



MISSING STUDENT POLICY

The OHC&AT Board of Directors has agreed this Policy and as such, it applies across all College centres and settings – 26th March 2021.

Peter Lauener
Chair of OHC Board

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Lauener". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Missing Student Policy & Procedure

INTRODUCTION

Orchard Hill College (OHC) is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our students. The safety and welfare of our 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 College supervision or when a 'collected student' is not collected from College by their designated person. This policy lays out the procedures that should be followed in the event of either occurrence.

This policy applies to Orchard Hill College and aims to reflect both the adult status and the vulnerability of College students. There is a separate procedure for managing the welfare of children and young people at OHCAT Academies.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, and the Risk Assessment Policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES

OHC Trustees will:

- Monitor updated policies on a regular basis and receive termly reports on safeguarding that include any missing student/vulnerable adult incidents within the College.

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 students/vulnerable adults across the College as part of safeguarding monitoring, and provide termly safeguarding reports to Trustees.

The Principal will:

- Ensure all staff are aware of this policy and understand the procedure to be followed in the event of a missing College student.
- Review any incidence of missing student to ensure that the College 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 and Health & Safety.
- Ensure that attendance registers are completed accurately and promptly according to guidelines, and return attendance registers to the centre reception office promptly each day.

Parents/carers will:

- Ensure that the College holds up to date contact information, 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 College at the centre reception when collecting them during the College day.

MISSING COLLEGE STUDENT

Procedures aimed at reducing risk of a missing student

It is important to note that Orchard Hill College students are adults with a variety of additional learning needs, which may be complex and profound. Some students attend College using LA transport or are brought to and from College by parents/carers; a smaller number are independent travellers. Time spent in the community is an essential part of the College experience, with students attending a wide variety of work experience, enrichment and learning opportunities.

It is neither possible nor desirable for the College to monitor and control the movements of adults in precisely the same way as might be expected for school children; however, the College is fully cognisant of the fact that students have additional vulnerabilities related to their learning difficulties and disabilities. This may lead to, for example, behaviours of concern, which may include absconding or refusal to enter/leave College.

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

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

Everyday measures that the College takes to safeguard students include:

- If a student is absent and no notification of absence has been received, College staff will contact the named contact/s on the student's file to ascertain their whereabouts.
- The College will ensure 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 College centre, 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, via REMS.
- If students leave the classroom to work in other parts of the College, the lecturer must ensure 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 College 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 College premises.
- 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 College.

Procedure to be followed in the event of a student going missing

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

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 Head of Learning Centre (HoLC) and the centre reception immediately. The Head of Centre, SLT member and any teachers and/or TAs/STAs will carry out a thorough search of the building, including classrooms, toilets, storage areas, communal areas, resource rooms, outside areas and College grounds.
2. The following lists held in the centre reception and/or electronically 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 College. If something is discovered this needs to be drawn to the attention of the HoLC, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and SLT immediately.

5. Staff will attempt to call the student on their 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 SLT, HoLC 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 College 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. SLT members 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 College premises:

1. The lecturer or the allocated group leader must ensure the safety of remaining students. At least one member of College staff must stay with them. The lecturer 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. The College SLT and Designated Safeguarding Lead must be contacted immediately.
4. The lecturer or allocated group leader should immediately contact the College centre to alert them.
5. If the student is not found promptly, the lecturer must contact police by telephoning 999.

The lecturer or allocated group leader should alert the College that the police have been contacted and the College 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 College 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.

The College will ensure that it is 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 College 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 College centre 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 centre reception office where they will be supervised by College staff.
- If a student has not been collected within the hour following agreed collection time, the Designated Safeguarding Lead 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 person in charge at the time 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 College 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 has been contacted but is unable, for a given and accepted reason, to come to the College, the College 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/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>	1.2
<i>Reviewer:</i>	Kelly Phillips, Jackie Van-West
<i>Approval body:</i>	Family Board
<i>Date this version approved:</i>	26 th 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

Head of Learning Centre _____

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 Head of Learning Centre: _____ Date: _____

Signed by Principal/SLT: _____ Date: _____

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

Head of Centre _____

Name of student: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

Tel no: _____

Name of parent/carer: _____

Date & 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 Head of Learning Centre: _____ Date: _____

Signed by Principal/SLT: _____ Date: _____