Cardiff Academy

POLICY /// STUDENT WELFARE AND SAFEGUARDING

Missing Student Policy

What staff must do when a student – particularly a student under 18 or an adult at risk – cannot be located or fails to arrive, including timescales, who to contact, when to call the police, and how the student is supported on return.

REFERENCE	**CA-WEL-07**	VERSION	**1.0 (Approved)**
POLICY OWNER	**Designated Safeguarding Lead**	APPROVED BY	**Board of Governors**
ISSUE DATE	**October 2026**	APPROVAL DATE	**October 2026**
REVIEW CYCLE	**Annual**	NEXT REVIEW DUE	**October 2027**
APPLIES TO	**All staff; summary to students and parents of under-18s**	PUBLISHED	**Staff portal; summary in Student Handbook and Under-18 Information Pack**

RELATED POLICIES CA-WEL-01 Safeguarding and Child Protection; CA-ADM-04 Attendance; CA-WEL-09 Educational Visits; CA-GOV-04 Business Continuity and Critical Incident; CA-ADM-03 UKVI Sponsor Compliance

LEGAL ENTITY Cardiff Education Group Ltd, trading as Cardiff Academy (Company No. 14569122). Registered office: 168 City Road, Cardiff CF24 3JE. Teaching premises: 8 Drake Walk, Cardiff CF10 4LG

1 Purpose

A student who is unexpectedly missing may be at risk of harm. Quick, coordinated action can prevent harm. This policy sets out what happens when a student cannot be accounted for.

2 Definitions

- **Unexplained absence:** a student is absent from a timetabled session without notice. This is handled under CA-ADM-04 for adult students who are not at risk.
- **Missing student:** a student whose whereabouts are unknown and (a) is under 18, or (b) is an adult at risk, or (c) is an adult about whom there is a specific concern for their safety or wellbeing, or (d) fails to return from an Academy activity or trip.
- **Failure to arrive:** a new student does not arrive as expected at the start of the programme.

3 Prevention

- Registers are taken at the start of every session and activity; under-18s sign in and out.
- Students' current UK addresses, phone numbers and emergency contacts are checked at enrolment and each term.
- Students on trips have the group leader's phone number and know the meeting points (CA-WEL-09).
- Students are told at induction why we need to know where they are and how to tell us if they will be absent.

4 Procedure – student under 18 or adult at risk missing from the Academy

Time	Action	By
Immediately the absence is noticed (and by 10:30 at the latest)	Check the register, Reception sign-out records, and with friends and teachers. Call and message the student	Academic administration / teacher
Within 30 minutes	If not found: inform the DSL. Contact the parent or guardian, UK guardian or responsible adult to ask whether they know where the student is	DSL or Deputy DSL
Within 1 hour	If still not located and there are concerns, the DSL decides whether to report the student missing to **South Wales Police (999 if there is immediate concern, otherwise 101)**. For under-18s, the threshold is low – **if in doubt, report**	DSL
On reporting to police	Provide description, recent photograph (student ID), contact details, last known whereabouts and any risk factors. Record the police reference number	DSL
Ongoing	Keep in contact with the police, parents and guardian. Inform the Principal and, if appropriate, the CEO (critical incident, CA-GOV-04)	DSL

5 Procedure – missing during an educational visit or activity

1. The group leader conducts a head count and searches the immediate area with other staff, keeping the rest of the group supervised.
2. Call and message the student.
3. If the student is not found within **15 minutes** (under-18s) or **30 minutes** (adults), the group leader informs the DSL, who decides on reporting to the police and contacting parents.
4. A member of staff stays at the last known location or meeting point.
5. The group does not leave the venue without the DSL's agreement.

6 Failure to arrive at the start of the programme

- If a new student under 18 does not arrive as expected, the DSL contacts the parents, guardian and agent the same day. If the student's whereabouts are unknown and they are believed to be in the UK, the DSL reports the student missing.

- For adult students, the Admissions and Compliance Manager contacts the student, agent and sponsor. Non-enrolment is reported to UKVI as required (CA-ADM-03).

7 When the student is found

- The DSL (or a trained member of staff) meets the student to make sure they are safe and well, and holds a **return conversation** to understand why they went missing, whether they were at risk, and what support they need. For under-18s, this is in addition to any police "safe and well" check.
- Parents, guardians and the police are informed.
- A risk assessment and support plan are agreed if needed, and a referral to MASH is considered.

8 Records and review

The DSL keeps a record of every missing student episode, including timings, actions and the outcome. Each episode is reviewed to learn lessons, and a summary is included in the annual safeguarding report.

9 Review

This policy is reviewed annually and after any missing student episode.

Compliance mapping

This policy has been written to meet, and to evidence, the following external requirements. Inspectors and university partners can use this table to locate the relevant provisions.

ISI Educational Oversight (PFE) standards	Standard 40 (safeguarding); Section 4 criteria on timely contact with students who miss classes
British Council Accreditation UK criteria	S5–S6 (supervision and safety of under-18s during and outside the programme, including procedures if a student is missing); W1 (emergency planning)
UKVI Student sponsor guidance	Monitoring of attendance and reporting of students who stop attending
University partner due diligence	Partner due diligence – welfare and safeguarding procedures for under-18s
Legislation and statutory guidance	Keeping Learners Safe (Wales, 2022); Wales Safeguarding Procedures (children missing from home or care); Children Act 1989

Document control

Version	Date	Author / reviewer	Summary of changes
0.9	Pre-2026	Various	CA BC Missing Student Policy (2025)
1.0	October 2026	Designated Safeguarding Lead	New policy written for university partnerships, ISI Educational Oversight and British Council Accreditation UK. Supersedes all previous versions.

APPROVED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD	SIGNATURE	DATE
Chair of the Board of Governors		