



SPARSHOLT
COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE

ANDOVER COLLEGE
prepared for life

Missing from Education Policy

Excellence, Integrity, Supportiveness



With excellence in
Environmental and Land Based Training

Recognising the best organisations
for training and development solutions



Principal: Tim Jackson BTech (Hons), PGCE

Our Mission

To inspire learners to recognise and achieve their full potential

Our Values

Excellence, Passion, Team Work, Integrity, Innovation,
Sustainability, Valuing Others and Supportiveness

Sparsholt College Group

The Sparsholt College Group (the College Group) includes Sparsholt College, Andover College, University Centre Sparsholt, Sparsholt College Services, Westley Enterprises and Andover Town Football Club. College Group policies apply to each part of the group unless specified otherwise.

The *Missing from Education Policy* was approved by the Board of Governors in July 2019.

Equality Impact Assessment	Conducted:
Originator: Deputy Principal Curriculum	Located: College Document Library
	College Intranet
	College Website
Date of next scheduled review:	May 2021

Missing from Education Policy

Excellence, Integrity, Supportiveness

Contents	Page
1. Introduction	4
2. Scope	4
3. Background	5
4. Children Missing Education	6
5. Children subject to a Child Protection Plan who go missing	7
6. Children missing from home	7
7. Information Sharing	7
8. Locating the child and follow up actions	7

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Department of Education (DfE) published new statutory guidance in September 2016, entitled 'Children missing Education', primarily addressed to local authorities on children who run away or go missing from home or care.
- 1.2 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a key duty on Local Authorities and requires local authorities, agencies and partners to work together effectively.
- 1.3 A child missing from education is not in itself a child protection matter, and there may be an innocent explanation for this. However, unexplained non-attendance can be an early indicator of problems, risk and vulnerability.
- 1.4 When a child is missing or runs away they are at risk. Safeguarding children therefore includes protecting them from this and also includes planning to prevent children going missing and to protect them when they do.
- 1.4 Children missing education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later on in life.
- 1.5 Some 16 and 17-year-olds have greater independence from their parents and carers and choose to leave home. However, when a 16 or 17 year old runs away or goes missing they are no less vulnerable than younger children to sexual exploitation or involvement with gangs.
- 1.6 Effective information sharing between parents, schools/ colleges and local authorities is critical to ensure that all students are safe and receiving suitable education.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy is designed to ensure an effective collaborative safeguarding response from all agencies involved, including the College, when a student goes missing.
- 2.5 When responding to the needs of students who go missing the key principles are:
 - The safety and welfare of the student is paramount;
 - Locating and returning the student to a safe environment is the main objective;
 - Child Protection Procedures will be initiated by Children's Social Care whenever there are concerns that a child who is missing may be at risk of significant harm and a strategy discussion and Section 47 enquiry initiated;
 - The Police will act on any report of a child missing in line with their definition:
 - **Missing:** anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggest a person may be subject to a crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another

3. Background

3.1 The immediate risks associated with going missing include:

- no means of support or legitimate income
- involvement in criminal activities
- victim of crime
- victim of abuse
- alcohol/substance misuse
- deterioration of mental health
- missing schooling and education
- increased vulnerability

3.2 Longer-term risks include:

- long-term dependency/alcohol dependency
- crime
- homelessness
- disengagement from education
- child sexual exploitation
- poor physical and/or mental health

3.3 '**Push**' factors are things that push a young person away from home. They include:

- Not feeling accepted in the environment where they should be safe and happy.
- Not feeling safe in the environment where they should be safe and happy
- Family breakdown and young people being drawn into their parents/carers conflicts are less likely to do well at school and more likely to truant or run away from home.
- Mental health problems
- Bullying (including issues of e-safety/sexting [youth produced sexual imagery] etc.)
- Drug and alcohol misuse by family members, and new stepfamilies moving in.
- Teenage pregnancy - some young women run away or are forced to leave home because they become (or fear that they may be) pregnant.
- Fear of forced marriage or Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

3.4 The factors that '**pull**' young people from home can include being pulled into activity outside of their home, it can vary from:

- Staying out with peers, boyfriends or girlfriends.
- Running to be near friends or family – especially when a young person is in care and there are problems with contact arrangements
- Becoming involved in risky behaviours such as substance or alcohol misuse, offending and anti-social behaviour
- Wanting freedom and independence
- Being made to feel special by grooming for potential sexual exploitation or child trafficking
- Fear of repercussion for self or family if they don't go

4. Children Missing Education

- 4.1 Due to the daily contact that the College has with students, it is well placed to notice when a student has gone missing.
- 4.2 The College will monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance using the procedures for managing conduct and performance. To support this task a daily report on absent students will be sent to the pastoral support tutors (PSTs) who are required to make reasonable enquiries as to the reason why the student has not been at College.
- 4.3 The College will take one or more of the following actions if a student is absent from College:
 - a. Make contact with the student to ascertain the reason for the absence
 - b. Make contact with the parent and/or other relatives using known contact details (students under 18 or vulnerable adults)

Once the reason is known, this will be recorded on Promonitor along with any further actions required.

- 4.4 If unable to make contact and the student does not return on their subsequent day, the College Wellbeing Team will follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies. This will include checking with agencies known to be involved with the family.
- 4.5 When a student appears to have gone missing, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) must be informed who will make every effort to trace the student as soon as it is apparent that the period of absence is unusual in any way.
- 4.6 A final audit check will be undertaken to ensure all avenues of communication have been explored with no success in establishing the reason for absence.
- 4.7 The DSL/DDSL will complete the 'Child at risk of missing education' tracking form and return to:

CME Tracking Officer
cme@hants.gov.uk
Admissions Team
Hampshire County Council
Winchester
(01962) 843638

- 4.8 In the following circumstances a referral to Children's Services and/ or the police should be made immediately:
 - The student may be a victim of crime
 - The student is subject to a Child Protection Plan
 - The student is subject of Section 47 enquiries
 - The student is a 'Child Looked After (CLA)'
 - There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household
 - There is a history of the family moving frequently

5. Children subject to a Child Protection Plan who goes missing

- 5.1 The unexplained, continuous absence of any student who is subject to a Child Protection Plan must be treated as the highest priority and the College DSL/DDSL will immediately notify the student's allocated social worker. It is the responsibility of the student's social worker to ensure that a Strategy Meeting in line with local procedures is convened as soon as is practicably possible.

6. Children missing from home

- 6.1 There is an expectation that parents, carers and guardians will report to the Police if their child is missing. If a parent/ guardian/carer reports to the College that their child has gone missing they should be advised to report this information to the police.

7. Information Sharing

- 7.1 When there are concerns about a child's safety it may be necessary to share information with other agencies. The safety and welfare of a child must be the first consideration when making decisions about sharing information about them. It is lawful to disclose confidential information if it appears necessary to do so to safeguard a child in the public interest i.e. the public interest in protecting children may override the public interest in maintaining confidentiality.
- 7.2 Agencies working with children and young people and their families and carers must use well established, comprehensive, transparent and consensual information sharing systems and processes that places the child at the centre of how their information is used.
- 7.3 This must be delivered in accordance with the:
- General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)
 - Human Rights Act (2000)
 - Children Act (1989) and (2004)

8. Locating the child and follow up actions

- 8.1 Once the student has been located, it will be essential to assess their needs so that they can be referred to appropriate services.