



## **RGS Guidance on Children Missing in Education. Including Guidance for a Boarder who is missing.**

Date Agreed by the Governing Body	November 2022
Date to be reviewed	November 2023
Date of last review	November 2021
Governors Committee accountable for review	Education
Senior Leadership Team member accountable for review	Jl Scourfield

This policy should be read in conjunction with the RGS 'Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School' Policy. This policy is directed to actions staff should be taking if a child is missing in education as opposed to educating children who are unable to attend. All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. These may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risk of a child going missing in the future. Staff should be aware of their school's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

The RGS HW undertakes to take the following action with regard to absence:

- The Authorised Officer ("AO") will contact home/boarding for any unexplained absence on the first day of such absence
- The AO and/or class teachers will contact the Head of Year ("HoY") and FT/boarding when lessons are missed, particularly a pattern of lessons
- Day 5 of continuous absence, the AO will alert the HoY, FT, boarding and Matron. Depending on the reason for absence, a nominated person will contact parents.
- Day 10 of continuous absence, the AO will alert DSL, Matron and HoY and a nominated person will make weekly contact with parents and cc AO to log.
- Day 15 of continuous absence, AO to alert DSL and team to make a request for home tutoring. AO to log and monitor progress via Vulnerable Students weekly meeting
- At the end of each term, the AO will send a letter home from the Assistant Head ("AH") if attendance falls below 90%. The parents will be asked in for a meeting and outcome logged
- At the end of each term, the AO will alert the HoY and AH (define) of any absences for holiday (3 or more days) and a letter from AH will be sent home and logged
- The AO/HoY/Matron/DSL/AH will meet to discuss any persistent low attendance cases and to manage these on an individual basis. This will be done with liaison with the AH in charge of Pastoral Care, and all actions will be logged. In cases of high concern, advice will be sought from County.

### **Boarding Specific Guidance**

- In terms of absence from school all boarders are under the same procedures and guidance as day students.
- In order to fully support these procedures it is important that in the case of any boarder being absent from school that boarding staff (Boarding Administrator/Matron or Boarding duty staff) liaise with the School Attendance Officer, school absence should be reported via email.
- In terms of outside the normal school day we need to ensure that we know where all our boarders are at any given time. Signing in and out procedures need to be followed and regular reminders given to all boarders.

### **Guidance if a boarder is missing from Fraser Youens House Boarding ("FYH").**

We expect boarders to have signed in and out at all times outside of the school day. Regular reminders are given to all boarders about signing in/out this helps reduce the risk of students forgetting.

Boarders need to ask permission to leave the school site and there is specific guidance for this on the duty expectations.

**If you cannot locate the whereabouts of a boarder and believe he is missing from boarding.**

- Check Reach, duty notes and boarding email in case students have permission but have forgotten to sign out.
- Try to contact the boarder using his phone and the duty boarding mobiles – if contact cannot be made please contact a duty Housemaster.
- Talk to fellow students to see if they know where the boarder is or have been in contact with them. (Even if you have been told by another student that a boarder is at a club/activity or is offsite it is important that this is checked and that boarders are then reminded of the policy.)
- If you are unable to contact the boarder and have checked with his friends and fellow students please contact parents to see if they are aware of where their son is. (Apps such as find my friend or find my iPhone can help and many parents have these and should be asked to activate them).
- In terms of timing of contact to parents, this will depend on who the student is and on the age of a student. (Clearly if this is late in the evening this is a bigger issue than if it is just after school when someone may be at a club or activity.)

**If a student is genuinely missing then one should follow Bucks CSB Children Missing from Care, Home and Education Procedure. The full link is attached within this guidance.**

<https://bscb.procedures.org.uk/qkosg/children-in-specific-circumstances/children-missing-from-care-home-and-education-procedure#s2646>

**Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.**

**At the point where a parent / person with parental responsibility considers the child to be missing, they should inform the police without delay.**

**When reporting a child missing to the police any relevant information that might help find or support the child should be shared, including;**

- if there are any specific risks
- a description of the child and the clothing they were wearing
- any mobile phone numbers
- whether or not the missing child uses social media
- details of where the child was last seen, when and with whom
- a recent photograph and consent to release this to the press if required
- relevant addresses, known associates and addresses frequented
- details of any previous missing episodes – when, where, for how long, with whom, where found/when returned
- the circumstances and any relevant information such as an argument, being bullied.
- any other information that is seen as increasing the vulnerability of the child (for example: learning disability, criminal associations, drug or alcohol dependency, or if the child has previously experienced or been considered at risk of sexual exploitation or trafficking).

It is essential that appropriate policy guidance documents are considered, and risk assessments are in place to safeguard both staff and pupils, who can be more vulnerable in these situations. This means that staff should follow the RGS Guidance on Home Visits if such intervention is required.