



# CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION POLICY

## APPLIES TO THE WHOLE SCHOOL

### **Applies to all:**

- activities undertaken by the school inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours and away from the school site
- who, work, volunteer or supply services to our school - that is all staff (teaching and support staff), students on placement, the Proprietors and volunteers working in the school.

### **Availability:**

This policy is publicly available on the school website and on request a copy may be obtained from the school.

### **Other relevant documents:**

This policy should be read and understood in conjunction with our Safeguarding – Child Protection, Behaviour Management, Admissions and Attendance Policies, Whistleblowing Policies, the Staff Code of Conduct and the Lost and Missing Children Procedures for each building. This policy takes full account of the child protection procedures agreed by the Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board and statutory guidance.

### **Monitoring and review:**

This policy is subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by Robert Higgins (Headmaster and Proprietor) and Sarah Phillips (Designated Safeguarding Lead, DSL). The Proprietor will undertake a full annual review of this policy and procedures, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, and will review the policy earlier if legislation or regulatory changes require. All staff will be informed of the update/reviewed policy and it is made available to them in either a hard copy or electronically.

The Pointer School will put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for students who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. Staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage. More information can be found in 'Statutory guidance on students who run away or go missing from home or care' and KCSIE (DfE: September, 2018). The Pointer School works within the Royal Borough of Greenwich and as such, access the services for Children Missing Education within the borough. The school will follow the protocol to identify children missing from education. This applies to all starters and leavers at non-standard transition points. Any changes to our admission register will trigger notification to the Greenwich Admissions Team within five days of a student starting or leaving The Pointer School (emailed to [school-register-reporting@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:school-register-reporting@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)).

Signed:

Date: July 2018

Next Review: July 2019

Mr. R.J.S. Higgins  
Headmaster and Proprietor



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### **Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Children (MET)**

[http://4lscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_missing\\_exploit\\_traff.html](http://4lscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_missing_exploit_traff.html)

Within our Local Authority, the acronym MET is used to identify all children who are missing; believed to be at risk of or being sexually exploited; or who are at risk of or are being trafficked. Given the close links between all of these issues, there has been a considered response to join all three issues so that cross over of risk is not missed.

### **Children Missing from Education**

[http://4lscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_child\\_miss\\_edu.html](http://4lscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_child_miss_edu.html)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/395138/Children\\_missing\\_education\\_Statutory\\_guidance\\_for\\_local\\_authorities.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/395138/Children_missing_education_Statutory_guidance_for_local_authorities.pdf)

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/printpdf/1889>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/identifying-children-who-are-missing-education>.

Patterns of children missing education can be an indicator of either abuse or safeguarding risks. A relatively short length of time a child is missing does not reduce risk of harm to that child, and all absence or non-attendance should be considered with other known factors or concerns.

### **DSLs and staff should consider:**

Single missing days:

- Is there a pattern in the day missed?
- Is it before or after the weekend suggesting the child is away from the area?
- Are there specific lessons or members of staff on these days?
- Is the parent informing the school of the absence on the day?
- Are missing days reported back to parents to confirm their awareness?
- Is the child being sexually exploited during this day? Do the parents appear to be aware?
- Are the pupil's peers making comments or suggestions as to where the pupil is at?

Continuous missing days:

- Has the school been able to make contact with the parent? Is medical evidence being provided?
- Are siblings attending school (either our or local schools)?
- Did we have any concerns about radicalisation, FGM, forced marriage, honor based violence, sexual exploitation?
- Have we had any concerns about physical or sexual abuse?

The school will view absence as both a safeguarding issue and an educational outcomes issue. The school may take steps that could result in legal action for attendance, or a referral to children's social care, or both.

### **Children Missing from Home or Care**



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<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care>

<http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-lobbying/children-risk/runaways>

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/printpdf/1889>

Children who run away from home or from care, provide a clear behavioural indication that they are either unhappy or do not feel safe in the place that they are living. Research shows that children run away from conflict or problems at home or school, neglect or abuse, or because children are being groomed by predatory individuals who seek to exploit them.

The association of chief police officers has provided the following definitions and guidance.

*“Missing person is: ‘Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be the subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.’*

*An absent person is: ‘A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.’*

All cases classified as ‘missing’ by the police will receive an active police response – such as deployment of police officers to locate a child. Cases where the child was classified as ‘absent’ will be recorded by the police and risk assessed regularly but no active response will be deployed. The absent case will be resolved when a young person returns or new information comes to light suggesting that he/she is at risk. In the latter instance, the case is upgraded to ‘missing’.

Within any case of children who are missing both push and pull factors will need to be considered.

Push factors include:

- Conflict with parents/carers; Feeling powerless;
- Being bullied/abused; Being unhappy/not being listened to;
- The Toxic Trio (domestic violence, mental ill-health and drug/alcohol misuse as defined by Ofsted). Working Together notes these issues rarely exist in isolation. There is a complex interaction between the three issues.

Pull factors include:

- Wanting to be with family/friends;
- Drugs, money and any exchangeable item; Peer pressure
- For those who have been trafficked into the United Kingdom as unaccompanied asylum seeking children there will be pressure to make contact with their trafficker

As a school we will inform all parents of children who are absent (unless the parent has informed us). If the parent is also unaware of the location of their child, and the definition of missing is met, we will either support the parent to/directly contact the police to inform them.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

<http://paceuk.info/>

[http://4lscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_sexual\\_exploit.html](http://4lscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_sexual_exploit.html)



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Sexual exploitation of children is not limited by the age of consent and can occur up until the age of 18. CSE involves children being in situations, contexts or relationships where they (or a third person) receive 'something' as a result of them performing sexual activities. The something can include food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, or money. Child sexual exploitation can happen via technology without the child's being aware; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. CSE can happen to a child of any age, gender, ability or social status. Often the victim of CSE is not aware that they are being exploited and do not see themselves as a victim.

**Characteristics of Child Sexual Exploitation and abuse:** it is often planned and systematic—people do not sexually abuse children by accident, through sexual abuse can be opportunistic; grooming the child—people who abuse children take care to choose a vulnerable child and often spend time making them dependent; grooming the child's environment—abusers try to ensure that potential adult protectors (parents and other carers especially) are not suspicious of their motives.

**Indicators of sexual abuse:** Some of the following signs may be behavioural indicators of sexual exploitation:

- children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions; who associate with other young people involved in exploitation; have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant; who suffer from changes in emotional well-being; children who misuse drugs and alcohol;
- children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education; staying away from certain people or avoiding being alone with someone; displaying sexual behaviour that is inappropriate for their age;
- inappropriate masturbation or self-harm (including eating disorders) and an unwillingness to remove clothes when changing for PE etc.

Physical observations include damage to genitalia, anus or mouth; sexually transmitted diseases; unexpected pregnancy, especially in very young girls; soreness in genital area, anus or mouth and other medical problems such as chronic itching; unexplained recurrent urinary tract infections and discharges or abdominal pain. The concerns listed are not exhaustive. Staff can and should also record and report other concerns about a child, such as general welfare concerns.

### **Trafficked Children**

Human trafficking is defined by the UNHCR in respect of children as a process that is a combination of movement (including within the UK) for the purpose of exploitation. Any child transported for exploitative reasons is considered to be a trafficking victim. There is significant evidence that children (both of UK and other citizenship) are being trafficked internally within the UK and this is regarded as a more common form of



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trafficking in the UK. There are a number of indicators which suggest that a child may have been trafficked into the UK, and may still be controlled by the traffickers or receiving adults. These are as follows:

- Shows signs of physical or sexual abuse, and/or has contracted a sexually transmitted infection or has an unwanted pregnancy;
- Has a history with missing links and unexplained moves;
- Is required to earn a minimum amount of money every day; Works in various locations;
- Has limited freedom of movement; Appears to be missing for periods;
- Is known to beg for money;
- Is being cared for by adult/s who are not their parents and the quality of the relationship between the child and their adult carers is not good;
- Is one among a number of unrelated children found at one address;
- Has not been registered with or attended a GP practice; Is excessively afraid of being deported.

For those children who are internally trafficked within the UK indicators include:

- Physical symptoms (bruising indicating either physical or sexual assault);
- Prevalence of a sexually transmitted infection or unwanted pregnancy;
- Reports from reliable sources suggesting the likelihood of involvement in sexual exploitation / the child has been seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation;
- Evidence of drug, alcohol or substance misuse;
- Being in the community in clothing unusual for a child i.e. inappropriate for age, or borrowing clothing from older people
- Relationship with a significantly older partner ;
- Accounts of social activities, expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding;
- Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation;
- Returning after having been missing, looking well cared for despite having not been at home;
- Having keys to premises other than those known about;
- Low self- image, low self-esteem, self-harming behaviour including cutting, overdosing, eating disorder, promiscuity;
- Truancy / disengagement with education;
- Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults;
- Going missing and being found in areas where the child or young person has no known links; and/or
- Possible inappropriate use of the internet and forming on-line relationships, particularly with adults.

These behaviours themselves do not indicate that a child is being trafficked, but should be considered as indicators that this may be the case. If staff believe that a child is being trafficked, this will be reported to the designated safeguarding lead for referral to be considered to children's social care.

We will follow-up unexplained absences of any student with a telephone call from the school on the morning of the first day of absence and notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a student who is on the student safeguarding register. The DSL shall also inform the applicable local



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authority of any student who has been absent without the school's permission for such intervals as required by the local authority. Additionally, the DSL will notify the applicable local authority of any student who is going to be deleted from the admission register where the student:

- has been taken out of school by his/her parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education; has ceased to attend Pointer School and no longer live within reasonable distance of Pointer School;
- has been certified by a doctor as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend Pointer School before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend Pointer School after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- has been permanently excluded;
- is in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and Pointer School does not reasonably believe he/she will be returning at the end of the period or, has been permanently excluded;
- where the child fails to attend school regularly or is absent without leave for more than 10 school days (continuous);
- when we remove or add a pupil's name to the admissions register at non-standard transitions ie where a compulsory school-aged child leaves a school before completing the school's final year or joins a school after the beginning of the school's first year

The applicable local authority must be notified as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than the time of deleting the student's name from the register. This will assist the local authority to fulfil its duty to identify students of compulsory school age who are missing in education and follow up with any student who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

**Students being withdrawn from school:** If a student is withdrawn from the school, all efforts will be made to identify the school to which the student is being admitted; their confidential educational and student protection records will be sent separately. Educational records sent to our school concerning a student who is not registered by the parent will be returned and the school advised to refer to their Local Authority Education Welfare Service. A student's name will only be removed from the School's Admission Register in accordance with the Child Registration Regulations. Further information is contained in our Admissions Policy.

We also understand our duty to provide information to the local authority for standard transitions if requested.

We also appreciate that there is an overlap with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE 2016) which recognises children missing education as a safeguarding issue particularly when a child leaves with no known destination. In addition to reporting to the Greenwich Safeguarding Children Board we also inform the local authority where the child is normally resident. We also understand that our right to remove a child is also subject to the terms and conditions of our school/parent contract. We recognise that from September 2016 (due to the absence of illness or unavoidable cause) that we have the right to delete a pupil for non-return within 10 school days after authorised leave of 10 school days or more, or after 20 school days unauthorised absence but this does not arise until Pointer School and the local authority have jointly made reasonable



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enquiries as to the pupil's whereabouts and failed. As such, Pointer School recognises that it is a criminal offence not to report, as required.

**Notifiable Incidents:** This is an incident involving the care of a child that meets any of the following criteria:

- a child has died (including cases of suspected suicide) and abuse or neglect is known or suspected;
- a looked after child has died (including cases where abuse is **not** known or suspected);
- a child has been seriously harmed and abuse or neglect is known or suspected;
- a child in a regulated setting or service has died (including cases where abuse is **not** known or suspected).

Any such incident should be reported to London Borough of Greenwich Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) coordinator whose contact details are: telephone: 0208 921 44 Email:

[agnes.hibbs@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.cjism.net](mailto:agnes.hibbs@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.cjism.net)

Also Ofsted and the DfE are to be informed along with the *Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences* (RIDDOR) in accordance with the regulations of 2013.

Signed:

Mr. R. Higgins  
(Headmaster and Proprietor)

Reviewed: July 2018

Next Review: July 2019