**Educatius UK Missing Student Policy**

**Policy Statement**

The safety and welfare of the students we work with is absolutely paramount. Educatius UK always ensure that we make the safety of our students the highest priority. The intention of this policy is to clearly lay out the steps to be taken in cases where students are believed to be missing.

This policy should be read and used in conjunction with the Educatius UK Safeguarding Policy.

Educatius UK commit to responding appropriately to the report of a missing student. This policy will be reviewed in such an instance to assess and update as needed and minimise future risk.

**Definitions**

**Absent** – A student who is not present at the place or occasion they were expected to be.

**Missing person** – Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggested they may be subject to an increased risk of harm or crime.

**Context**

Students may be considered 'absent' if they have not arrived to college, a student meet up or the host family home as expected. Educatius UK considers a student 'absent' when it is considered there is no apparent immediate risk to the student or others, whilst checks are carried out to ascertain their whereabouts.

Students may be considered as 'missing' if there is cause to believe the student is at increased risk of immediate harm or, if it is not possible to ascertain the whereabouts of a student previously deemed 'absent'.

**Guidance for Host Families**

Cases of absenteeism should not be ignored. If a student has not arrived as expected and can be considered '**absent'**, please follow these steps:

- Attempt to contact the student, if successful please advise the student of your concern and explain where they are expected to be.

- If attempts to contact the student are unsuccessful please notify the Local Coordinator. They will:

  o Attempt to contact the student every ten minutes for a period of 60 minutes.
  o Contact the school/college (if appropriate).
  o Contact friends/those known to have been with the student recently.
  o If appropriate, ask that the school contact known friends/associates of the student.
  o Notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead if the above steps have not been successful after 60 minutes of attempted contact.
  o Monitor the situation in liaison with the DSL and continue attempting to contact the student every 10 minutes until advised otherwise by the DSL.

The DSL will consider if and when it is necessary to escalate to '**missing'**. When a student is considered **'missing'** Educatius UK will contact the natural parents and agency of the student.

If the student is considered to be at immediate risk of harm, the incident will be referred as an emergency to the police.

The police will require as much detailed information as possible in order to conduct a risk assessment and form a report. They will ask for information such as:

- The student's name and date of birth/age;
- When and where the student was last seen and by whom;
- Who is the missing person's guardian/next of kin (Educatius UK);
- A description of what the student was wearing when they were last seen;
- Information regarding any incident/event that may be important to consider as a trigger event;
- How long have they been missing and have steps been taken to try to locate them.


The Local Coordinator will contact known friends of the student and the host family to find out when and where the student was last seen.

The Local Coordinator will carry out a thorough search of the venues/buildings in the local area where the student had last been seen.

**Guidance for Educatius UK staff**

In the case of a '**missing**' student, a prompt response is crucial. If a host family, student, school, or other person in the placement area notifies you that a student is 'absent' or 'missing' please ensure you follow the steps listed above.

These next steps describe the actions to be taken should a student become '**absent**' or '**missing**' during a planned excursion or residential trip:

- Carry out a headcount as soon as it is noticed that a student is '**absent**'.
- One member of staff should search the immediate vicinity.
- Attempt to contact the student and continue to do so every 10 minutes if unsuccessful.
- Ascertain who last saw the student, when and where.
- Contact the DSL and report the issue. If there is concern that the student may be at immediate risk of harm, the DSL/Educatius UK management staff will contact the police to report the student as '**missing**'.
- At least one staff member to remain at the 'meeting point' or position the student should be expected to return to if possible.
- DSL/Educatius UK management staff will notify parents and agency after three hours if it has not been possible to locate the student.
- After all possible steps have been taken to locate the student and if attempts to contact the student have failed, the DSL/Educatius UK management staff will contact the police to report the student as '**missing**'.

**Police investigation**

Educatius UK staff and host families are expected to cooperate fully should a police investigation be required. If there is reason to believe a child protection issue may need addressing, Children's Social Care may also be involved.

**Once the student is found**

Once the student has been located and is safe, Educatius UK staff should ensure the following steps are taken:

- If the student had been reported to the police as 'missing', DSL/Educatius UK management staff will contact the police to provide an update as soon as possible.

- The DSL/Educatius management staff will contact the student's parents and agency to inform them that the student has been found.

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- The Local Coordinator, with the support of the DSL, will speak with the student, take care of and comfort them.

- The Local Coordinator will express to other students in the placement area the importance of following the student programme rules and keeping adults informed of their whereabouts.

- Educatius UK will review any relevant policies for amendments to reduce the risk of future incidents.

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Persons responsible for review of policy: Michele Harrison / Jemma Coleborn