

Absent or Missing Student Policy

Academic Families is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people – referred to as students.

This policy is to ensure that missing or absent students under the age of 18 and who are not under the duty of care of their school are subject of an appropriate response by Academic Families. To ensure that students are found and returned to an approved location as soon as practicable and that all such reports are recorded.

We use the National Policing Improvement Agency 'Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2010' distinct definitions to determine whether someone is missing or absent.

Missing person - A person 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.

Absent person - A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be and there is **no** apparent risk and are absent for less than two hours.

Every report is risk assessed to identify and prioritise vulnerable and high risk children and young people. Where criminality is associated with either the initial disappearance or subsequent harbouring of those who wish to remain absent, this will be reported to the police.

Procedure

1. The Academic Families staff member receiving the initial contact will initiate a conference call with Director, Lorna Clayton and the Child Protection Officer.
2. The Director has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that a missing or absent student is reported to the appropriate authorities however the CPO may take immediate operational command to confirm the known details.
3. The Guardianship Manger or Area Manager will support the CPO to complete the initial enquiries.
 - a. If the student was reported absent by their host, support them to complete the [Host Absent or Missing Student form](#).

- b. If the student is missing when not staying with a host or we will report the missing student to the police, then complete the [Missing Student report for police](#) and update it as information becomes available.
 - c. Phone, text and email the student asking them to make contact immediately. Repeat at least every 30 minutes.
 - d. Review their Team information on ILP for notes of specific friends who may have information about their whereabouts.
 - e. If staying with a host, ask them to again search their house and garden and contact their family members who may have information about their whereabouts.
 - f. If during term time, contact the houseparent to gather information about their possible whereabouts including contact their friends.
 - g. If in transit, review flight and transfer details and contact the driver and airline to confirm their last known whereabouts.
 - h. Contact their parents to report the situation and gather any information they may have about their possible whereabouts.
4. If the student is not found within two hours or the Director has reason to be concerned for their safety before then, they will report the student as missing to the Police who will then assume responsibility to complete their enquiries. Call 101 for a non-emergency report or 999 for an emergency response if it is believed they are in immediate risk of harm.
 5. The Director or CPO will be responsible to communicate with the student's parents, keeping them informed regularly whether there is an update or not..
 6. The CPO or Guardianship Manager will communicate with school and advise them that student has been reported missing to the Police. They will continue to communicate with the school as Police updates are received.
 7. No contact will be initiated with the media and if contacted, Academic Families will make no comment.
 8. The incident and all communications must be recorded in the student's ILP file in Journals - Missing Person with regular updates being added until the matter has been resolved.

The Return

9. All people who have been involved in the search for the student must be informed of their return – parents, school, host and other parties.
10. The police are responsible for ensuring a missing student has returned safely and will conduct their return interview to give them an opportunity to discuss their experience.

11. If a student is absent and the police have not been involved, the CPO or Area Manager will conduct the return interview to allow the child or young person an opportunity to talk about their absence.
12. If a student has been absent on more than one occasion, the return interview must be conducted within 72 hours, in a neutral location away from school and the host.
13. If any possible form of child abuse becomes apparent then child protection procedures must be implemented and the police contacted immediately.
14. If there is any possibility that the student has been a victim or perpetrator of crime, consideration must be given to securing evidence. This includes preventing the student washing themselves and securing their clothing. The student's welfare is paramount and careful consideration must be given to their support.

Who to contact

Roni Jennings, Child Protection Officer (CPO) who will contact the school CPO in accordance with individual School Guidelines.

roni@academicfamilies.com mobile 07532 414191

or

Lorna Clayton, Deputy Child Protection Officer

lorna@academicfamilies.com 07734 849554