deals with absent and missing students initially in the same way (as detailed in the flow chart (Appendix 2). Any student who is presenting as 'absent' or 'missing' should have their concerns raised in exactly the same manner, with a Director or DSL to determine whether any 'absent' students progress to a 'missing student'. For the purposes of Oxbridge Group Ltd's procedures, any student who has been 'absent' for one hour, would be escalated to 'missing' at this point.

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 escalation to 'missing' should sufficient time or change in circumstances present.

Prevention

In order to minimise the risk of children and young people going missing whilst under the care of Oxbridge Group Ltd (for example at half term, exeat or during a suspension/expulsion) we undertake to put the following measure in place as far as is practical:

- Ensure the accommodation which children and young people in our care are staying (for example when staying with a host family) are secure and take steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering these premises.
- Ensure that children and young people are appropriately supervised according to their age when visiting unfamiliar areas.
- Assessing a child and young person's stage of development to ensure the required level of supervision is in place.
- Educating children and young people in our care about how to keep safe.
- Advise children and young people about what to do if they find themselves lost.
- With appropriate parental consent, have an up-to-date photograph of each child and young person under Oxbridge Group Ltd' care.

Responsibilities and relevant contacts

NB: The initial steps of the absent/missing procedure are the same, regardless of whether student is

'absent' or 'missing'.

The UK Director (DSL), Steph Gilbert has ultimate responsibility for overseeing the report of any unauthorised absence or missing student.

UK Director (DSL) – Steph Gilbert
+ 44 78377 78298

Alternatively

DDSL – Daniel Wellings
+44 7523 196894

The senior member of staff on duty at the time of the report 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.

It is important to remain calm and to follow the appropriate steps without delay.

Procedure: Absent Student

It is important to remain calm and to follow the appropriate steps without delay.

1. Report - Inform DSL and complete the 'Absent or Missing Student Risk Assessment' (paper version available Appendix 1) Cause for Concern Form – Oxbridge Group Ltd to determine if the child or young person is absent or missing. The absence of a child or young person together with full notes of any decision taken must be recorded in their file.
2. If it is decided that the child or young person is absent then the senior member of staff should ensure the following is carried out:
    a. Try to contact the child or young person by phone (leave a message if no answer), text, email and social media. This must be repeated every 20 minutes.
    b. Make contact with the child or young person's School to collate any relevant information about their whereabouts. Explain that Oxbridge Group Ltd will be responsible for leading the search and ask that the School work with you to manage the situation. If appropriate, you may wish to request that the School organises a search of the grounds and the child or young person's bedroom. You may also wish to ask the School to speak with the friends of the child or young person to see if they have any information about their whereabouts.
    c. Make contact with the child or young person's parent(s) to collate any relevant information about their whereabouts.
    d. Make contact with the child or young person's agent (if appropriate) to collate any relevant information about their whereabouts.
    e. If appropriate, review the flight and airport transfer details by communicating with the airline and/or airport and also the transfer company assigned to deliver or collect the child or young person.
    f. If appropriate, request that the Homestay conduct a search of the house and garden. It may also be appropriate to ask the Homestay to conduct a search of the immediate local area.
    g. Review information held on the Oxbridge Group Ltd database about

the child or young person to ascertain if there is any further relevant information about their possible whereabouts. E.g. any external clubs etc. they may belong to.

h. Should the absent student be uncontactable for 1 hour, this would escalate the student's case to 'missing'. The absent student risk assessment should be reassessed at this time by the senior member of staff. At any time previous to the 1 hour mark should the contextual information change (previous conduct, contact with parents/school/host, informal communication) the case may be escalated to 'missing' in accordance with the DSL assessment. The DSL or DDSL will continue to monitor if the situation is escalated.

3. The Senior member of staff would make a Missing Person report to police (101 or 999 dependent on risk level). 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:
    a. Where you are and where the missing person was last seen.
    b. Who is the missing person's next of kin.
    c. A detailed description of the missing person, including age, sex and as much information about their clothing as possible.
    d. The circumstances of the incident, including anything that may have triggered the disappearance,
    e. How long the missing person has been missing, where they were last seen, if there was an argument.
    f. Who is looking for the child or young person, where were they last seen, do they have a mobile with them, what is the number.
    g. The police may also ask more detailed questions, all information about the child or young person can be found in the Oxbridge Group Ltd's electronic database or Student Care Folder
4. The senior member of staff handling the incident 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 senior member of staff should ensure that they are contactable at all times. If possible they should have access to a landline and a mobile telephone number and use one for outgoing and one for incoming calls.
5. The senior member of staff handling the incident must inform the child or young person's school of any report made to the police, as the school may remain with the overall duty of care. The school should be updated every 3 hours with any developments.
6. All unauthorised Absence and Missing Student reports must be reviewed daily until the incident is resolved.

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Oxbridge Group Ltd: Absent or Missing Student Policy

Procedure: Missing Student

It is important to remain calm and to follow the appropriate steps without delay.

1. Report – Inform DSL and complete the 'Absent or Missing Student Risk Assessment' (paper version available Appendix 1) Cause for Concern Form – Oxbridge Group Ltd to determine if the child or young person is absent or missing. The absence of a child or young person together with full notes of any decision taken must be recorded in their file.
2. If it is decided that the child or young person 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 child or young person then 999 should be called in order to receive an emergency response.
7. The senior member of staff handling the incident will ensure that the following information is gathered for the initial police report.
    a. Where you are and where the missing person was last seen.
    b. Who is the missing person's next of kin.
    c. A detailed description of the missing person, including age, sex and as much information about their clothing as possible.
    d. The circumstances of the incident, including anything that may have triggered the disappearance,
    e. How long the missing person has been missing, where they were last seen, if there was an argument.
    f. Who is looking for the child or young person, where were they last seen, do they have a mobile with them, what is the number.
    g. The police may also ask more detailed questions, all information about the child or young person can be found in the Oxbridge Group Ltd's electronic database or Student Care Folder:
        i. What is the name, date of birth and nationality of the child or young person? What does the child or young person look like and what were they last seen wearing?
        ii. When were they last seen and who were they with?
        iii. What is the specific concern for the child or young person?
        iv. Is the child or young person likely to be subjected to crime, become a victim of abuse or at risk of sexual exploitation?
        v. Is the child or young person likely to attempt suicide?
        vi. Is the child or young person likely to pose a danger to other people?
        vii. What actions have been completed so far to locate the child or young person?
        viii. What are the contact details for the child or young person's family?
        ix. Who are the child or young person's known associates, what are their telephone numbers and addresses?
        x. What is the child or young persons' Homestay's address?

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xi. What are the details of the child or young person's social media accounts or who might know these details?

xii. Does the child or young person have a previous history or absconding/absenteeism and what were the circumstances?

xiii. Are there any factors that could increase the risk to the child or young person that you or others are aware of at this stage?

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.

3. The senior member of staff handling the incident 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 senior member of staff should ensure that they are contactable at all times. If possible they should have access to a landline and a mobile telephone number and use one for outgoing and one for incoming calls.
4. The senior member of staff handling the incident must inform the child or young person's school of any report made to the police, as the school may remain with the overall duty of care. The school should be updated every 3 hours with any developments.
5. The senior member of staff handling the incident must update Police if any contact is made with the child or young person.
6. All unauthorised Absence and Missing Student reports must be reviewed daily until the incident is resolved.

Contact with the Press and Media

The police are responsible for advising the press and 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 Oxbridge Group Ltd should release any details to the press or media and must refer any contact from them directly to the relevant police force. If in doubt please direct all queries to a Director and make no comment at all.

Procedure once the Child or Young Person is found

The police are responsible for ensuring that the child or young person 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.

Oxbridge Group Ltd: Absent or Missing Student Policy

Where a student has been reported as absent to the police they will not be given a return interview. In such cases, Oxbridge Group Ltd's DSL, Steph Gilbert will conduct a return interview with the child or young person and will discuss and record their reasons for absence.

If there is a suggestion that the child or young person has been the victim or perpetrator of crime, consideration must be given to securing evidence by police including forensic examination. This should also include securing clothing and delaying washing/bathing in relevant cases.

Staff and Homestays must remember that all necessary permissions must be obtained from the child or young person's parents and/or those with parental responsibility. The priority is to recognise that the welfare of the child or young person is paramount and careful consideration must be given to the potential effects of such procedures of the child or young person.

If there has been an allegation of abuse toward the student, the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership must be contacted immediately and the Oxbridge Group Ltd Designated Safeguarding Lead informed.

Any persons informed that the child or young person was absent or missing must be contacted immediately and be advised of their return.

If a child or young person has been absent or missing on more than one occasion Oxbridge Group Ltd's DSL, Steph Gilbert will consult with the child or young persons' parents and a formal review of the guardianship level required must be assessed.

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Oxbridge Group Ltd: Absent or Missing Student Policy

Appendix 1: Absent/Missing Child Risk Assessment (automatically prompted for on created of a Cause for Concern – Absent/Missing Child)

Date	
Reported By	
Full Name of Child/Young Person	
Absent or Missing (If contact is not made with student within 1 hour of initial report, student to be treated as missing)	
Details of Contact Attempts (Every 20 minutes by phone, text, email and social media - please record all communication)	
Date &Time student absent/missing - start	
Date &Time student absent/missing - end	
Gender	
School	
Host Family	
What are the circumstances in which the child/young person is absent/missing. Please note as much information as possible	
History: Has this student been absent/missing before?	
When and where was the child/young person last seen?	
Where is the child/young person supposed to be currently?	
What was the temperament of the child/young person when last seen?	
Does the child/young person have any medical conditions or take any medication? If so, do they have their medication with them?	
Other Factors contributing to risk calculation	

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Level of Risk presented	
total time student absent/missing	
Physical Description (Height, Build, Ethnicity, Eye colour, Hair Colour & Style, Glasses/Contact Lenses, Distinctive Features)	
Please supply as much information as possible about what the child/young person was last seen wearing (Top/Sweater/Shirt/T-Shirt, Coat/Jacket. Trousers/Shorts/Skirt, Shoes/Trainers/Boots, Headwear/Gloves/Scarf, Other identifiable clothing)	
Action Taken (Reported to DSL)	
DSL/Director Report on Outcome/Further Action Taken (Parents/School/Authorities/Airports)	

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Appendix 2: Flowchart for Absent/Missing Student Procedure



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