

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION AND MISSING CHILDREN

This document which applies to the whole college inclusive of boarding is publicly available on the college website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the college office.

Purpose and Scope

This policy sets out the College's arrangements for safeguarding children who are missing education, missing from College, or missing from home or care. It applies to all students on roll and to all activities undertaken by the College, including those outside normal College hours and away from the College site.

The policy applies to all staff, volunteers, contractors, proprietors, and others who work with or provide services to the College. All such persons share responsibility for understanding and implementing this policy.

This policy should be read alongside the College's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Attendance Policy, Behaviour Management Policy, Online Safety Policy, Looked After Children Policy, and SEND Policy.

Reviewed: January 2026

Next Review: January 2027

Signed

David Game
CEO and Founder

John Dalton
Principal

Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy is informed by and complies with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations, *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, *Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance*, *Children Who Run Away or Go Missing from Home or Care*, and local safeguarding partnership procedures.

The College recognises that children missing education is a safeguarding issue, particularly where absence is repeated, unexplained, prolonged, or forms a concerning pattern.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, a *child missing education* refers to a child of compulsory school age who is not registered as a pupil and is not receiving suitable education. A *missing child* is one whose whereabouts cannot be established and where there is concern for their safety or welfare. An *absent child* is a child not at a place where they are expected to be, but where there is no immediate indication of risk.

David Game College is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all children fulfil their potential.

Roles and Responsibilities

Proprietor

The Proprietor holds ultimate responsibility for ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place, including compliance with statutory duties relating to children missing education and missing children. The Proprietor undertakes an annual review of this policy and its effectiveness.

Principal

The Principal is responsible for the operational implementation of this policy and for ensuring that attendance monitoring, safeguarding procedures, and reporting requirements are followed consistently.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL has lead responsibility for responding to concerns relating to children missing education or missing from home or care, assessing safeguarding risk, liaising with local authorities, children's social care, police, and other agencies, ensuring that referrals are made where thresholds are met, and maintaining accurate and secure safeguarding records.

Staff

All staff are expected to remain vigilant to patterns of absence, changes in behaviour, or indicators of risk. Any concerns must be reported immediately to the DSL in line with safeguarding procedures.

Attendance and Early Identification

The College treats attendance as both an educational and safeguarding priority. Staff are alert to repeated lesson absence, patterns of absence before or after weekends or holidays, unexplained or prolonged absence, and changes in behaviour, peer associations, or engagement.

All unexplained absences are followed up promptly in accordance with the Attendance Policy, and concerns are escalated where patterns or risks emerge.

Risk Environment and Safeguarding Context

The College recognises that children who are missing education or frequently absent may be at increased risk of harm. Such risks may include child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation including county lines involvement, forced marriage and honour-based abuse, female genital mutilation, trafficking and modern slavery, or radicalisation and extremist influence.

Staff receive training to recognise indicators of these risks and must report concerns immediately to the DSL. All safeguarding concerns are managed in line with statutory guidance and local safeguarding partnership procedures.

Children Missing Education

Where a student is absent without explanation, the College will make prompt contact with parents or carers on the first day of absence and continue reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts. Concerns are escalated to the DSL where absence persists or safeguarding concerns arise.

The College notifies the relevant local authority where a student is absent without permission for ten consecutive school days or more, where a student is removed from the admissions register in accordance with regulations, or where a student leaves the College and no confirmed destination is known. Names are removed from the admissions register only in accordance with statutory requirements and following appropriate enquiries.

Children Missing from Home or Care

Where a child is believed to be missing from home or care, parents or carers are informed immediately unless doing so would place the child at increased risk. Parents may be supported to contact the police, and the DSL liaises with children's social care, police, and other relevant agencies as appropriate.

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Repeat incidents are treated as indicators of heightened safeguarding risk and are monitored closely, with further action taken where necessary.

Liaison with Local Authorities and Agencies

The College works closely with local authorities, children's social care, police, virtual schools, and safeguarding partners to safeguard children missing education or missing from home or care. Information is shared promptly and appropriately to support joint safeguarding action and fulfil statutory duties.

Notifiable Incidents

The College recognises its duty to report notifiable safeguarding incidents, including the death of a child (including suspected suicide) where abuse or neglect is known or suspected, the death of a looked-after child, and serious harm to a child where abuse or neglect is known or suspected. Such incidents are reported to the relevant local authority, safeguarding partners, and regulatory bodies in line with statutory guidance.

Record Keeping and Information Sharing

Accurate records are maintained of attendance, concerns, referrals, decisions, and actions taken. Information is shared in line with safeguarding guidance and data protection legislation, ensuring that records are secure and access is restricted to authorised personnel.

Training and Awareness

All staff receive safeguarding training that includes awareness of children missing education, exploitation risks, and local safeguarding procedures. The DSL undertakes regular updates to ensure continued compliance with current legislation and guidance.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis and reviewed annually by the Proprietor, or sooner where required in response to changes in legislation, guidance, or safeguarding practice.

Availability

This policy is publicly available on the College website. Copies are available on request, including in accessible formats.