



## POLICY STATEMENT

Policy	Missing Student Policy
Date Written	21 <sup>st</sup> February 2018
Written by	Giles Sutton
Approved by	K Scott
Next major review date	Feb 2019
Location and disseminations	A copy of the policy can be found, in the college admin office and on the College website.

### Missing Pupil Policy

This policy addresses ISI Regulatory Requirements (Effective from February 2016), Part 3 - Welfare, Health and Safety of Pupils, para 15 and should be read in conjunction with the College's safeguarding policies. In addition, it links with the DFE guidance on children who go missing from home or care, January 2014. National minimum boarding standards.

#### 1. Introduction

Safeguarding and student welfare is of the utmost importance at St George's College. When a person goes missing, they are at risk and vulnerable.

For the purposes of this policy the term missing person means; Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the content suggests the person may be subject of a crime or at risk to themselves and others.

This procedure is to be used when searching for, and if necessary, reporting, any pupil missing from St George's College. The procedure includes the requirement to record any incident, the action taken and the reasons given by the pupil for being missing. It is vital that clear lines of communication are open during this process, especially when outside agencies are involved. One person needs to lead and take charge of the process, whilst keeping all other agencies updated on a

regular basis until the missing person is found and brought back to college.

NB: A child going missing from College or from home is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow this procedure for dealing with children who go missing:

Staff should act to identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation. Consequently the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) always be informed when a pupil is found to be missing from College. The DSL, the relevant Housemaster/Housemistress and or Cover Master/Cover Mistress, will always apply the locally agreed procedure in acting to safeguard any child who is missing from College. In particular, the matter will be referred to other agencies, including children's social care services and the police in cases where a pupil has gone missing for longer than the agreed initial timeframe, or where a single instance of truancy or running away gives rise to concerns of abuse or neglect or other risk of harm, or where there is evidence of a crime. In cases where a student is on a Tier 4 visa and there is a possibility, that they may leave the country, UK boarder force should be informed.

## **2. Missing Child Procedure for Boarders within the College Day:**

### **Children Missing from Education**

When a Day or Boarding student has not arrived by 09:00 and a reason has not been provided, it will be referred to the Principal or Director of Studies and a follow up will be made to the Boarding House.

### **Teacher**

Teachers have a responsibility to maintain an eregister for each lesson within ten minutes of the start of the lesson and to alert the DSL or Director of Studies if there is an unexplained absence. Procedures will be instituted to look for the missing child.

If a student's absence is not accounted for after relevant phone calls and searching the parents/carers must be kept informed and the DSL or Director of Studies will action under procedures for 'Children Missing from Education.'

If the student cannot be traced within an hour of their being reported missing, a member of the DSL and Director of Studies, will make a Risk Assessed Judgment of the situation (see below) and make a decision as to whether to inform the police immediately; or whether a longer timescale should be created and what other members of staff should do during any such time extension, including key check- points, and a cut-off point after which the police must be contacted. This will always be in agreement with the parent when parents can be contacted, if not then the report will still be made.

If Police are contacted, SPOA(Single Point of Advice) should also be informed and they may request a SOR(Statement of Referral) This may trigger multi agency work with ESCC. It is vital that systems of clear communication are open and that the process is led by one person which will be the DSL

The DSL will take control of the situation.

### **3. Missing Child Procedure for Boarders**

If a pupil does not return to the boarding house within a 30 minute period from when their return was anticipated, the duty member of staff should make every effort to communicate with them to ascertain their whereabouts. Should this not prove to be possible then the Housemaster/Housemistress and DSL should be informed with a view to involving the police.

A suggested timeline is as follows, it is important to note that this is not a strict protocol, but a guideline for the duty member of staff on how to respond. It is recognised that timings may vary in each case.

Indicated return time, e.g. end of supper/commencement of second prep;

0 – 30 'Late return' noted on the register. Try to establish whereabouts of the boarder by speaking to other boarders, house staff and try to make contact by mobile phone; inform DSL.

If unable to contact the student, the housemaster/housemistress should seek to make contact with friends, parents, check for College trips, conduct a basic room search for evidence of reason for being absent, etc. If for any reason there has been a delay in the absence being discovered, the timescale should be tightened accordingly, but there still needs to be the effort made to ascertain the pupil's whereabouts.

The Housemaster/Housemistress should contact the DSL, with the pupil's details and steps taken to locate them, along with the information that the search has yielded to that point. A risk assessed judgement will be made at this point about the level of concern for the pupil, and further action taken in consultation with a senior member of the staff and DSL.

30 -60 minutes late. DSL must be informed and a judgement call made as to police involvement at this stage. If at any time during the investigations there are warning signs that the student is in danger, it is out of context and character, or circumstances suggest that they may be involved in a crime, then the police will immediately be informed. Please ensure you have all the necessary personal detail of the missing person at hand.

#### **4. Making the Risk Assessment Judgement**

A number of contextual factors will be taken into account, including:

- Possible threat factors: time of day; darkness; weather conditions; known local concerns;
- Individual pupil circumstances: age, judgement, known personal, pastoral or disciplinary issues, mood and/or communications prior to going missing, previous instances of going missing;
- Any reassurances/likelihood as to their whereabouts;
- Any parental indication of concern;
- Out of context and character;
- Danger to themselves and others.

Specifically:

- In the case of a pupil about whom there are pre-existing welfare concerns, then the time- frame must be compressed and the police must be contacted by the one hour point (see below);

All staff should remember that:

- Early contact with the police may help to save a child's life or save them from significant harm;
- Failing to act within a reasonably responsive time frame could prove costly;
- Staff must feel confident in making sensible judgements as to the whereabouts of the pupil, as a normal parent would – but always erring on the side of caution, and believing that 'sooner is better than later'.

#### **5. Contacting the Police**

Generally, before the police are called, the DSL and the parents should be informed. However, where attempts to contact the DSL and or the parents are unsuccessful, this should not delay making contact with the police. When contacting the police to report a missing child, call 101 (not 999). Pass to the police all pertinent details as they request. This will include a physical description and emotional state before the person went missing. Ask for their direct contact number, so that you can make swift contact should the situation change, please note the name and any extension number of the person that you are dealing with and take any notes.

Where the College contacts the Police during the day or night, the following information should be

provided:

- The student's name;
- The student's age;
- Nationality;
- An up-to-date photograph if possible;
- The student's height, physical description;
- Any particular individual features;
- Any disability, learning difficulty or special educational needs that the student may have;
- The student's home address and telephone number;
- A description of the clothing the student is thought to be wearing;
- Any relevant comments made by the student such as "I'm going to run away to Brighton".

Any suspicion or evidence of a crime. The information will then be passed to the various police stations through police channels. If the missing person hold a TIER 4 visa inform UK Border Agency as it may be the case they are trying to leave the country. All agencies need to be informed and updated on a regular basis until the missing person is found and brought back to the college.

### **Children Missing Education (prolonged absence)**

A child going missing from education is a potential sign of abuse or neglect, particularly on repeat occasions.

St George's has put in place appropriate safeguarding responses to children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect and to help prevent the risks of their going missing again.

The College will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend college regularly, or has been absent without the College's permission for a continuous period of 10 college days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the College and the local authority. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

### **Pupils sponsored under Tier Four of the Points Based System**

As a licensed UKBA sponsor under Tier Four of the points-based system, the College has an obligation to report certain events/absences of Tier Four sponsored pupils to UKBA within ten working days. This should be done through the Principal's Secretary. To comply with current

legislation, the International Admissions maintains up-to-date records 'for the Tier Four pupils during College holidays. These are stored in the Admin Office. A report will be made to the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) department of the Home Office in the cases where a Tier Four pupil is found to have contravened the terms of their visa. These can include:

- Enrolled, but not attended;
- Not enrolled within the enrolment period;
- Withdrawn due to ill health or other circumstances ( including if the student withdraws before they travel to the UK);
- Ceased to be sponsored by the College;
- Ceased studying and stopped attending;
- Been excluded or otherwise required to leave by the College, resulting in the College withdrawing sponsorship;
- Been the subject of an administrative error in student reporting;
- Missed ten consecutive expected contact points without reasonable permission being given by the College leading up to those contact points, resulting in the College withdrawing sponsorship.

The College does not need to make a report if:

- A student has been given clear permission to miss a contact and his or her whereabouts is known and agreed.
- The College has decided not to withdraw sponsorship even though the student has missed ten consecutive contacts. This should be very rare and the College must keep any evidence of any decision of this kind, together with the reasoning behind it and a chronology of events.
- In these cases the college must have clear records around sponsorship and guardians, future destinations, modes of transport, all personal and family details, previous College history, medical records and clear contact details.

## **6. Record-Keeping**

Depending on the incident, the DSL will keep a record of the incident on the individual student file; in the case of a boarder going missing, the Housemaster will also keep a Missing Child Incident folder. As such, as soon as possible following the conclusion of the incident, the member of staff responsible for leading the College's response should provide to the DSL (and in the case of boarders, the Housemaster/Housemistress) a written record of:

The student's name;

- Relevant dates and times;
- The decisions and actions taken to find the student and the reasons for them;
- Whether the police social services and any other external agency were informed;
- Outcome or resolution of the incident;
- Any reason given by the pupil for going missing;
- Any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident;
- A record of the staff involved;
- Any other salient information.

## **7. Follow-up to a Missing Pupil Incident**

Once a pupil returns from being missing, they will be provided with support and the opportunity to discuss the incident with the DSL and/or the College Medical team and access to a counselor. They may also be provided with the contact details for external support services (e.g. NSPCC).

It is important to make clear notes at this stage and ask questions around the time the student was missing. Note their physical and emotional state and include this in your notes. Check if the person has money and if you deem it necessary test for drugs and alcohol. Consider weight gain or loss, look for any bruises or odd marks. Note if the person seems nervous or anxious, in control of their emotions. If you have any doubts, it would be worthwhile asking some of the questions again and check for consistency.

The pupil's parents will also be given the opportunity to discuss the incident with the DSL, who will provide advice and support where required.

Any further concerns about the pupil's welfare resulting from an incident will be acted upon and, where appropriate, Children's Social Care Services, and the police will be informed, in accordance with the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures.

The College will review procedures following a missing student incident in order to review and consider the lessons learnt and how the system can be improved.