Perse Upper School Missing Pupil Procedure

The Perse Upper School

September 2023

Contents

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

Introduction

This policy is applicable to all pupils in the Upper School (the **School**). It is available on the School's website or on request from the School Office. It has been drafted in compliance with *Keeping Children Safe In Education (September 2022)* and should be read in conjunction with the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*, *Risk Assessment Policy for Pupil Welfare and Attendance Policy* which are available on the School's website.

This policy applies at all times when a pupil is, or is intended to be, in the care of the School.

The School expects parents to make any application for authorised absence at the earliest opportunity and wherever possible before the start of the School day (details of this procedure are in the Parent Handbook). Parents are also expected to notify the School of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible in accordance with the School's *Attendance Policy* and when doing so, give an accurate explanation of this. The School will follow up any unexplained absences as soon as is practicable using the procedures detailed below. Where reasonably practicable the School will hold more than one emergency contact for each pupil so that the School has additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

It is important to distinguish between a pupil's absence from school for an unknown reason (Children Missing from Education) and a pupil's disappearance from a lesson or activity after arrival at school. Please also see the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* for details of the procedures to follow for Children Missing from Education.

Children going missing, particularly persistently (including during the school day), can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities including neglect, sexual abuse, and child sexual and criminal exploitation. The School's policies are designed to assist in identifying such abuse and also help prevent the risk of them going missing in the future. The School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* sets out the School's approach, both to support early help assessments when problems are first emerging and also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as those on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where going missing from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. School attendance registers are carefully monitored to identify any trends. Action should be taken in accordance with the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*, if any absence of a pupil from the School gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

Responsibility

The Board of Governors (the Proprietor of the School) has overall responsibility for matters which are the subject of this policy.

All staff have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

All members of staff contribute to the safety of pupils at the School by providing appropriate supervision under the guidance of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Head and Executive Leadership Team (ELT). The members of ELT are identified in Appendix 2 below.

It is the duty of staff in charge of any pupil's supervision to check why a pupil is absent, although during the school day this may be delegated if that member of staff is busy.

To ensure the efficient discharge of its responsibilities under this policy, the Board of Governors has allocated the following tasks:

Task	Allocated to	When / frequency of review
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice	Designated Safeguarding Lead	As required, and at least annually
Monitoring the implementation of the policy, relevant risk assessments and any action taken in response and evaluating effectiveness	Designated Safeguarding Lead	As required, and at least termly
Seeking input from interested groups (such as pupils, staff, Parents) to consider improvements to the School's processes under the policy	Designated Safeguarding Lead	As required, and at least annually
Maintaining up to date records of all information created in relation to the policy and its implementation as required by the UK GDPR	Designated Safeguarding Lead	As required, and at least termly
Formal annual review	Board of Governors	Annually

Procedures for monitoring the whereabouts of Pupils

To establish whether a pupil is missing it is a requirement to monitor the whereabouts of pupils. This includes use of the following procedures:

- Statutory registration: tutors must register all pupils at morning registration (with the exception of Thursdays for the Upper Sixth). Afternoon registration is completed by teachers in lessons at 2pm (years 7-11 only);

- In lessons, all staff should be aware of the pupils they should have in their care;

- On school trips/visits/fixtures; the staff in charge should ensure that scheduled meeting times and locations are specified and adhered to by pupils. The list of pupils on the trip should be presented to reception or placed in the post box out of school hours.

Absence Recording and Registration

- Staff must record planned absences onto SIMS as soon as the School is notified – it is also good practice to copy correspondence to the Attendance Officer and Deputy Head (pupil development and welfare) if permission is required (over ½ day for non-medical absence).

- Parents are expected to contact the School every day their child is absent unless previous permission has been granted. Such absences must be recorded on SIMS when notified to the School.

- If a pupil has not been registered by their tutor they should use electronic registration as soon as they are on site (it is a disciplinary offence not to sign in).

Monitoring pupils on off-site activities

- Staff must make meeting times and locations clear to all pupils.

- Regular head counts must be undertaken, especially when moving from one location to another.

- All pupils must have access to staff contact details during a trip (a laminated card is very useful).

When would a pupil be identified as missing?

A pupil may be identified as missing:

- If an absence from school is not confirmed by contact with the home contact;

- By comparing pupils in a class with the day's absence sheet (i.e. if a pupil is previously marked present, but has not arrived in class) – the teacher should email reception no later than 20 minutes after the start time of the lesson;

- By a report of a missing child by a fellow pupil;

- On school trips/visits/fixtures, after trying the pupil's mobile phone, talking to their friends and conducting a brief search of the immediate area. The same principles apply if more than one pupil is missing.

Any member of staff discovering a discrepancy must immediately notify the School Reception on extension 3800 (on external line 01223 403800) or email reception@perse.co.uk.

Missing Pupil Procedures

Anyone who suspects or believes that a pupil is missing during the School day should contact reception immediately.

1. **Pupils absent from school for an unknown reason:**
   - The Attendance Officer will check the absence lists, including the trips/visits lists and local train updates (where relevant to home address) from 9.30am (once late pupils have arrived) and produce a 'to look for list' by 10am;

   - For Y7-11: If pupils have not been located by 10.30am – the Attendance Officer will call home contacts;

   - For 6th form: tutor, Head of Year and Head of Section should be emailed – if no response is gained; the Attendance Officer will call home contacts after 11.30am;

   - Where the home contact is not immediately available, the Attendance Officer will continue to try all contact numbers. If no contact can be made having tried periodically; the Attendance Officer will inform Deputy Head (pupil development and welfare) by 12pm for follow up;

   - Where the home contact has been spoken to and the pupil's absence is not confirmed with them, the Attendance Officer will immediately contact a member of the pastoral staff (usually the Head of Year/Head of Section).

2. **Pupils identified as missing during the school day:**
   On receiving notification of a discrepancy, Reception will contact the Attendance Officer who will:

   - Check Liveregister to see if the pupil has signed in/out;

   - Contact the medical room (3826) and Library (3829). The Attendance Officer will also consult lists provided by Music (3831) and Learning Support (3844) and check for email acknowledgement from the School Counsellor (3823) and check the bulletin for in-school events and trips/visits lists (check: SharePoint/staff team site/educational visits and fixtures and calendar) to see if the pupil can be located;

   - Contact relevant pastoral staff (the tutor, the Head of Year, Head of Section and Deputy Head (pupil development and welfare)). Upon receiving the email those staff will 'reply to all' to provide their availability. The first to reply that they are free will be the 'Case Manager'. If no one can take charge within 40 minutes; the Attendance Officer will contact the school office to take on the role of Case Manager.

   - The Case Manager will make the necessary checks such as the tutor/teacher to assess whether the absence is expected and will check whether the pupil has turned up to their class by this time and ask pupils in the class and the pupil's friends where appropriate if they know the pupil's whereabouts. The Case Manager will undertake a secondary check of library, music rooms, learning support, counsellors and medical centre.

   If the Attendance Officer is unavailable, the senior member of staff in reception will carry out the role of Case Manager.

3. **Pastoral Staff**
   If the pupil is still missing after steps 1 or 2 above, the Case Manager will immediately:

- Inform the Deputy Head (pupil development and welfare) – extension 3896, or another appropriate ELT member, who will manage the incident and where appropriate initiate and oversee a search of the site (library, lavatories, changing rooms, music rooms are the usual starting places).

- Try to locate the pupil's mobile phone number (from one of their friends) to call them.

- Advise all teachers (via email) due to teach the pupil later that day that they must immediately inform the School Office if the pupil appears.

- Once all steps have been taken by the Case Manager, the Deputy Head (pupil development and welfare) will call the pupil's parents to find out if they have returned home.

- If the pupil is still not located; the missing procedures in step 5 below will then be followed.

4. **Pupils identified as missing on a school trip**
   - The trip leader will initially attempt to contact the pupil(s) via their mobile phone (obtaining their number from either a peer or from the pupil's parents). If the pupil is staying in accommodation away from staff, staff will contact the accommodation provider. The trip leader will immediately contact the ELT on-call contact who will inform the DSL or in their absence a Deputy DSL.   Following initial searches of likely places including the previous venue, the trip leader will liaise with the ELT on-call contact to discuss contacting local police, British Embassy (if overseas) and local hospitals.

5. **Member of ELT managing the incident**
   If the pupil is not found after an initial site search, no later than 1 hour after commencing searching, the member of ELT managing the incident will:

   - Ring reception to register the pupil as missing and record any suggestions as to where the pupil might be based on information gained from speaking to staff and other pupils.

   - Report the situation to the DSL and other members of Upper ELT along with the relevant details.

   - Contact the pupil's parents. If the parents are abroad, there may need to be a delay in contacting them.

   - If appropriate, initiate a search of local area.

   - Make arrangements for dealing with media enquiries.

   At their discretion, and in consultation with the parents where possible (and usually not later than 2 hours of a search commencing), the DSL will arrange for the police and Children's Social Care to be informed and will decide at what point it is appropriate to inform the Chair of Governors and / or enact the School's Critical Incident Plan.

   Please see Appendix 1 for further details of the information that will be provided to the police and Children's Social Care.

Any decision to contact Children's Social Care will be taken in accordance with the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* and procedures.

6. **Resolution of the incident**

If the pupil is found on site or in the vicinity, the School staff will make a concerted effort to persuade the pupil to return to the School or to re-join the main group if on an educational visit. If the pupil refuses to do so, staff members at the scene will attempt to continue to monitor the pupil's whereabouts. Staff should consider contacting the parents in such circumstances.

When the pupil is found, or the incident is otherwise resolved, the member of the pastoral staff or the member of ELT managing the incident will inform the Head, the Deputy Head (pupil development and welfare), the DSL and parents directly.

The DSL will inform the police and Children's Social Care if they have been involved.

7. **Investigation**

Following resolution of the incident, the Head will initiate a full investigation, and require a written report from the member of ELT managing the incident. This report and the incident log will be kept on the pupil's file and in a central record of all such incidents. The Head will advise the Chair of Governors of all incidents as appropriate.

Child Student Visa Sponsored Pupils

In the event that a missing pupil is sponsored by the School under the Child Student Visa Points Based System, the School will report to UKVI if the pupil misses ten consecutive contact points.

Each time the School's attendance register is completed for sixth form students at morning registration is treated as a contact point for these purposes.

The report will be made by the School's Level 1 user via the Sponsor Management System and in accordance with prevailing Child Student Visa sponsor guidance.

Training

The School ensures that regular guidance and training is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles. The level and frequency of training depends on the role of the individual member of staff.

Risk Assessment

The School has a *Risk Assessment Policy for Pupil Welfare* which is available on the School's website. Where a concern about a pupil's welfare is identified, the risks to that pupil's welfare will be assessed and appropriate action will be taken to reduce the risks identified.

The format of risk assessment may vary and may be included as part of the School's overall response to a welfare issue, including the use of individual pupil welfare plans (such as behaviour, healthcare

and education plans, as appropriate). Regardless of the form used, the School's approach to promoting pupil welfare will be systematic and pupil focused.

The Head has overall responsibility for ensuring that matters which affect pupil welfare are adequately risk assessed and for ensuring that the relevant findings are implemented, monitored and evaluated.

Day to day responsibility to carry out risk assessments under this policy will be delegated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who has been properly trained in, and tasked with, carrying out the particular assessment.

Record Keeping

The School will keep a full written record of any incident of a missing pupil. This written record will be kept on the pupil file and in a central record of all such incidents. The written record will include:
- the pupil's name;
- relevant dates and times (e.g. when it was first noticed that the pupil was missing) and whether the incident was a single occurrence or part of a repeating pattern.
- the action taken to find the pupil;
- whether the Police or Children's Social care were involved;
- outcome or resolution of the incident;
- any reasons given by the pupil for being missing;
- any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident;
- a record of the staff involved.
- Any recommendations concerning future incidents.

All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's *Records Management Policy* and *Records Retention Schedule*.

The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The School's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has published privacy notices on its website which explain how the School will use personal data. The School's approach to data protection compliance is set out in the School's data protection policies and procedures. In addition, staff must ensure that they follow the School's data protection policies and procedures when handling personal data created in connection with this policy. This includes the School's *Data Protection Policy* and *Information Security and Sharing Data Guidance*.

Policy Review

The Governors will undertake an annual review of this policy, its procedures and its operation as part of the School's annual review of safeguarding and update it as necessary.

Version Control

Date of adoption of this policy	6th September 2023

Date of last review of this policy	27th June 2023
Date for next review of this policy	June 2024
Policy owner (ELT)	Designated Safeguarding Lead
Authorised by	Jonathan Scott On behalf of the Board of Governors
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Status	Complies with **Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2023, Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (SI 2014/3283), DfE Statutory Guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (updated July 2022), Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE September 2022), Children Missing Education (September 2016), Education and Skills Act 2008,** and the **UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018**

Appendix 1

Questions that could be asked when interviewing during a missing pupil investigation
- When was the pupil last seen?
- Who was the pupil with?
- What were they wearing?
- What emotional state did the pupil appear to be in?
- Has anything upset the pupil recently?
- Did the pupil speak to anyone about leaving?
- Who are the pupil's main friends at School?
- Does the pupil have a mobile phone and what is the number?
- Is there any reason to believe the pupil might have been abducted (e.g. custody dispute) or otherwise at risk?
- Are there any medical and/or wellbeing issues that may be relevant?

Information to be provided to the police/children's social care
- the pupil's name;
- the pupil's age/date of birth;
- an up to date photograph if possible;
- the pupil's height and any other physical description that is not shown by the photograph;
- a description of the clothing the pupil is thought to be wearing;
- any physical disability, learning difficulty, medical issue or special educational needs that the pupil may have;
- the pupil's home address and telephone number and details of their parents/guardians;
- the pupil's mobile phone number if known;
- any relevant background information on the pupil's school record or home situation;
- any relevant comments made by the pupil or other pupils.

School Rules on attendance
Compulsory statutory registration takes place:

		Morning Registration	Afternoon Registration
Sixth Form	Monday, Wednesday and Thursday	On arrival at school using a biometric registration box (or an alternative method if appropriate)	N/A
	Tuesday and Friday	Morning Tutor Period (08:35-9.05)	N/A
Year 7 - 11	All days	Morning Tutor Period (08:35-9.05)	During lessons at 2pm

Pupils may not leave the site during the school day unless they have permission from a member of staff. One exception exists:

Sixth Form pupils must attend registration, assemblies, tutorials and all timetabled lessons including games and enrichment. They are free to leave school during private study (free) periods and break time.

The School cannot be held responsible for pupils who have left the site for private rather than School purposes. In these circumstances pupils leave the site at their own risk. This is made clear to pupils and parents on an annual basis.

Any pupil leaving the School site during the school day must register, using a biometric registration box (or an alternative method if appropriate), both on departure and on their return.

Appendix 2

The Upper School Executive Leadership Team (ELT) consists of:

Head
Senior Deputy Head
Deputy Head (Pupil Development and Welfare)
Deputy Head (International Schools and Projects)
Deputy Head (Operations and Outreach)
Deputy Head (Teaching & Learning)
Assessment Lead
Assistant Head (Compliance and Inspection)
Assistant Head (IE&D) / Chaplain
Assistant Head (Pupil Development)
Assistant Head (Pupil Welfare)
Assistant Head (Safeguarding) / DSL
Assistant Head (Teaching & Learning)
Assistant Head (Operations and Outreach)
Assistant Head (Qualifications & Progression)
Bursar
Deputy Bursar and Chief Financial Officer
Business Development Director
Director of Communications
Director of Human Resources
Director of ICT
Director of Parental Experience