THE PERSE
UPPER SCHOOL
CAMBRIDGE

Perse Upper School Missing Pupil Procedure

The Perse Upper School

September 2026

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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 2026)* 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 Deputy Head (pupil development and welfare), The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Head and Executive Leadership Team (ELT).

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	Deputy Head (pupil development and welfare)	As required, and at least annually
Monitoring the implementation of the policy, relevant risk assessments and any action taken in response and evaluating effectiveness	Deputy Head (pupil development and welfare)	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	Deputy Head (pupil development and welfare)	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	Deputy Head (pupil development and welfare)	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: the registration windows are 8.30-9.00am and 2.00-2.30pm. Tutors must register all pupils in Years 7-11 at morning registration, and class teachers register in the afternoon;
- 6th form attend formal morning registration on Tuesday and Friday. They are required to self-register upon arrival on other days.
- 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 pass on to the Deputy Head (pupil development and welfare) any requests for planned absences. These will be entered into SIMS by the Attendance Officer.
- 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 in 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 attendance 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

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;
   - If pupils have not been located by 10.30am (or after the first timetabled lesson of the day for 6th form) – the Attendance Officer will call home contacts;
   - 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 (i.e. they think their child should be in school), the Attendance Officer will immediately contact a member of the pastoral staff (usually the Head of Year/Head of Section) to initiate a search.

2. **Pupils identified as missing during the school day (until 4pm):**
   Anyone who suspects or believes that a pupil has gone missing during the School day should contact reception immediately (copying in the Attendance Officer is useful).

   On receiving notification of a missing pupil, Reception will contact the Attendance Officer (or the School Office Manager if they are unavailable) 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 (SOCS) and calendar) to see if the pupil can be located;
   - Send an email (with pupil photo attached) to relevant pastoral staff (the tutor, the Head of Year, Head of Section, Site Security and Pupil Welfare Officer, Assistant Head (pupils), the DSL and Deputy Head (pupil development and welfare)). Upon receiving the email those staff will 'reply to all' to provide their availability to search for the pupil. The first to reply that they are free will be the 'Case Manager'. If no one takes charge within 40 minutes, the Attendance Officer will 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. The Case Manager will check with the IT department to see if the pupil's device has connected to the Wi-Fi on that day.

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 will then be followed.

4. Pupils identified as missing after the school day (4-6pm):

The School runs a number of after school activities, manty of which are run on a 'drop-in basis'.

A pupil is deemed missing if

a. they are expected at an activity and do not arrive

If a pupil has not arrived after 20 mins, the activity supervisor should call reception and ask them to call the parent(s) to say that their child has not arrived at the lesson. If the parent thinks their child is still in school, reception will contact a member of ELT to locate the child (see section b. for detail). Once the child is located, the activity supervisor will be informed.

b. a parent/carer calls the school to report that their child is missing

In this circumstance reception will find out as much information about the pupil as possible from the parent:

- pupil mobile phone
- activities/hobbies
- method of travel
- any other information which may be of use (e.g. wellbeing concerns, friends they could have visited)

Then reception will follow this process:

- Call the Site Security and Pupil welfare Officer to reception (or a member of senior staff if they are not available) to be 'case manager'. Provide a photo of the pupil from SIMS;
- Preliminary desk-based checks:
    - Call the library, Sports Centre and Medical Centre;

- Check for after-school lessons on SIMS to see if the pupil has a block 20 lesson (which can go on until c5pm);
- Check SOCS Co-curricular –search for the pupil and view their scheduled timetable of activities
- Check for after-school activities on that day – obtain a list of activities, times and locations for the case manager to check for the pupil in case they have attended an activity not on SOCS.

- Site walk and checks.

  The case manager will:

  - Attend all the activities listed to see if the pupil is attending;
  - Circle the Secure Learning Zone to see if pupils are on the playing fields;
  - Knock on outer doors to lavatories and changing rooms (if possible, this is done by a member of staff of the same sex as the lavatories and changing rooms)

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. **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.

8. **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.

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	3 September 2026
Date of last review of this policy	June 2026
Date for next review of this policy	June 2027

Policy owner (ELT)	Senior Deputy Head
Authorised by	Jonathan Scott On behalf of the Board of Governors
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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)	During lessons at 2-2.30pm where applicable.
	Tuesday and Friday	Morning Registers (08:30-9.00)	During lessons at 2-2.30pm where applicable.
Year 7 - 11	All days	Morning Registers (08:30-9.00)	During lessons at 2-2.30pm

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.