



# MISSING CHILD POLICY

**The OHC&AT Board of Directors has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies across all OHCAT Academies – 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021.**

Jay Mercer  
Chair of OHCAT Board

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Mercer", is written over the printed name and title.

# Missing Child Policy

## INTRODUCTION

Orchard Hill College and Academy Trust (OHC&AT) is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils and students. The safety and welfare of our pupils and students is of the utmost importance. All staff should be aware of their responsibilities regarding student safety, including what to do if a student goes missing from Academy supervision or when a 'collected student' is not collected from school by their designated person. This policy lays out the procedures that should be followed in the event of either occurrence.

This policy applies to all OHCAT Academy students. There is a separate procedure for managing the welfare of Orchard Hill College students.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### **OHCAT Trustees will:**

- Monitor updated policies on a regular basis and receive termly reports on safeguarding that include any missing child/vulnerable adult incidents within OHCAT provisions.

### **OHC&AT Executive Senior Leadership Team will:**

- Ensure that this policy and related procedures are regularly reviewed and updated in line with government guidance and other best practice.
- Monitor incidences of missing children/vulnerable adults across OHCAT provisions as part of safeguarding monitoring, and provide termly safeguarding reports to Trustees.

### **Principals will:**

- Ensure all staff within their Academy are aware of this policy and understand the procedure to be followed in the event of a missing student.
- Review any incidence of missing student to ensure that the Academy takes forward any lessons learned and continues to operate best practice.

### **Staff will:**

- Ensure they are familiar with this policy and adhere to all related policies and procedures, especially, but not exclusively, those relating to Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding, Risk Assessment, Health & Safety and Educational Visits.
- Ensure that attendance registers are completed accurately and promptly according to guidelines, and return attendance registers to the Academy office promptly each day.

**Parents/carers will:**

- Ensure that the Academy holds up to date contact information for at least three responsible adults, including named emergency contacts in the event that parents/carers are not available.
- Know the procedure for handover and collection of students where relevant, particularly where there may be safeguarding issues or concerns, including parental responsibility.
- Sign students out of school at the Academy office when collecting them during the school day.

**MISSING CHILD****Procedures aimed at reducing risk of a missing child**

It is important to note that students attending OHCAT Academies cover all age ranges from 2 to 19 and have a variety of additional learning needs, which may be complex and profound. Some students attend school using LA transport or are brought to and from school by parents/carers; a smaller number are independent travellers. Students also experience time in the community, attending a wide variety of work experience, enrichment and learning opportunities.

This policy therefore seeks to set out the general principles and procedures that should be followed whenever OHCAT staff suspect a student may be considered missing. Such situations might include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to arrive for a scheduled school day or session, whether on Academy premises or in the community
- Absconding from a scheduled school day or session, whether on Academy premises or in the community
- Becoming lost while out in the community e.g. through separation from Academy staff and peers

Everyday measures that OHCAT Academies take to safeguard students include:

- If a student is absent and no notification of absence has been received by the Academy, staff will contact the named contact/s on the student's file to ascertain their whereabouts as soon as possible.
- The Academy ensures parents/carers are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of the student passes from staff to them and vice versa.
- Clear procedures are in place for welcoming students into each Academy, including signing in and out.
- Teaching and support staff ensure that students go to the relevant classroom or appropriately allocated area.
- Staff mark registers promptly and accurately morning and afternoon.
- If students leave the classroom to work in other parts of the school, the class teacher ensures that a suitable level of supervision, as appropriate, is maintained at all times and that all students are accounted for on return to the classroom.

- Students who travel to and from school using LA transport are escorted by appropriate named staff onto their bus or taxi. A formalised system of checking students onto their transport is in place.
- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff/student ratios are provided when students leave Academy premises for educational visits or learning outside the classroom.
- Where students do not have capacity to consent, permission from parents/carers for educational trips should be obtained generically at the beginning of each academic year and specifically for each trip where that visit is not covered in global permissions.
- Staff mobile telephones are taken on every visit and mobile contact numbers left at the Academy.

### **Procedure to be followed in the event of a student going missing on or from the Academy premises**

In the event of a member of staff discovering or suspecting that a student has gone missing while at school:

1. If a teacher, TA or other key adult (for example, therapist or lunchtime supervisor) suspects that a student is missing from a lesson or activity, they must contact the nearest member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the Principal and office staff immediately. Following an assessment of the circumstances, a senior staff member will coordinate, where necessary, an initial search of the building, including classrooms, toilets, storage areas, communal areas, resource rooms, outside areas and Academy grounds.
2. The following lists should be held in the school office and/or electronically and will be checked:
  - a. Attendance registers
  - b. Off-site record (trips and visits)
  - c. Lists of those attending other provisions (e.g. inclusion links, work placements or other alternative provision)

Where a search occurs:

3. Staff will count and name check all the students present against the register.
4. A thorough check of all exits will be made, to ascertain if all relevant gates/doors were secure and there are no other ways a student could have left the premises. If something is discovered, this needs to be drawn to the attention of senior staff immediately.
5. Staff will attempt to call the student on the student's personal mobile phone, if they have one.
6. Senior staff will conduct an in-situ risk assessment to establish whether, and when, parents/carers should be notified. The Principal or next most senior

member of staff on site will decide at which point the police need to be contacted, if necessary.

7. Staff will write down as full a description of the student as possible, including what they were wearing and any distinguishing features. A recent photo of the student, for example their ID photo, will be provided to those searching where this is necessary.
8. Any specific special medical or learning needs relating to the missing student should be disclosed to police or other agencies as appropriate.
9. Senior staff will speak to all staff members who have had contact with the missing student that day, in order to try and build up a clear picture of the student's movements.

#### **Additional procedures in the event of a student going missing while off Academy premises:**

1. The teacher or the allocated group leader must ensure the safety of remaining students. At least one member of Academy staff must stay with them, which will be informed by an in-situ risk assessment. The teacher or allocated group leader must make a professional judgement at the time with respect to the size of the student group, the needs of that group and the available staff:student ratios.
2. One or more staff members must immediately start searching for the student.
3. Senior staff, including the Principal and/or next most senior staff member, and Designated Safeguarding Lead must be contacted immediately.
4. If the student is not found promptly, the teacher must contact police by telephoning 999.

Where they have done so, the teacher or allocated group leader should alert the Academy that the police have been contacted and the Academy will make arrangements to notify parents/carers, after which the procedures described above will be followed.

#### **STUDENT NOT COLLECTED**

This procedure outlines what should happen when a 'collected student' i.e. one who is collected from school by a parent, carer or designated adult, is not collected. The guiding principle in dealing with any situation of this type must be to minimise distress to the student and for him or her to remain in familiar surroundings and/or with familiar people for as long as possible.

Academy staff will ensure they are aware of all students who are collected by a parent, carer or designated adult, if they are not collected by LA transport and do not travel to

and from school independently. The following general principles should be adhered to by all parties:

- Parents/carers who know they are going to be late must inform the main office in advance.
- On occasions when a student is due to be collected by someone other than their parent/carer or normally authorised person (e.g. when all of the above are unexpectedly unavailable), parents/carers must advise how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect the student. This will normally be through the use of a pre-determined password.

In the event of a 'collected student' not being collected at the end of the day, the following procedures will be activated:

**We undertake to look after the student safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care.**

- If a student is not collected promptly, and regardless, if that time exceeds twenty minutes, a member of staff will call the parent/carer or designated adult and use any other emergency contact details available in order to determine the nature and length of delay in collection. If contacts go to voicemail/ answerphone, staff members should leave messages giving their name and the Academy telephone number and requesting a prompt return call.
- While waiting to be collected, the student will be supervised by a member of staff who will offer them as much support and reassurance as is necessary.
- Students awaiting collection will be taken to the school office where they will be supervised by Academy staff.
- If a student has not been collected within the hour following agreed collection time, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must be informed and a decision taken as to whether Social Services needs to be called.
- If all attempts within this period to contact a parent/carer, designated person or emergency contact fail then the DSL or other senior staff member should inform the Local Authority Social Services department of the situation without delay.
- The duty social worker will take ownership of the situation and decide what happens next, including whether the police need to be involved in helping to trace the parent/carer of the student.
- The student will not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the Registration Form or in their file.
- The Academy will ensure that there are at least two members of staff present whilst waiting for the parent/carer to collect the student.

- Under normal circumstances, staff should not look for the parent/carer or take the student home. In exceptional circumstances, if the parent/carer or responsible adult has been contacted but is unable, for a given and accepted reason, to come to the school, the school may escort the student home with that parent/carer or responsible adult's permission. Where this does occur, this should ordinarily happen with two staff members, one of whom is a senior member of staff.
- In the event that transporting the student somewhere is agreed to be necessary, staff should not usually transport students alone in their own cars and may wish to consider using a taxi or mini-cab (approved licenced drivers only). In this instance, two members of staff will accompany the student. However, there may be exceptional circumstances (for example in an emergency) where solo accompaniment of the student by an appropriate staff member is necessary. In this instance, the staff member must ensure that a senior leader or line manager (ideally the Principal and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead) is made aware of the arrangement beforehand and can follow up accordingly.
- Continual incidents of late collection will be recorded and discussed with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity.

## **POLICY REVIEW DETAILS**

<i>Version:</i>	1.3
<i>Reviewer:</i>	John Prior, Jackie Van-West
<i>Approval body:</i>	Family Board
<i>Date this version approved:</i>	26 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<i>Due for review:</i>	Spring 2024

## **RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy  
Health & Safety Policy  
Risk Assessment Policy  
Educational Visits Policy

**APPENDIX A: Recording form for incidence of missing student**

School / Designated Safeguarding Lead \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tel no: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date, time & location of disappearance:  
\_\_\_\_\_Who was responsible for caring for the student at the time he/she disappeared?  
\_\_\_\_\_

What was the student wearing? \_\_\_\_\_

Any distinguishing features? \_\_\_\_\_

Circumstances surrounding disappearance:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_Parent/carer contacted:  Yes  NoPolice contacted:  Yes  NoWhat happens next?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by registered person: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed by Principal/SLT: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**APPENDIX B: Recording form for incidence of student not collected by parent/carer**

School / Designated Safeguarding Lead \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tel no: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time student should have been collected:

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of person who should have collected the student:

\_\_\_\_\_

Contact made with parent/carer/emergency contact:  Yes  NoSocial Services contacted:  Yes  No

What happens next?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Designated Safeguarding Lead: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed by Principal/SLT: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**