

Hope International Education (UK) Ltd

Missing Student Procedure

Statement

This policy is designed to be implemented in cases where students are believed to be absent or missing from the care of Hope International Education (UK) Ltd. The purpose of the policy is to locate the student by the safest and fastest means possible.

Hope International Education (UK) Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.

This policy is required to ensure that missing or absent students (who are not under the duty of care of the school), are subject to an appropriate response by Hope International Education (UK) Ltd. This is to ensure that children are found and returned to an approved location as soon as practicable.

The benefits of this policy are that all reports of missing/absent people will be recorded. The policy provides a model and framework for response and dealing with incidents dependent on the risk posed. This policy is applicable to all staff members who may become involved in the initial stages of a report of a missing child or young person.

Hope International Education (UK) Ltd will respond appropriately to reports of missing and absent persons. Every report will be risk assessed so that those who are vulnerable or represent a high risk will be immediately identified. This process shall be on-going, dynamic and supervised in each and every case with a focus on locating the person safely and mitigating any risk posed to others. Where criminality is associated with either the initial disappearance or subsequent harbouring of those who wish to remain absent, this will be reported to the police.

Hope International Education (UK) Ltd will liaise closely with schools following a report that a student has gone missing. Hope International Education (UK) Ltd is aware that some schools may wish to take the lead in the response as they retain the overall duty of care as the student's sponsor. In these cases, Hope International Education (UK) Ltd will cooperate fully with the school's requests. The procedure outlined in this policy assumes that the guardianship organisation is taking the lead in the response.

Definitions:

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd recognises the importance of identifying and responding appropriately when a child is absent or missing. The organisation will follow local safeguarding partnership procedures and national guidance when responding to concerns regarding a child's whereabouts.

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) definitions are:

Absent – A child or young person is not at a place where they are expected or required to be and there is no apparent risk.

Missing – A child or young person whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests that the child may be subject to crime or at risk of harm to themselves or others.

Where a student's whereabouts cannot be established, HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will follow its Missing Student Procedure, notify appropriate staff and carers, and where necessary contact the police, parents, guardians, educational setting and other relevant agencies without delay.

Supporting Reference Documents:

NSPCC publications

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

Safeguarding Children and Young People from CSE 2009

Scoping Report on Missing and Abducted Children – CEOP

Local Safeguarding Children Partnership Protocols – Reporting children who go missing from care

Statutory Guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care – DfE 2014

Children Missing Education 2025: [Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK](#)

Procedure:

This workflow applies when a young person is absent (they are not where they are supposed to be but there is no apparent risk) or when they are missing (unexpected and uncharacteristic absence which causes concern for their safety). It applies when they are under the care of Hope International Education (UK) Ltd during journeys around the UK organised by us or at a homestay.

The DSL Mei XIAN shall manage any cases of absent or missing children or young people, and as such all reports must be brought to the attention of the DSL.

Contact details for the DSL

Job title	Name	Telephone/ Email
DSL	Mei XIAN	Telephone:07305020013 Email: m.xian@hope-studyabroad.com
Mei XIAN 24-hour emergency number (out of hours)		Telephone: 07305020013

If a child or young person goes missing out of hours and Hope International Education (UK) Ltd receives a report then the on duty manager is responsible for ensuring the completion of the initial reasonable enquiries where a student is absent/missing during an event (for example half term, exam or during a suspension/expulsion) which will include:

- if appropriate, reviewing the flight and transfer details (with communication to the airline and transfer company to confirm transport arrangements for the student)
- texting, emailing and phoning the student (leaving a message if no answer) asking them to make contact with the on duty member of staff and repeating this contact every 30 minutes
- texting, emailing and phoning the house parent to collate any relevant information about the whereabouts of the student – this is only possible if the houseparent is at school.
- texting, emailing and phoning the parent/agent to collate any relevant information about the whereabouts of the student
- texting, emailing and phoning the homestay to collate any relevant information about the whereabouts of the student
- review of information held on file which may indicate friends or associates who the student may be with.

A written record of all actions taken, decisions made, communications undertaken, risk assessments completed and outcomes achieved will be maintained in accordance with the organisation's safeguarding record-keeping procedures.

Any member of staff, homestay host or responsible adult who has immediate concerns for a child's safety may contact the police without delay. Staff should also notify the Incident Lead and/or DSL as soon as possible.

All reports of a child or young person being absent or missing will be subject to an immediate risk assessment to determine the appropriate response.

Upon receiving a report that a student is absent or missing, the Incident Lead or On-Duty Manager will conduct an immediate risk assessment taking into account the student's age, vulnerability, medical needs, safeguarding history, known risks, location, and the circumstances surrounding the absence.

Following a risk assessment, the receiving police force will record a report of absent or missing where there are grounds to do so. In cases of missing children or young people, the police will work cooperatively with Children's Social Care staff during any enquiry.

The incident lead is responsible for ensuring the school is informed of any report made to the police of an absent or missing child or young person, as the school retains the overall duty of care. The school should be updated with any developments as they should know the whereabouts of the student at all times, especially those on visas. [The school may decide to take the lead in the incident and will have their own missing child procedure. Where this is the case, the guardianship organisation should take direction from the member of school staff leading the response.]

The incident lead is responsible for ensuring that the parent(s), legal guardian(s), educational guardian(s), or agent, as appropriate are informed of any report made to the police of an absent or missing child or young person. The parents/agent should be regularly updated (recommended a minimum of every 4 hours) with any developments. This is to ensure that they are fully informed as to the situation involving their son or daughter.

Repeated, unexplained or prolonged absences will be considered potential indicators of safeguarding concerns and will be reviewed by UK Office Director, Mei XIAN to determine whether further safeguarding action is required.

Process and Response – report of a missing child

1. A child or young person who falls into the 'Missing' Category must be reported to the police as soon as possible by telephoning 101 for a non-emergency report or 999 for an emergency response i.e. information received that a child or young person is in immediate danger of harm.

YOU WILL NEED TO ENSURE THAT YOU ARE TRANSFERRED TO THE FORCE RELEVANT TO THE AREA THE CHILD IS MISSING/ABSENT FROM.

IF CALLING 999 YOU WILL NEED TO TELL THE CALL HANDLER TO STAY ON THE LINE WHILE YOU ARE TRANSFERRED TO THE RELEVANT FORCE.

If the report to the police is not made by the DSL/ DDSL, then the reporter must inform the DSL/ DDSL of the situation as soon as possible.

2. The DSL or Deputy DSL will ensure that the following information is gathered for the initial report to the police:

- Name, date of birth and nationality of the child or young person;
- The specific concern for the child or young person;
- Whether they are likely to be subjected to crime, a victim of abuse or at risk of sexual exploitation;
- Whether there are concerns that the child or young person may be at risk of self-harm, suicide, exploitation, abuse, neglect, or other significant harm;
- Whether the child or young person is likely to pose a danger to other people;
- What actions have been completed so far to locate the child or young person;
- A description of the child or young person, including their build, hair, clothing and glasses;
- Details of when the child or young person was last seen and with whom;
- Relevant medical information, vulnerabilities, disabilities, allergies, prescribed medication, or other factors that may affect the child's safety and wellbeing;
- Any previous history of going missing, being absent, running away, or episodes where their whereabouts were unknown;
- The circumstances under which the child or young person is absent;
- Any factors which increase the risk to the child or young person;
- Homestay address.

Information that may be needed later to extend investigations if the young person is not located:

- A recent photograph (if available);
- Family addresses and contact telephone numbers;
- Known associates, telephone numbers and addresses frequented;
- Relevant healthcare contact details where necessary to support safeguarding and welfare enquiries;
- The circumstances under which the child or young person is absent;
- Any factors which increase the risk to the child or young person;
- School and House Parent addresses and contact details;
- Details of any travel and accommodation plans authorised by the overseas parents;
- Details of any known online platforms, communication methods or social media accounts that may assist in locating the child, where lawful and appropriate.

3. The incident must be recorded as an incident report file with regular updates being added until the matter has been resolved. If a police report has been made, the police incident reference number must be recorded. A record of all emails should be included in the incident report file.

4. Following the report to the police, the parents, the agent (if applicable), school and homestay must be informed and requested to contact UK Office Director without delay if the child or young person makes contact.

5. Any incident involving a missing child, or repeated or prolonged absences, will be reviewed by the DSL to determine whether additional safeguarding action or support is required.

Process and Response – report of an absent child

Upon receiving a report that a child is absent, an immediate risk assessment will be completed to determine the level of concern, the child's vulnerabilities, known risks and the appropriate response.

1. If a child or young person is considered to fall within the definition of absent, the decision to record the child as such, together with the evidence supporting that decision must be recorded. The absence of a child or young person must be recorded in the Student File as an 'incident'.
2. Details of children or young people who are absent should still be notified to the police (using the non-emergency telephone number 101 or the emergency telephone number 999) in order that a record of the child or young person's absence can be made, an agreement can be reached on what needs to be done, review times and on-going actions. Although there is an expectation that Hope International Education (UK) Ltd should continue to make reasonable enquiries to locate the child or young person, the police may also initiate some enquiries as appropriate.
3. The Incident Lead, Mei XIAN will notify the school and parents, legal guardians, educational guardians and/or agent, as appropriate of the incident, and regularly provide updates to both parties (minimum every 4 hours) with news of any developments, or confirmation that there have been no developments since the last update. This also affords an opportunity for the school or parents/agent to update the *Incident Lead*, Mei XIAN with any contact they may have had from the student or other information received. All actions taken, decisions made, risk assessments completed, communications undertaken and outcomes achieved must be fully documented within the incident record.
4. Hope International Education (UK) Ltd staff will constantly review the circumstances in the light of any enquiries made or information received and inform the police of any developments by telephoning 101, quoting the reference number and providing the new information received. If the period of absence continues for six hours, consideration should be given as to whether the child should still be regarded as absent, or whether they should now be considered as missing. Six hours should be regarded as the maximum period before reconsideration, and in many cases a shorter period would be more appropriate.
5. Any absence that gives rise to safeguarding concerns, involves a vulnerable child, continues for a prolonged period, occurs repeatedly, or raises concerns regarding exploitation, abuse, neglect, mental health, self-harm or other significant harm must be referred immediately to the DSL or DDSL for review and consideration of further safeguarding action.

Informing the media

The police are responsible for managing media communications relating to missing children and young people. Decisions regarding the release of information to the media will be made by the police in accordance with operational requirements, safeguarding considerations and applicable

legal requirements. Where appropriate, the police will liaise with parents, those with parental responsibility and other relevant parties regarding any media strategy.

No employee, volunteer, homestay host or representative of HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd is authorised to provide information to the media regarding a missing child or young person. Any media enquiries must be referred immediately to the relevant police force's Media Relations Office and, where appropriate, the UK Office Director or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Staff must maintain confidentiality and ensure that information relating to a missing child or young person is only shared with those who have a legitimate safeguarding or operational need to know.

The Return

1. When a child or young person who has been reported missing is located, their safe return should be confirmed as soon as possible. Where appropriate, a return home interview or equivalent welfare discussion should be offered in accordance with local safeguarding arrangements to identify any safeguarding concerns, understand the reasons for the absence and reduce the risk of future incidents.
2. Where an allegation of any form of child abuse is made or becomes evident, child protection procedures must be implemented. Where concerns arise that a child may have suffered, or be at risk of suffering, abuse, neglect, exploitation or other significant harm, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will ensure that referrals are made promptly to Children's Social Care, the police and/or other relevant agencies in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.
3. If there is any suggestion that the child has been a victim or perpetrator of crime, consideration must be given to securing evidence by police including by forensic examination. Where there is reason to believe that a crime may have been committed, staff should seek advice from the police and preserve potential evidence where appropriate. Staff should follow police guidance and ensure that the welfare and best interests of the child remain paramount.
4. All relevant parties, including parents, legal guardians, educational guardians, agents, homestay hosts and the educational setting, should be informed of the child's safe return as soon as practicable, subject to safeguarding considerations.
5. Where a child or young person has been absent, a member of HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd staff will conduct a welfare discussion, where appropriate, to understand the reasons for the absence, identify any safeguarding concerns, and determine whether any further support or action is required. Any repeated, unexplained or prolonged absences will be referred to the DSL for review and consideration of any further safeguarding action required.

Children who are absent from education

As explained in Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), all staff and homestay hosts should be aware that children who are absent from education, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods of time, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns. This may include abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation (including

county lines), mental health concerns, substance misuse, radicalisation, travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation (FGM), so-called honour-based abuse and forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify any underlying safeguarding concerns and help prevent future incidents of absence.

Should HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd become aware that a student in its care may be missing education, the organisation will notify the school or college immediately and work collaboratively with relevant agencies to establish the student's whereabouts, welfare and educational arrangements.

Children Missing Education (September 2025) is statutory guidance for schools and local authorities in England. Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

Children missing education are at significant risk of underachievement, poorer health outcomes, harm, exploitation, radicalisation and becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) later in life.

HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd recognises that no single agency will have a complete picture of a child's circumstances. Effective information sharing, timely intervention and collaborative working between schools, parents, guardians, local authorities and other relevant agencies are essential to identifying, supporting and preventing children from becoming children missing education.

Where concerns are identified, HOPE International Education (UK) Ltd will work with schools, local authorities and other relevant agencies to help establish the child's whereabouts, safeguard their welfare and minimise any period during which the child is not receiving suitable education.

Review

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy was last reviewed on:22/06/2026.....(date)

Signed: *M.xian*.....

Date:22/06/2026.....