

Thames Hightech Ltd

Missing Student Procedure 2025/26

Registered address: Hurlingham Studio, Ranelagh Gardens, London SW6 3PA
Applies when a student is under Thames Hightech Ltd care, including homestay stays, transfers and organisation-arranged travel

This procedure explains the action to be taken if a student is absent, unaccounted for or missing while under the care or supervision of Thames Hightech Ltd.

The purpose of the procedure is to locate the student as quickly and safely as possible, reduce risk, involve the right agencies at the right time and ensure accurate recording, communication and follow-up.

This procedure should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Emergency Procedure, Student Handbook, Homestay Handbook and relevant contracts and travel arrangements.

1. Key principles

- The welfare of the child is paramount.
- Every report will be taken seriously and assessed on the facts known at the time.
- Risk assessment is dynamic and may change quickly as new information emerges.
- Staff and homestays must not delay reporting because they are waiting for certainty.
- Concerns may need immediate police involvement if there is reason to believe the student is at risk of harm.

2. Definitions

For the purposes of this procedure:

- Absent / unaccounted for: the student is not where they are expected to be, but there is no immediate information suggesting significant risk.
- Missing: the student's whereabouts cannot be established and the circumstances indicate that the student may be at risk of harm, exploitation, crime, self-harm or other significant concern.
- Children missing education concerns must also be considered where absence from school, repeated non-attendance or unexplained disappearance from education raises safeguarding concerns.

3. Immediate reporting route

Any member of staff, contracted worker or homestay who becomes aware that a student is missing or unaccounted for must act immediately.

- Contact Yuhong Li, Director / DSL, on 07538826068 as soon as possible.
- If there is an immediate risk of harm or emergency circumstances, call 999 without delay.
- If the DSL is not available, the person receiving the report must still take immediate safeguarding action and must not wait to escalate concerns.

4. Core information to gather

As far as possible, the following information should be gathered quickly and recorded:

- Student name, date of birth and nationality.
- Mobile number and any other contact details.
- Last known location, date and time last seen, and by whom.
- What the student was expected to be doing and where they were expected to be.
- Clothing description, physical description and any recent photograph if available.
- Any medical needs, medication, mental health concerns, vulnerabilities or known risks.
- Whether the student has money, passport, travel documents or access to transport.
- Any known friends, associates, local contacts, destinations or online contact that may be relevant.
- Any recent incident, conflict, sanction, distress, homesickness, relationship issue or trigger.

5. Immediate action by Thames Hightech Ltd

- Try to contact the student directly by phone, message and any other approved contact route.
- Contact the homestay, school, driver, local coordinator or other relevant adult linked to the student's current arrangements.
- Check travel plans, transfer details, timetable, booking records and authorised arrangements.
- Check whether the student has been seen by friends, house staff, school staff, transport providers or family contacts.
- Review the student file for emergency contacts, vulnerabilities and possible locations.

6. When to contact the police

The police must be contacted immediately where the student is believed to be missing and there is any indication of risk. This includes, but is not limited to, the following circumstances:

- The student is young, vulnerable or unfamiliar with the area.
- There are concerns about exploitation, criminal involvement, radicalisation, self-harm, suicidal thoughts, mental health crisis, abuse or coercion.
- The disappearance is out of character or associated with suspicious circumstances.
- The student has not returned after an agreed time and risk is increasing.
- The student is missing during travel, transfer, suspension, emergency placement or out-of-school accommodation.

Use 999 for emergencies and 101 for non-emergency police reports. When reporting, provide all available information and record the police reference number.

7. Informing school and parents

- The student's school must be informed promptly of any missing student incident where relevant.
- Parents must be informed promptly unless there is a safeguarding reason not to do so, in which case advice should be taken from police or children's services.
- Where an agent is involved, information sharing must be proportionate and in line with confidentiality and safeguarding needs.
- Updates must continue as the situation develops.

8. Ongoing management of the incident

- Continue reviewing risk as new information is received.
- Maintain communication with police, school, parents, homestay and any relevant contacts.
- Do not make assumptions that the student is safe simply because some time has passed.

- Escalate from absent to missing whenever the level of concern increases.
- Keep a clear written chronology of all actions, calls, messages, decisions and outcomes.

9. Recording requirements

A missing student incident record must be opened as soon as practicable. The record should include:

- Date and time concern was first raised.
- Who reported the concern.
- What was known at the outset.
- All steps taken to locate the student.
- Risk factors considered.
- Who was informed and when.
- Police / social care / school reference details if applicable.
- Date and time the student was located or the incident otherwise resolved.
- Any follow-up actions and safeguarding outcomes.

10. If the student is found or returns

- Confirm the student is safe and determine whether any urgent medical or safeguarding action is required.
- Inform the police, school, parents and other relevant parties that the student has been found or returned.
- Consider whether the student needs immediate support, supervision or medical assessment.
- Arrange a return conversation / welfare discussion to understand what happened, identify risks and agree next steps.
- Consider whether additional safeguarding referrals are necessary.

11. Return conversation / welfare review

After any missing or significant absent episode, Thames Hightech Ltd will consider a return conversation with the student, taking account of age, circumstances and whether police or another agency has already completed a return interview. The purpose is to:

- Understand what happened and why.
- Identify any safeguarding risks such as abuse, bullying, exploitation, mental health needs or peer issues.
- Agree support and safety planning.
- Consider whether the current arrangements remain suitable.

12. Repeated incidents

Repeated missing or absent incidents are a safeguarding concern in themselves. Thames Hightech Ltd will review repeated incidents with the student, parents, school and other relevant agencies and consider whether a formal review of arrangements, welfare planning or risk management is required.

13. Children missing education

Staff and homestays must remain alert to the safeguarding significance of children missing education. Unexplained absence from school, repeated non-attendance or disappearance from education may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation, criminal activity, radicalisation, forced marriage, honour-based abuse or mental health concerns. Any such concern must be shared promptly with the school and DSL.

14. Media and publicity

No member of staff or homestay should share details of a missing student incident with the media or on social media. Any external enquiry must be referred to the police or appropriate lead agency where relevant.

15. Review

This procedure will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if guidance, legislation, AEGIS standards or organisational practice changes.

DSL / Incident Lead	Yuhong Li
Telephone	07538826068
Email	Andrew.li@thameshightech.com
Emergency services	999
Police non-emergency	101
Review cycle	Annual