TITLE		REF	VERSION
Missing Students and Apprentices Procedure		LSPRO044	3.0
DEPARTMENT	Group Student Support - Safeguarding		
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MISSING STUDENTS AND APPRENTICES PROCEDURE

Procedure Statement

Activate Learning is committed to fulfilling its statutory and legal duties to safeguard students and apprentices and ensure they feel safe, supported and cared for in line with our core values and Safeguarding and Prevent Policy.

Research shows that episodes where a person goes missing can be an important indicator of safeguarding concerns, including abuse, harm, exploitation, neglect or mental ill-health. Students and apprentices who go missing may also be at increased risk of criminal or sexual exploitation, radicalisation, or other forms of contextual harm.

Early intervention is essential to identify any underlying safeguarding risks and to prevent further incidents.

This procedure outlines the actions and responsibilities of staff, employers and placement providers when a student or apprentice is believed to be missing:

- During the college day
- From halls of residence
- During an off-site activity, trip or visit
- During work experience, industry placement or employment connected to their apprenticeship or study programme.

Separate procedures exist for students who are absent from college where there are no additional safeguarding concerns, as outlined in the Attendance, Punctuality and Absence Management Policy and the Student Attendance and Absence Management Procedure.

Scope

This procedure applies to all Activate Learning students and apprentices.

In this context, a student or apprentice may be considered missing where their whereabouts cannot be established and:

- The circumstances are unusual, out of character or give cause for concern
- There are known safeguarding vulnerabilities or welfare concerns
- Attempts to contact them have been unsuccessful
- There are concerns they may be at risk of harm, abuse, exploitation or neglect.

This also applies to residential students under the age of 18 who have not returned to halls of residence by curfew (22:30 hours) without explanation and whose whereabouts cannot be established.

For apprentices and students undertaking work experience or industry placements, concerns may arise from employers, placement providers, workplace supervisors or Activate Learning staff.

All incidents where a student may be missing must be treated seriously and responded to promptly.

Those Who May Be Vulnerable:

Some students and apprentices may be at increased risk if they go missing. This may include, but is not limited to, those who:

- Are currently or previously open to Activate Learning's Safeguarding Team
- Are open to Children's or Adult Social Care (e.g. Early Help, Child in Need, Child Protection)
- Are cared for by the local authority, care leavers or care experienced
- Are estranged from parents or guardians
- Are young carers or young parents
- Enrolled on a 14-16 Study Programme
- May be at risk of harm, abuse, exploitation or neglect
- Have additional needs or vulnerabilities such as, have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), have a disability or significant health condition, have a Personal Risk Assessment (PRA) or Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)

- Have mental health or behavioural concerns such as, a mental health difficulty, have a history of self-harm or suicidal ideation, misuse substances, or may be involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour
- Have repeat episodes of absconding or going missing.
- Undertake lone working, travel between sites, or community-based work, as part of an apprenticeship, industry placement or work experience

Procedure

Procedure for Students and Apprentices Who Go Missing During the College Day:

Initial Response

When a student is suspected to be missing, the concerned staff member (e.g., tutor, performance coach, faculty coordinator), must first attempt to contact the student by phone, text, consulting with others, and reaching out to emergency contacts to determine their location and confirm their safety.

If a student is identified as missing or there are immediate concerns for their safety, the following procedure must be initiated immediately:

- The concerned staff member should inform the Curriculum Manager, Behaviour and Welfare Officer, Head of Student Experience, and Safeguarding Team who will assist in locating the student by searching the premises and reviewing CCTV.
- While the search is ongoing, the Safeguarding Team, with other relevant staff, will assess the student's vulnerability, considering all risks and known external circumstances. If the student has a Social Worker or Support Worker, the Safeguarding Team will inform them to aid in the risk assessment.
- If contact cannot be made with the student or their emergency contacts, the Safeguarding Team and DDSL/DSL will assess the urgency of the situation on a case-by-case basis to determine when to notify the Police.
- The Duty Manager may be called upon to assist and support.

Searching the Premises

Where appropriate, staff should conduct a search of the immediate area while Student

Support and Safeguarding staff coordinate the search and assess risk. This may also involve checking CCTV footage and ID card sign in/out records. The Duty Manager may be called upon to assist and support.

The Advice and Admissions team should also be notified to temporarily suspend the student's ID card and add a note to the student's REMS/ProSolution profile instructing staff to contact the Student Support or Safeguarding Team if the student attempts to access college buildings or facilities.

Risk Assessment

The Student Support and Safeguarding Team will assess the situation considering:

- The student's age and vulnerability
- The time elapsed since they were last seen
- Whether the behaviour is out of character
- Any known safeguarding concerns
- Information from friends, staff or family

If the student is supported by a social worker or any other relevant external professional, they will be informed where appropriate.

If the student cannot be located, the Student Support and Safeguarding Team will determine when the Police should be contacted.

Procedure for Residential Students Who Go Missing Overnight:

Residential students under 18 must return to halls of residence by 22:30.

Students must sign out with the accommodation team when leaving, providing their destination and expected return time. Those over 18 hand over their keys when staying out overnight.

If a student does not return:

- The duty warden will attempt to contact the student and consult with other staff and

students present.

- Staff will check the student's room and communal areas.
- The ID card access control system and CCTV will be reviewed. (For Harcourt Hill, the duty warden will liaise with Oxford Brookes University staff to review their systems).
- Emergency contacts will be contacted.
- The Accommodation Manager will be informed.

If the student cannot be located, the Police should be notified within one hour of the initial contact attempt. However, where there are immediate safety concerns, the Police should be contacted without delay.

If the student is supported by a social worker or any other relevant external professional, they should be informed where appropriate. Out of hours Social Care contact details are available at: https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council

Procedure for Students Who Go Missing During an Offsite Activity, Trip or Visit:

When a student is suspected missing during an offsite trip or activity (e.g., fails to meet at an arranged time or location), the following actions will be taken:

- Conduct an immediate head count to ensure all other students are present.
- Attempt to contact the student and consult with other staff and students present.
- One staff member remains with the group, while another searches the immediate vicinity.
- Depending on circumstances, notify venue staff to inform them and assist in a search.
- During college working hours, inform the Safeguarding Team on 01865 550401, assess the level of vulnerability and risk, and agree on the next steps.
- The trip organiser should make safe arrangements to return the remaining students to the college.
- If no contact can be made with the student or their emergency contacts, the Student Support and Safeguarding Team will assess the urgency of the situation on a case-by-case basis to determine when to notify the Police.

For trips and visits outside of usual college hours (e.g., overnight and weekends), where the Safeguarding Team cannot be reached and contact with the student or their emergency

contacts is unsuccessful, the Police should be notified (via 101 or 999) within one hour of the initial contact attempt.

If the student is supported by a social worker or any other relevant external professional, they should be informed where appropriate. Out of hours Social Care contact details are available at: https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council

Procedure for Students or Apprentices Missing During Work Experience, Industry Placement or Employment:

Activate Learning recognises that student undertaking work experience, industry placements or apprenticeships may spend significant periods of time away from college sites. For apprentices in work and students on work experience or industry placement, Activate Learning relies on employers and placement providers to promptly inform Activate Learning where there are concerns that a student or apprentice may be missing.

Employers and placement providers are expected to:

1. Attempt to contact the student or apprentice directly
2. Check whether they have communicated with colleagues, supervisors or peers
3. Search their setting
4. Follow their own internal safeguarding, attendance and HR procedures, which may include contacting emergency contacts, next of kin, the Police or other relevant agencies where there are concerns for their safety or wellbeing
5. Notify Activate Learning immediately if there are concerns regarding the student or apprentice's welfare, safety or whereabouts, particularly where they cannot be located or contact attempts have been unsuccessful.

Concerns should be reported immediately to:

- The Activate Learning contact e.g., Performance Coach, Work Experience Coordinator or relevant staff member.
- The Safeguarding Team

All concerns regarding missing students or apprentices during placements or employment must be recorded and managed in line with Activate Learning's Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and Safeguarding – Reporting a Concern Procedure.

Concerns About Students Missing From Other Settings:

Activate Learning recognises that concerns relating to students or apprentices going missing may also arise outside of college activities or settings not directly managed by Activate Learning. This may include situations where a student or apprentice is reported missing from:

- Private accommodation such as their home, semi-independent or independent living arrangements
- Local authority care such as foster care, supported accommodation or residential care
- Hospital, health, or therapeutic settings

Where Activate Learning staff become aware that a student or apprentice has been reported missing from any setting, this must still be reported immediately to the Safeguarding Team in line with the Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and Safeguarding – Reporting a Concern Procedure.

Staff should not assume that another agency is managing the situation or that no further action is required because the incident did not occur on an Activate Learning site or activity. The Safeguarding Team will assess the level of risk, record the concern, liaise with relevant agencies where appropriate, and consider any additional support, monitoring, or safeguarding measures required within the education setting.

Notifying the Police:

Where a student or apprentice remains missing or there are immediate concerns for their safety, the Police will be notified by:

- The Safeguarding Team
- Behaviour and Welfare Officer
- Head of Student Experience

- Duty Warden (for residential students out of hours)

The Police may request the following information:

- Student's full name, age and date of birth
- Home address
- Physical description and clothing
- Time and location last seen
- Known associates
- Previous missing incidents
- Safeguarding or medical information
- Emergency contact details or next of kin

While the incident is ongoing, staff must maintain communication with the Police and follow their instructions.

Next Steps

Student or apprentice is located:

The reporting staff member must inform the Police (if they were previously notified) and the student's emergency contact that the student has been located.

A member of the Student Support and Safeguarding Team (or the Duty Warden for residential students) should meet with the student to discuss the circumstances of the incident, explore any potential triggers, risks or unmet needs, and identify any appropriate support measures.

The Student Support and Safeguarding Team will consult with relevant internal staff (such as study programme staff, Learning Support team or Accommodation Manager) to determine the most appropriate next steps. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the circumstances of the incident and an assessment of the student's needs, vulnerability and risk.

The Student Support and Safeguarding Team may also liaise with employers or placement providers to review any ongoing safeguarding concerns, workplace risks or support arrangements.

Where necessary, arrangements may be made for the student or apprentice to be transported home or to another place of safety while appropriate support is put in place.

Student or apprentice remains missing

If the student or apprentice remains missing beyond the same day:

- The Safeguarding Team will liaise with the Police and emergency contacts during working hours and will hand over any relevant information before the end of the day.
- Where relevant, the Safeguarding Team will maintain liaison with employers, placement providers or workplace supervisors while the student or apprentice remains missing.
- As the Safeguarding Team is not available overnight, any urgent concerns during this time should be directed to the Police or emergency services.
- The Safeguarding Team will review the situation and continue liaison with the Police, emergency contacts, and relevant professionals on the next working day.
- Relevant staff will be updated, and further safeguarding actions will be considered as appropriate.
- For residential students outside working hours, duty wardens will maintain contact with Police and update safeguarding staff the next working day as per the Safeguarding – Reporting a Concern Procedure.

Monitoring

Follow up

Following an incident, the Student Support and Safeguarding Team may consider additional support measures, such as:

- A Personal Risk Assessment, support or safety plan agreed with the student or apprentice
- Pastoral, wellbeing, or counselling support, where appropriate

- Liaison with parents/carers and external professionals (e.g. social workers, youth workers, mental health services) where relevant
- Reasonable adjustments to learning, such as timetable changes or temporary remote learning
- Monitoring and review meetings to assess ongoing risk and support needs
- For residential students, this may also include a temporary alternative living arrangement or removal from halls of residence while risks are assessed, and appropriate support measures are put in place.
- For 14–16 students, the Safeguarding Team and 14–16 Programme Lead will liaise with the Local Authority and the student's main school provider to ensure appropriate oversight and coordinated support.
- Review of workplace, placement or travel-related risk assessments and support, including additional supervision or welfare check arrangements with employers or placement providers where appropriate, or temporary suspension or adjustment of placement/employment activities while risks are assessed

Recording

All instances of a student or apprentice going missing must be reported to the Safeguarding Team as per Activate Learning's Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and Safeguarding – Reporting a Concern Procedure.

Reports can be made by:

- Phone: 01865 550401
- Email: safe@activatelearning.ac.uk
- Safeguarding Record of Concern Form
- Speak to the Designated Safeguarding Adviser directly. ***IMPORTANT*** *- Once referred, staff must follow up immediately with a written record and ensure this is sent to the relevant Designated Safeguarding Adviser. This can be via email or on a safeguarding Record of Concern form. Safeguarding referrals should not be via ProMonitor due to confidentiality.*

Records should include:

- Timeline of events
- Actions taken
- Agencies contacted
- Outcome of the incident.

All episodes where a student is considered missing, regardless of duration or outcome, must be recorded in CPOMS to enable monitoring of patterns and repeat incidents.

Near Misses

In addition to confirmed incidents where a student is believed to be missing, near misses must be reported and recorded to the Health and Safety Team via Incident and Near Miss Reporting Form

A near miss may include situations where a student was at risk of going missing but was located quickly, or where additional supervision arrangements were in place but briefly failed. Examples may include:

- A student receiving 1:1 support whose whereabouts cannot be accounted for a period of time
- A student who is not met or temporarily unaccounted for during local authority-arranged transport arrangements
- A student who leaves a supervised area without staff awareness but is quickly located.

Multi-Agency Working

The Safeguarding Team is responsible for making referrals to statutory services where a student may be at risk of abuse, harm, exploitation or neglect. Therefore, information may be shared with Police, Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, or other safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this may also involve liaison with employers or placement providers.

The Safeguarding Team will support the Police and/or Local Authority in facilitating any statutory return home interview.

Monitoring

The Safeguarding Team will monitor incidents of students going missing and report trends and concerns to senior leaders and governors through the Safeguarding Committee.

Learning from incidents will be used to improve safeguarding practice and procedures.

References

Attendance, Punctuality and Absence Management Policy
Student Attendance, Punctuality and Absence Management Procedure
Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
Safeguarding – Reporting a Concern Procedure
Student Positive Behaviour Management Policy
Student Positive Behaviour Management Procedure
Student Code of Conduct
Student Conduct and Behaviour in Accommodation
Fitness to Study/Reside Policy
Student Health and Wellbeing Policy
Trips and Residential Procedure
DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education
DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children
DfE Statutory Guidance on Children Who Run Away or Go Missing from Home or Care
Home Office Missing Children and Adults Strategy