

MISSING PERSONS POLICY

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"One of the most consistently high-achieving independent schools in Britain" Sunday Times Schools Guide

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to outline the process if a student is reported missing or students who have taken leave without permission.

Westbourne School is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all of its pupils. We believe that our school should provide a safe, caring, positive and stimulating environment that promotes the social, physical and moral development of each member of the school community.

The aims of this policy are:

- to protect the health and safety of our students;
- to respond to the absence of a student as quickly and as sensitively as possible; and
- to remain compliant with statutory frameworks/regulations.

This policy applies to the Boarding House, Prep and Senior School only, the Nursery has their own policy to which they will adhere to if they are unable to locate a child.

Definition of 'Missing'

The Wales Safeguarding Procedures describes a missing person as:

“Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and their wellbeing or otherwise confirmed.”

Westbourne School defines a missing student as a student whose whereabouts are unknown for more than 1 hour and/or where there are fears for the wellbeing of the student.

Registration and Absences

The School has clear guidelines for the registration of students set out in the Attendance policy.

A missing student is not the same as a student who is absent from check-in.

Any pupils absent during first (or second registration) of the day, must provide evidence to support the absence from:

- Parent(s) - pupils who are not boarders
- Boarding House Parent(s) - pupils who reside in the Boarding House
- HomeStay Parent(s) - pupils who reside in a homestay property

If no valid reason is forth-coming by 9am for the morning registration and/or 2.25pm for the afternoon registration, then reception staff contact the appropriate parent(s)/legal guardian(s) for official confirmation.

Form tutors are expected to check the daily attendance at the end of each day.

Should a student go missing during the school day, the appropriate Coordinator (MY/ GCSE/IB) or member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), will initiate the following action:



- a) Check with the School Office that the student has not signed out for an appointment (e.g. dentist, hospital etc);
- b) Check they are not elsewhere on the school premises/sites for example the Boarding House or off site with the School for an event or lesson;
- c) Check they are not with the off site School Counsellor;
- d) Check with students in their class/form to see if anyone knows their location; if necessary checking snap maps for their location
- g) Check toilets and changing areas in case they are unwell.

If the pupil is still unaccounted for, the member of SLT will:

- a) Try ringing the missing student's mobile phone where possible;
- b) Enlist the help of support staff to search the School and grounds (supply photo, if available);
- c) Ring home/parent to check that they have not taken their child out of school and failed to inform us. At this stage, if appropriate, we will inform parents that we may have to contact the Police
- d) Send an email to the whole school distribution list asking staff to keep a lookout.

When a student goes missing

- If a student is not where they are expected to be and all reasonable efforts to make contact with the student or to locate them are unsuccessful then the student should be reported as missing to the police (The pupil's parents will be informed that we have done this).
- Should the person(s) reporting the student as missing be aware of any details that suggest that the student might be at risk of significant harm, it is imperative that these details are passed onto the Police including any information that has led to these concerns.
- When the Police receive a report that a student is missing they will carry out a risk assessment based on the information they receive and any information they already hold about the student and this will inform their decision on the appropriate response to the report that has been made.
- Whilst the student is missing all agencies involved should liaise with one another and discuss what ongoing actions will be taken to try and locate the student. Timely and effective information sharing is key to a robust safeguarding response.
- Police forces are required to submit case details to the Missing Persons Bureau (MPB) in relation to all: people reported missing in the UK who are still missing after 72 hours; foreign nationals reported as missing in the UK (via INTERPOL or any other means) and UK residents reported as missing abroad.

When a student is found

When a student who has been missing (whereabouts unknown) is located the Police will decide whether they need to conduct a Safe and Well Check and complete a Public Protection Notification



(PPN) or their force equivalent which shares information surrounding the student and incident with relevant partner agencies.

Parents/legal guardians, Police, Local Authorities and anyone else who has been informed that the student was missing should be informed that the student has been located.

If there is no information to suggest that it is unsafe for the student to return home/living accommodation or to stay at home/living accommodation, they will be returned there.

Approach following an episode when a student has been missing

When a child has been missing and they return back to their home/living accommodation it is important that they are made physically comfortable and are received in a way that makes them feel safe.

When they are ready, the student should be given the opportunity to talk about their experience of going missing. This should happen in a place where and at a time when the child is comfortable to talk. They should be given information about where they can go to speak confidentially about anything which is worrying them

Sponsored Students

Any students studying with a visa, are subject to additional checks by Coordinators (GCSE/IB) and boarding staff on a daily basis, in addition to their form tutors.

Sponsored students must inform their UK legal guardian of when they leave any accommodation, whether it be by signing in/out of the boarding house and/or verbally at a home stay property.

If a sponsored student is not going to school due to illness, they must inform their UK legal guardian before 8.30am, on each morning of absence.

Sponsored students that leave their accommodation for any length of time overnight must provide:

- Written permission from their parents;
- Permission from their UK legal guardian **AND** the Boarding House Parent and/or the Principal/Vice Principal;
- Confirmation of departure and return dates.
- Information of travel arrangements, including times of both departure and arrival for both journeys;
- The address and names of where they'll be residing, including an emergency contact number (including holidays).

Any late returns must be confirmed by their parents and the students to their UK legal guardians.

Whilst away the students must remain in daily contact with their UK guardian to confirm location and safety.



*Any sponsored student not returning on the indicated date/time will be considered temporarily missing and the guardian should contact; their form tutor, Principal/Vice Principal(s), parents and emergency contact, along with the guardians at the accommodation provided.

*The authorities will be informed if there is any indication that the student is 'missing' or 'in danger'.

Sponsored Student Unauthorised Absence

Any sponsored students who have been absent/late for more than two days in a fortnight will have a meeting with both their Form tutor and Vice Principal(s) to advise the importance of attendance. They will be warned that both their punctuality and attendance will be monitored very closely as a consequence and the meeting is to be recorded on iSAMs.

Should a sponsored student be absent without approval, for example, not attend registration, the following process must be followed:

Day One

On day one of their unauthorised absence, the admin team will contact the appropriate parent(s)/legal guardian(s) for official confirmation of the absence and will report this to the Vice Principal(s)/Principal.

Day Three

On day three, should the absence continue and we have received no response, assuming no safeguarding concerns, the admin team will report this to Student Sponsor Licence Level 2 user (or the Level 1 user in their absence), who will contact the appropriate parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or agent for confirmation of the absence and to remind them of the responsibilities for students to attend school in line with their visas.

Day Five

On day five, following all safeguarding checks, if no-one has been in touch to confirm the absence and they have not resumed their studies, the absence is reported to the Student Sponsor Licence Authorising Officer, who will contact the appropriate parent(s)/legal guardian(s) or agent for confirmation of the absence and to advise them of the consequences for students failing to attend school in line.

Day Ten

On day ten, should there be no change, the Student Sponsor Licence Authorising Officer must report this to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) via the Sponsorship Management System (SMS) within ten days.

Sponsored students are informed regularly of their responsibility of attendance at the start of their education at Westbourne by guardians, form tutors, the pastoral team and the Vice Principal(s)/Principal.

