



## Missing Child Policy

### Absent and missing

**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.

### On checking whether a child has gone missing

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, Kew Learning will take the following steps to ensure their safe return to our care.

When a student 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 parents and the police. Such steps would include:

- Call the student's mobile phone
- Contact Kew Learning 24 hour emergency number +44 020 3968 9890. Designated Child Protection Coordinator **Yi Chi** should be the contact point. In her absence, the DSL should be contacted to ensure that alternative
- arrangements are in place.
- Contacting the missing student's school, host family & friends
- Checking social media

### Children consistently missing education

Students must attend school every day unless authorised absence has been agreed.

Children missing from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important that Kew Learning is made aware and swiftly respond to children missing from education so we can

identify potential causes and help prevent the risk of them going missing in the future.

### **Reporting to the Police**

The Police will only become involved after all reasonable checks to locate the student have been carried out. If the student is not located, the reporting individual should contact the Police via 101 to report them as being missing from their address. Parents will be informed at the latest once a report has been made to the police and they will then be updated regularly until the student is found.

The primary function of the Police is to investigate the disappearance and attempt to locate the student 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 student concerned, which will utilise information from partners and those who know the person.

### **When a child is found**

The attitude of professionals, such as police and social workers, towards a student 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 student returns, actively listening and responding to their needs, will have a greater chance of preventing the student from going missing again and safeguarding them against other risks.

### **Actions to be Followed by Staff once the Pupil is Found**

- Staff will talk with, take care of and comfort the student.
- Staff will speak with the other students to ensure that they understand why they should not leave without obtaining permission and notifying their Local Guardian.
- The DSL will speak with the parents to report the incident, and then record an account of the incident by writing a letter to the parents.
- The DSL will carry out a full investigation involving, if appropriate, the Police and the appropriate Local Safeguarding Children Board.
- 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.
- Any media questions will be referred to a partner / DSL at Head Office
- All relevant procedures will be reviewed in the light of the incident.