

Pippa's Guardians Absent or Missing Student Policy

Overview

This policy is designed to be implemented in cases where students are believed to be absent or missing whilst under the care of Pippa's Guardians. The purpose of the policy is to help locate the student using the fastest and safest means possible and return them to an agreed and approved location.

Pippa's Guardians is wholly committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all students under our Guardianship and this policy should be read by both host families and Pippa's Guardians staff in conjunction with our Safeguarding Policy which can be found on our website [here](#) and the government guidance document Children Missing Education which can be found [here](#). Please do let us know on office@pippasguardians.co.uk if you would prefer us to issue you with a hard copy of this guidance.

Pippa's Guardians will respond appropriately to any reports of unauthorised absence or of missing students. After each report, Pippa's Guardians will assess and update (if necessary) this policy to minimise the risks in future. Where criminality is associated with the absent or missing student, this will be reported to the police by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Rose Vigers-Belgeonne, or in her absence, the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, Michelle Edwards.

In accordance with the College of Policing's current Authorised Professional Practice (APP) on Missing Persons, this policy will help determine whether a student is absent or missing and set out the appropriate safeguarding and reporting response.

Definitions:

Absent: "A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be."

Missing Person: "Anyone 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."

The 'absent' category should comprise cases in which people are not presently where they are supposed to be and there is no apparent risk.

'Absent' cases should not be ignored and must be monitored over periods of time with consideration given to escalating to 'missing' if there is a change to the circumstances that has increased the level of risk.

Procedure to follow upon report of an absent or missing student:

If a student is absent or goes missing from school, then each school has their own Missing Child Policy, and this would be immediately implemented and followed by the school and Pippa's Guardians would not seek to interfere or override this as it may cause confusion and could ultimately delay finding the absent or missing student. It would be expected that Pippa's Guardians would support and help the school in any way possible with finding the absent or missing child.

The Pippa's Guardians Designated Safeguarding Lead has the ultimate responsibility for overseeing incidences of any unauthorised absences or missing students. It is most likely, although these are not the only circumstances, that a student may go missing or become absent during a travel event (exeat, half term, ends and beginnings of term) or from the home of a Host Family.

The Area Manager who looks after the absent or missing student is responsible for ensuring the steps below are followed upon the report of an unauthorised absence. This report may come into the Area Manager in the form of a telephone call, email, social media message or face to face disclosure.

The Area Manager must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Rose Vigers-Belgeonne or in her absence the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) Michelle Edwards immediately that a report has been received of an absent or missing student. The DSL and Area Manager must always remain contactable during the period the student is absent or missing.

Rose Vigers-Belgeonne on 07731 997732 or safeguarding@pippasguardians.co.uk and Michelle Edwards on 07802 421472 (DDSL) or safeguarding@pippasguardians.co.uk

Pippa's Guardians 24 hour Duty Phone is 07721 372865.

Data Protection and Information Sharing

Pippa's Guardians will process and share personal information relating to students, parents, host families, schools, agents and staff in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Information may be shared with relevant agencies, including the police, schools, local authorities, parents or guardians, and safeguarding professionals, where this is necessary to safeguard a student, protect their vital interests, prevent or detect crime, comply with a legal obligation, or carry out tasks in the public interest.

The lawful bases for processing and sharing personal data may include:

- Article 6(1)(c) UK GDPR - processing necessary for compliance with a legal obligation.
- Article 6(1)(d) UK GDPR - processing necessary to protect the vital interests of the student or another person.
- Article 6(1)(e) UK GDPR - processing necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest.
- Where special category data is processed, the relevant conditions under Article 9 UK GDPR and Schedule 1 of the Data Protection Act 2018 will be relied upon, particularly where processing is necessary for safeguarding children and individuals at risk.

Only information that is necessary, relevant and proportionate to the safeguarding concern or missing student incident will be shared. Records of information sharing decisions, including the reason for sharing and the recipient, will be maintained where appropriate.

The safety and welfare of the student will be the primary consideration when deciding whether to share information. Where there is a risk of harm, information may be shared without consent if this is necessary and lawful in the circumstances.

In discussion with the DSL the Area Manager should determine whether the student is absent or missing.

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The ‘absent’ category should comprise cases in which people are not presently where they are supposed to be and there is no apparent risk.

‘Absent’ cases should not be ignored and must be monitored over periods of time with consideration given to escalating to ‘missing’ if there is a change to the circumstances that has increased the level of risk.

Any member of Pippa’s Guardians staff or a host family member may report a student as absent or missing to the police if there is a genuine concern for their safety. If there is a concern a young person maybe involved in an incident or if there are welfare concerns but no immediate danger, the matter should be referred to the police by dialling 101.

If the student is believed to be at immediate risk of harm, or if there is known or suspected immediate danger to the student, the incident should be reported to the police by dialling 999 to request an emergency response

Following a risk assessment, the local police force will record a report of absent or missing if there are grounds to do so. In order to make a police report as much of the following information should be collated to pass to the Police:

- Where the missing person was last seen.
- Who is the missing person’s next of kin or in the case of an overseas student their Guardian information (Pippa’s Guardians)
- A detailed description of the missing person, including age, sex and as much information about their clothing as possible (if known).
- The circumstances of the incident, including anything that may have triggered the disappearance, how long the missing person has been missing, if there was an argument.
- Who is looking for the child, do they have a mobile with them, what is the number.

The police may also ask more detailed questions. All information we hold about the student can be found on our CRM under the individual student record. The DSL must inform the parent(s) of any report made to the police. The parent(s) should be updated at least every four hours regarding any developments, or sooner where possible.

The DSL must inform the school of the student of any report they have made to the police, as the school have the overall duty of care for the student under their Student Sponsor responsibilities and the school should also be updated every at least every four hours with any developments that are known to Pippa's Guardians. If it is decided the student is absent, then the Area Manager should then carry out the following;

- 1) Try to contact the student by phone (leave a message if no answer), WhatsApp, WeChat, Line, text, email and social media. This must be repeated every 30 minutes.
- 2) Review the travel event information held on our CRM for the student to ascertain any relevant information about the possible whereabouts of the student.
- 3) If appropriate, review airport transfer details by communicating with the taxi company or driver that was assigned to collect the student.
- 4) Make contact with the student's house parent and/or matron to collate any relevant information about the possible whereabouts of the student.
- 5) If appropriate, request that the school organise a search of the grounds and bedroom of the student.
- 6) If appropriate, request that the school speak to friends of the student about the possible whereabouts of the student.
- 7) If appropriate, request that the host family conduct a search of their house and garden.
- 8) Make contact with the student's agent and parent(s), after taking advice from the DSL, to collate any relevant information about the possible whereabouts of the student.

The absence of a student must be recorded in the student's file. This will be done by the DSL on receipt of the absent or missing student report from an Area Manager. This report should be in the form of written email and should be sent to her at the earliest opportunity.

Informing the Media

The police are responsible for advising the media regarding children or young people who are reported as missing. The decision to publicise these matters will always be made in consultation with the parents who must give their signed consent before the media are able to circulate the details. As such, no member of Pippas Guardians should release any details to the media and must refer any contact from them directly to the relevant police force.

Student Return

The police are responsible for ensuring that the student that has been reported as missing has been returned safe and well and has an opportunity to disclose any relevant issues to them in their return interview.

Where a student has been reported as absent to the police, they will not be given a 'safe return' interview. In such cases, the students Area Manager should liaise with the school DSL and ensure a 'safe return' interview with the student is set up to discuss their absence and any reasoning behind it. This offers an opportunity to provide any additional support that the student may need.

If there has been an allegation of abuse toward the student, the school must contact their Local Children's Safeguarding Partnership and follow their reporting procedure. The Pippa's Guardians DSL will carry out due diligence and ensure communications between themselves and the school DSL remain up to date and accurate.

Any persons that had been informed of the student being absent or missing must be contacted immediately by the Area Manager and be advised of the students safe return.

If a student has been absent or missing on more than one occasion Pippa's Guardians Head of Guardianship Director, Sally Tyler Short will consult with the students' parents and a formal review of the guardianship level required must be assessed.

Policy Information	
Policy Version Number	V1
Date of Policy	13 th July 2026
Policy Review Date:	13 th July 2027
Responsibility for Policy Review	Imogen Trevethan
Policy Accepted by:	Pippa's Guardians Senior Leadership Team