



**Academic
Guardians UK**

Absent or Missing Children Policy

This policy is designed to be implemented in cases where students are believed to be absent or missing from the care of Academic Guardians UK. The purpose of the policy is to assist in the location of the student by the safest and fastest means possible.

This document details the policy aims, safeguarding measures, training & response to individual concerns. The policy is linked to the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy. Absent or missing student policy and procedures should be seen as part of our wider and existing safeguarding framework.

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January 2020

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January 2021



Academic Guardians UK Ltd – Absent or Missing Student

Policy: Absent or Missing Student

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Policy Owner: Andrew Kettle Update: January 2020

Next Review Date: January 2021



1. Policy

- 1.1 Academic Guardians UK Ltd (AGUK) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. This policy is in place to help ensure that missing or absent children (under the age of 18) (who are not under the duty of care of the school/university), are subject to an appropriate response by AGUK. This policy also extends to every student, including those over the age of 18, under AGUK care. The policy is to ensure that children are found and returned to an approved location as soon as practicable. When a child is absent or missing they may be at risk from all forms of serious harm including abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, trafficking and mental health issues.
- 1.2 There are many concerns and heightened risk for the wellbeing of children as they can become vulnerable to being recruited, moved or transported and then exploited, forced to work or sold; Children are trafficked for child sexual exploitation, benefit fraud, forced marriage, domestic servitude (cleaning, childcare, cooking), forced labour in factories or agriculture, and criminal activity. It is also worth noting that many children are trafficked into the UK from abroad, but children can also be trafficked from one part of the UK to another. AGUK's wider Safeguarding policies and procedures are in place to protect children and young people from these and other risks.
- 1.3 A key feature of this policy is that it requires all reports of missing/absent people to be recorded. This policy provides a framework for the response and dealing with incidents, dependent on the risk identified, and encourages partnership working with other agencies, to reduce the number of recorded incidents of missing or absent people. This policy is applicable to all staff, homestay host families, schools & drivers who may become involved in the initial stages of a report of a missing child or young person.
- 1.4 Academic Guardians UK will always respond appropriately to reports of missing and absent persons. Each individual report will be risk assessed, to identify those who are vulnerable, or represent a high risk, which will require an immediately and urgent response. AGUK's focus will be on locating the person safely and mitigating any risk posed to others. Where criminality is associated with either the initial disappearance or subsequent harbouring of those who wish to remain absent, will be reported to the police.
- 1.5 A copy of this policy along with all other policies are made available to all students, parents/agents, members of staff, local coordinators, homestay hosts and partner schools via the appropriate intranet sharepoint sites, student parent / agent portal, local coordinator and homestay host portals and the company website at <https://www.academic-guardians.co.uk/our-policies>.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 AGUK have applied the following definitions as they have been agreed with the Children's Services and included within the Local Safeguarding Children Board protocols:

Absent – a child or young person is not at a place where they are expected or required to be and there is no apparent risk



Missing – a child or young 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.

2.2 Levels of Risk:

- 2.2.1 Low Risk – ‘There is no apparent threat or danger to the child or the public.’
- 2.2.2 Medium risk – ‘The risk posed is likely to place the child in danger or they are a threat to themselves or others.’
- 2.2.3 High risk – ‘The risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the subject is in danger through their own vulnerability; or may have been the victim of a serious crime; or the risk posed is immediate and there are substantial grounds for believing that the public is in danger.’

3. Absent or Missing Student Procedure

- 3.1 The safety of all students is paramount and it is essential we know where all students are at all times. Should a student go missing, AGUK will take the following steps to ensure their safe return to our care.
- 3.2 When a child is identified as not being at a location they are meant or are expected to be at, the reporting individual must take proactive steps to trace the person’s whereabouts prior to contacting the police. Such steps would include:
 - Contacting the missing individual’s school, host family & friends.
 - Checking all social media platforms
- 3.3 The reporting individual, if not a member of staff, must contact the office using the 24/7 emergency contact numbers. For AGUK these numbers are +44 7931 964 106 and +44 7823 321 993.
- 3.4 Reporting to the police - The Police will only become involved after all reasonable checks to locate the individual have been carried out. If the child is not located, the reporting individual should contact the Police via 101 to report them as being missing from their address.
- 3.5 The primary function of the Police is to investigate the disappearance and attempt to locate the young person prior to any harm befalling them. Police response and associated actions will be based on a police risk assessment of the incident and knowledge of the individual(s) concerned, which will utilise information from partners and those who know the person.



4. When a child is found

4.1 The attitude of professionals, such as police and social workers, towards a child who has been missing can have a big impact on how they will engage with subsequent investigations and protection planning. However 'streetwise' they may appear, they are children and may be extremely vulnerable to multiple risks. A supportive approach when a child returns, actively listening and responding to their needs, will have a greater chance of preventing the child from going missing again and safeguarding them against other risks.

4.2 Actions to be followed by members of AGUK once the student has been found

4.2.1 A member of staff will talk with, take care of and comfort the student.

4.2.2 A reminder will be sent out to all students improving their understanding of why they should not leave without obtaining permission and providing ample and accurate notifications of their whereabouts to the office team and homestay hosts where applicable.

4.2.3 The Designated Safeguarding & Prevent Lead (DSL) will speak with the parents/agent to report the incident, and then record an account of the incident, to be saved in the students care folder, by writing a formal statement to the parents.

4.2.4 The DSL will carry out a full investigation involving, if appropriate, the Police and the appropriate Local Safeguarding Children Board and complete their report.

4.2.5 The written report of the incident will record details of time, place, members of staff, the circumstances in which the student went missing, an outline of what was understood to have happened, the length of time during which the student was missing and an initial explanation of how the incident appeared to have arisen. Written statements may be invited from all.

4.2.6 Any media questions will be referred to the Directors

4.2.7 All relevant procedures will be reviewed in the light of any such incident occurring.

5. Key Academic Guardians UK contacts

Designated Safeguarding & Prevent Lead – Director Andrew Kettle who can be contacted on:

+44(0) 203 515 8880 + 44 (0) 7823 321 993 andrew@academic-guardians.co.uk

Deputy Safeguarding Lead – Director Dawn Kettle who can be contacted on:

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Academic Guardians UK Ltd – Absent or Missing Student

Safeguarding Partners - Academic Guardians UK registered office is within the borough of Islington whose current safeguarding contact details are as follows:

Website: <http://www.islingtonscb.org.uk/Pages/Key-contacts-in-Islington.aspx>

Children's Services Contact Team - +44 20 7527 7400

Tim Djavit - Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) - +44 20 7527 8102

Information about services for children can be found on the Islington Family Directory www.islington.gov.uk/familydirectory

Police Referrals - Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT) +44 20 8733 6495 or +44 20 8733 6500

For Emergencies - 999

All local Safeguarding Partners & MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) contact details are provided to Homestay Host families, attached to the student profile on confirmation of booking.

6. Supporting Reference Documents:

6.1 A copy of this policy along with the all the AGUK polices are made available to the homestay hosts, local coordinators, drivers, students and parents in the AGUK SharePoint sites and portals. Reference to these policies are also made within the School, Student, Parent and Homestay host handbooks. All stakeholders are expected to familiarise themselves with the policy and are encouraged to do so during the recruitment and initial meetings that take place as appropriate.

6.2 Additional Supporting documents include:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Safeguarding Children and Young People from CSE 2009
- Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2010 -NPIA
- Scoping Report on Missing and Abducted Children - CEOP
- Local Safeguarding Children Board Protocols – Reporting children who go missing from care
- Statutory Guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care – Department of Education 2014