



Absent or Missing Child Procedures 2024

Introduction

This policy and its procedures are applicable to all children at an XP-UK Summer Centre (the Centre). It has been drafted in compliance with Keeping Children Safe In Education (September 2018) and should be read in conjunction with the Centre's policy on safeguarding and child protection, which is available on the Centre's website.

The Centre will follow up any unexplained absences as soon as is practicable using the procedures detailed below. Where reasonably practicable the Centre will hold more than one emergency contact for each child.

It is important to distinguish between a child's absence from the Centre for an unknown reason and a child's disappearance from a lesson or activity after arrival at Centre.

Responsibility

All staff, hosts and contractors have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

All members of staff contribute to the safety of children at the Centre by providing appropriate supervision under the guidance of the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

It is the duty of staff in charge of any child's supervision to check why a child is absent, although during the Centre day this may be delegated if that member of staff is busy.

Procedures for monitoring the whereabouts of Children

To establish whether a child is missing it is a requirement to monitor the whereabouts of children. This includes use of the following procedures:

- Teachers must register all children at morning registration. Afternoon registration for classes must be completed by teachers and activity staff must do so for activities and excursions;
- In lessons, all staff should be aware of the children they should have in their care;
- On Centre trips/visits/activities; the staff in charge should ensure that scheduled meeting times and locations are specified and adhered to by the children. A copy of the list of children on a trip or activity should be held centrally.

Recording and Registration

- If a child is too unwell to attend classes and/or activities, then they must be taken to the Centre sick bay. If the child is a homestay student, then either the hosts must bring them to the Centre, or they must be collected by a member of staff and brought to the

sick bay. Group leaders should be informed of sickness and any incidence of sickness should be logged in the child's record in Class.

Monitoring children on off-site activities

- Staff must make meeting times and locations clear to all children.
- Regular head counts must be undertaken, especially when moving from one location to another.
- All children must have access to staff contact details during a trip
- For further details please see the Free Time / Unsupervised Time Procedures

When would a child be identified as missing? A child may be missing if:

- If an absence from Centre is noted through the multiple registration points during the day
- By comparing children in a class with the day's register (i.e. if a child is previously marked present, but has not arrived back in class) – the teacher should contact the Centre office reception no later than 20 minutes after the start time of the lesson;
- By a report of a missing child by a fellow child;
- On Centre trips/visits/fixtures, after trying the child's mobile phone, talking to their friends and conducting a brief search of the immediate area. The same principles apply if more than one child is missing.

Any member of staff discovering a discrepancy must immediately notify the Centre Office

Missing Child Procedures

1. Child absent from Centre for an unknown reason:

- A Designated Safeguarding Staff member will check the registers, from 9.15am and produce a 'to look for list' by 10am;
- If a child has not been located after the creation of the list, the DSS will contact either the relevant House Supervisor or Host – and in both cases notify the relevant group leader
- Where the Host is not immediately available, the DSS will continue to try all contact numbers. If no contact can be made having tried periodically; the DSS will inform the Designated Safeguard Lead by 11 a.m. for follow up;
- Where the Host has been spoken to and the child's departure from home is confirmed with them, the DSS will immediately contact the DSL

2. Childs identified as missing during the Centre day:

On receiving notification of a discrepancy, any member of staff noticing that discrepancy must contact the Duty DSS who will:

- Liaise with SMT;

- Check the Sick Bay;
- The Duty DSS will make the necessary checks such as teacher, group leader or House Supervisor to assess whether the absence is known and will check whether the child has turned up to their class by this time and ask children in the class if they know the child's whereabouts. The Case Manager will undertake a secondary check of the sick bay, canteens and other common areas

3. Safeguarding Staff

If the child is still missing after steps 1 or 2 above, the Duty DSS will immediately:

- Inform the SMT, the DSL and the Homestay Responsible (if homestay related) —, who will manage the incident and where appropriate initiate and oversee a search of the site (library, lavatories, changing rooms, music rooms are the usual starting places). The SMT will communicate with the Group Leader from this point
- Locate the child's mobile phone number and call them.
- Advise all teachers and activity staff, at next break, that they must immediately inform the office if the child appears.
- If the child is still not located; the missing procedures in step 5 below will then be followed.

4. Childs identified as missing on a Centre trip

- Not later than 1 hour after commencing searching the trip leader will contact the SMT on-call contact. The missing procedures in step 5 below will then be followed.

5. Member of SMT managing the incident

If the site search fails, no later than 1 hour after commencing searching , the member of SMT managing the incident will:

- Inform the Director or her deputy who will then liaise with the agent to inform them and to have them inform the parents/guardians.
- Parents, through the agent and/or group leader, will be kept informed of all progress.
- Initiate a search of local roads in some cases.
- At their discretion, and in consultation with the group leader/agent/parents where possible (and usually not later than 2 hours of a search commencing), the member of the SMT managing the incident (after agreement with the Director or her deputy) will arrange for the police and Children's Social Care to be informed
- Make arrangements for dealing with media enquiries.

Any decision to contact Children's Social Care will be taken in accordance with the Centre's safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.

6. Resolution of the incident

When the child is found, or the incident is otherwise resolved, the member of the pastoral staff or member of SMT managing the incident will:

- Inform the Group leader/agent directly.

- Inform the police and Children's Social Care if they have been involved.

7. Investigation

Following resolution of the incident, the Operations Manager will initiate a full investigation, and require a written report from the member of SMT managing the incident. This report and the incident log will be kept on the child's file and in a central record of all such incidents.

Risk Assessment

Where a concern about a child's welfare is identified, the risks to that child's welfare will be assessed and appropriate action will be taken to reduce the risks identified.

The Director has overall responsibility for ensuring that matters which affect child welfare are adequately risk assessed and for ensuring that the relevant findings are implemented, monitored and evaluated.

Day to day responsibility to carry out risk assessments under this policy will be delegated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who has been properly trained in, and tasked with, carrying out the particular assessment.

Record Keeping

All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the Centre's Data Policy

Records created in accordance with this policy may contain personal data. The Centre has a number of privacy notices which explain how the Centre will use the personal data of children and parents.

The privacy notices are published on the Centre's website. In addition, staff must ensure that they follow the Centre's data protection policies and procedures when handling personal data created in connection with this policy.

Policy Review

UKCE will undertake an annual review of this policy, its procedures and its operation as part of the Centre's annual review of safeguarding and update it as necessary.

Version Control

Date of adoption of this policy: 24th April 2023

Date of last review of this policy: 21st June 2024

Date for next review of this policy: April 2025

Policy owner: Director - XP-UK

APPENDIX

Questions that could be asked when interviewing during a missing child investigation

- When was the child last seen?
- Who was the child with?
- What was he/she wearing?
- What emotional state did the child appear to be in?
- Has anything upset the child recently?
- Did the child speak to anyone about leaving?
- Who are the child's main friends at Centre?
- Is there any reason to believe the child might have been abducted (e.g. custody dispute) or otherwise at risk?

Information to be provided to the police/children's social care

- the child's name;
- the child's age/date of birth;
- an up to date photograph;
- the child's height and any other physical description that is not shown by the photograph;
- a description of the clothing the child is thought to be wearing;
- any physical disability, learning difficulty or special educational needs that the child may have;
- the child's home address and telephone number and details of his/her parents/guardians;
- the child's mobile phone number if known;
- any relevant background information on the child's Centre record or home situation;
- any relevant comments made by the child or other children.

Record keeping

The Centre will keep a full written record of any incident of a missing child. This written record will be kept on the child file and in a central record of all such incidents. The written record will include:

- the child's name;
- relevant dates and times (e.g. when it was first noticed that the child was missing)
- the action taken to find the child;
- whether the Police or Children's Social care were involved;
- outcome or resolution of the incident;
- any reasons given by the child for being missing;
- any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident;
- a record of the staff involved.
- Any recommendations concerning future incidents.

Centre Rules on attendance

Compulsory registration takes place:

- all children - in the morning at first class
- all children – in the first class/activity of the afternoon
- all children – start and end of trips and excursions

Children may not leave the site during the Centre day unless they have supervised free time

The Centre cannot be held responsible for children who have left the site for private rather than Centre purposes.