MISSING STUDENT POLICY

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Missing Student Policy & Procedure

INTRODUCTION

Carew Academy is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our students. The safety and welfare of our students is of the utmost importance. All staff should be aware of their responsibilities regarding student safety, including what to do if a student goes missing from school supervision or when a student is not collected from school by their designated person. This policy lays out the procedures that should be followed in the event of either occurrence.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, the Risk Assessment Policy, the Health and Safety Policy and the Educational Visits Policy.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Carew Academy Governing Body will:

- Monitor updated policies on a regular basis and receive termly reports on safeguarding that include any missing student incidents at the school.

OHC&AT Executive Senior Leadership Team will:

- Ensure that this policy and related procedures are regularly reviewed and updated in line with government guidance and other best practice.
- Monitor incidences of missing students as part of safeguarding monitoring, and provide termly safeguarding reports to Trustees.

The Principal will:

- Ensure all staff are aware of this policy and understand the procedure to be followed in the event of a missing student.
- Review any incidence of a missing student to ensure that the school takes forward any lessons learned and continues to operate best practice.

Staff will:

- Ensure they are familiar with this policy and adhere to all related policies and procedures, especially, but not exclusively, those relating to Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding, Risk Assessment, Health & Safety and Educational Visits.
- Ensure that attendance registers are completed accurately and promptly according to guidelines and all missing student incidents are recorded on Safeguard the school's electronic safeguarding system.

Parents/carers will:

- Ensure that the school holds up to date contact information, including named emergency contacts in the event that parents/carers are not available.
- Know the procedure for handover and collection of students where relevant, particularly where there may be safeguarding issues or concerns, including parental responsibility.
- Sign students out of school at the school reception when collecting them during the school day.

MISSING STUDENT

Procedures aimed at reducing risk of a missing student

This policy seeks to set out the general principles and procedures that should be followed whenever school staff suspect a student may be considered missing. Such situations might include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to arrive for a scheduled school day.
- Absconding from a scheduled school day, whether on school premises or off site.
- Becoming lost while participating in educational activities off site e.g. through separation from school staff and peers.

Everyday measures that the school takes to safeguard students include:

- If a student is absent and no notification of absence has been received, the school office will contact the named contact/s on the student's file to ascertain the reason for absence.
- Carew Academy will ensure parents/carers are fully aware of the points at which responsibility for the care of the student passes from staff to them and vice versa.
- Clear procedures are in place for welcoming students into school.
- Teaching and support staff ensure that students go to the relevant classroom or appropriately allocated area.
- Staff mark registers promptly and accurately each morning and at the start of each lesson, via Arbor.
- If students leave the classroom to work in other parts of the school, the teacher must ensure that a suitable level of supervision, as appropriate, is maintained at all times and that all students are accounted for on return to the classroom.
- Students who travel to and from school using LA transport are supervised by a member of their class team onto their bus or taxi.
- A formalised system of checking out students who are collected by parents and who travel independently is in place.
- Alternative provisions notify the school' s off site learning lead of a student's absence and the reason for this absence.
- Thorough risk assessments and adequate staff/student ratios are provided when students leave school premises.

- Permission from parents/carers for local educational trips should be obtained generically at the beginning of each academic year and specifically for each trip where that visit is not covered in global permissions.
- Staff mobile telephones are taken on every visit and mobile contact numbers left at school.

Procedure to be followed in the event of a student going missing

In the event of a member of staff discovering or suspecting that a student has gone missing while at school:

1. If a teacher, TA or other key adult (for example, therapist or lunchtime supervisor) suspects that a student is missing from a lesson or activity, they must contact the nearest member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the school reception immediately. The SLT member and any teachers and/or TAs will carry out a thorough search of the building, including classrooms, toilets, storage areas, communal areas, resource rooms, outside areas and school grounds.

2. The following lists held in the school reception and on Arbor will be checked:
    a. Attendance registers
    b. Off-site record (trips and visits)
    c. Lists of those attending other provisions (e.g. alternative provisions)

Where a search occurs:

3. Staff will count and name check all the students present against the register.

4. A thorough check of all exits will be made, to ascertain if all relevant gates/doors were secure and there are no other ways a student could have left the school. If something is discovered this needs to be drawn to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and SLT immediately.

5. SLT will conduct an in-situ risk assessment to establish whether, and when, parents/carers should be notified. SLT will decide at which point the police need to be contacted, if necessary.

6. Staff will write down as full a description of the student as soon as possible, including what they were wearing and any distinguishing features. A recent photo of the student, for example their Arbor ID photo, will be provided to those searching where this is necessary.

7. Any specific special medical or learning needs relating to the missing student should be disclosed to police or other agencies as appropriate.

8. SLT members will speak to all staff members who have had contact with the missing student that day, in order to try and build up a clear picture of the student's movements.

Additional procedures in the event of a student going missing while off school premises:

1. The lead teacher must ensure the safety of the remaining students. At least one member of staff must stay with them. The lead teacher must make a professional judgement at the time with respect to the size of the student group, the needs of that group and the available staff:student ratios.

2. One or more staff members must immediately start searching for the student.

3. SLT and the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be contacted immediately.

4. If the student is not found promptly, the lead teacher must contact the police by phoning 999.

The lead teacher should alert the school that the police have been contacted and the school will make arrangements to notify parents/carers, after which the procedures described above will be followed.

STUDENT NOT COLLECTED

This procedure outlines what should happen when a 'collected student' i.e. one who is collected from school by a parent/carer or designated adult, is not collected. The guiding principle in dealing with any situation of this type must be to minimise distress to the student and for him or her to remain in familiar surroundings and/or with familiar people for as long as possible.

The school will ensure that it is aware of all students who are collected by a parent, carer or designated adult, if they are not collected by LA transport and do not travel to and from school independently. The following general principles should be adhered to by all parties:

- Parents/carers who know they are going to be late must inform the main office in advance.

- On occasions when a student is due to be collected by someone other than their parent/carer or normally authorised person (e.g. when all of the above are unexpectedly unavailable), parents/carers must advise how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect the student. This will normally be through the use of a pre-determined password.

In the event of a 'collected student' not being collected at the end of the day, the following procedures will be activated:

We undertake to look after the student safely throughout the time that he or she remains under our care.

- If a student is not collected promptly, and regardless, if that time exceeds twenty minutes, a member of staff will call the parent/carer or designated adult and use

any other emergency contact details available in order to determine the nature and length of delay in collection. If contacts go to voicemail/answerphone, staff members should leave messages giving their name and the school telephone number and requesting a prompt return call.

- While waiting to be collected, the student will be supervised by a member of staff who will offer them as much support and reassurance as is necessary.

- Students awaiting collection will be taken to the school reception where they will be supervised by school staff.

- If a student has not been collected within the hour following agreed collection time, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed and a decision taken as to whether Social Services needs to be called.

- If all attempts within this period to contact a parent/carer, designated person or emergency contact fail then the person in charge at the time should inform the Local Authority Social Services department of the situation without delay.

- The duty social worker will take ownership of the situation and decide what happens next, including whether the police need to be involved in helping to trace the parent/carer of the student.

- The student will not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on Arbor.

- The school will ensure that there are at least two members of staff present whilst waiting for the parent/carer to collect the student.

- Under normal circumstances, staff should not look for the parent/carer or take the student home. In exceptional circumstances, if the parent/carer has been contacted but is unable, for a given and accepted reason, to come to the school, the school may escort the student home with that parent/carer or responsible adult's permission. Where this does occur, this should ordinarily happen with two staff members, one of whom is a senior member of staff.

- In the event that transporting the student somewhere is agreed to be necessary, staff should not usually transport students alone in their own cars and may wish to consider using a taxi or mini-cab (approved licensed drivers only). In this instance, two members of staff will accompany the student. However, there may be exceptional circumstances (for example in an emergency) where solo accompaniment of the student by an appropriate staff member is necessary. In this instance, the staff member must ensure that a senior leader or line manager (ideally the Principal/Designated Safeguarding Lead) is made aware of the arrangement beforehand and can follow up accordingly.

- Continual incidents of late collection will be recorded on Safeguard the school's electronic safeguarding system and the DSL will discuss this with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity.

RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Child Protection, Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy
Health & Safety Policy
Risk Assessment Policy
Educational Visits Policy