THE PERSE
PELICAN SCHOOL
CAMBRIDGE

Pelican School Missing and Uncollected Pupil Procedure

The Perse School

September 2026

This policy applies equally to EYFS and Key Stage One

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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 Pelican 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 *the Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE, September 2025)* and should be read in conjunction with the School's S*afeguarding 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 possible the School will hold more than one emergency contact for each pupil and at least two for each EY 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 in their role as Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), the Head and Pelican Senior Leadership Team (Pelican SLT), which consists of the Head, The Deputy Head, The Head of Teaching and Learning and the Head of Co-Curricular and Enrichment.

It is the duty of staff in charge of any pupil 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	Pelican School Deputy Head	As required, and at least annually
Monitoring the implementation of the policy, relevant risk assessments and any action taken in response and evaluating effectiveness	Pelican School Deputy Head	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	Pelican School – Deputy Head	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	Pelican School – Deputy Head	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: form teachers will register classes in both the morning (8:30-9:00am) and afternoon (2:00 – 2:30pm) via SIMS.
- Children are registered for Larks from 8am, however, any absence will be followed up by the School Administrator after 8:50am.
- In all school activities on site, staff should be aware of the pupils they should have in their care. This includes taking registers for extra-curricular clubs before and after school.

- In school activities off site, the list of pupils in attendance should be presented to the Deputy Head and the School Administrator.

Absence Recording and Registration

- Form teachers, when notified, must record planned absences onto SIMS or ask the School Administrator to do so as soon as the School is notified and permission is granted by the Head/Deputy Head.
- 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.
- Form teachers will register classes in both the morning and afternoon via SIMS.
- If a pupil is present, mark with: /. If a pupil is absent, mark with: N. The School Administrator will follow up all absences marked "Unknown reason: N" before 9:30am in the morning, and no later than 2:45pm in the afternoon.
- Parents of late pupils who miss registration must sign them in at the School Office.
- When offsite, regular head counts must be undertaken, especially when moving from one location to another.
- On site after school, pupils are registered in after-school clubs and Owls. At the end of the session, pupils must be signed out by the Club Leader or Owls Assistant. Where a pupil remains uncollected at the end of the session, the procedures contained in the Uncollected Children section below will be followed.

When would a pupil be identified as missing?

A pupil may be identified as missing:

- If an absence from school is not confirmed by contacting the home contact.
- Off site, if there is a no show at a regular head count.
- On site, if a pupil does not show at a school activity. The member of staff should contact the Head/Deputy Head or a member of SLT in their absence.
- By a report of a missing child by a fellow pupil.

Any member of staff discovering a discrepancy must immediately notify the Head/Deputy Head in person, or on extension 3942/3947 (external line 01223 403942/01223 403947).

Missing Pupil Procedures

Anyone who suspects or believes that a pupil is missing during the School day should contact the Deputy Head (in their role as DSL) immediately.

1. **Pupils absent from School for an unknown reason:**
   - At 9.15am the School Administrator will produce a list of pupils unaccounted for – i.e. those pupils who are not marked as present but for whom the School has not received a

message from home regarding absence through sickness etc. The School Administrator will then contact the pupil's home contacts. The same routine occurs after pm registration.

- Where the home contact is not immediately available, the School Administrator will continue to try all contact numbers. If no contact can be made having tried regularly (at least every 15 minutes), Reception will inform a member of Pelican SLT by no later than break time (10.15am) for follow up;
- Where the home contact has been spoken to and the pupil's absence is not confirmed with them, Reception will immediately contact a member of Pelican SLT (usually the Deputy Head).

2. Pupils identified as missing during the school day:

If a pupil is identified as missing during the school day, the following procedure will be followed:

- The Deputy Head (in their role as DSL) or in their absence the most senior member of SLT present must be alerted immediately.
- Where appropriate, friends and classmates of the missing pupil will be asked if they know the missing pupil's whereabouts.
- Searches should be made within the School, its grounds and its immediate vicinity, or in the immediate vicinity when on an educational visit.
- If the pupil has not been found within a maximum of 10 minutes of searching, the police will be called on 999. Consideration will also be given whether to enact the School's Critical Incident Plan.
- The parents will be notified as soon as possible thereafter.
- Once the police arrive, the information set out in Appendix 1 will be passed to them.
- The Bursary must be advised on telephone number 01223 403806.
- If not on site, the Head must be advised and kept updated by the Deputy Head.
- A full written account of the incident must be produced by the most senior member of staff present and sent to the Head or Deputy Head.
- The Deputy Head, as Designated Safeguarding Lead, will also consider whether action should be taken in accordance with the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy,* including whether the School should contact Children's Social Care.

3. 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 Pelican SLT managing the incident will inform the Head, the DSL and parents, directly.

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

4. **Investigation:**
   Following resolution of the incident, the Head will initiate a full investigation and require a written report from the member of Pelican SLT 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. All incidents will be reported to the Head of the Upper School who will advise the Chair of Governors as appropriate.

Uncollected Children

On occasions when parents or the persons normally authorised to collect their child are not able to do so, they record the name and telephone number of the person who will be collecting their child in their reading diary or via email. The School will agree with the parents how to verify the identity of the person who is to collect their child, usually in the form of a password. For a regular arrangement, parents will notify the School in writing.

Parents are informed that if they are not able to collect their child as planned, they must inform the School so that it can make alternative arrangements. The School also informs parents that, in the event that their child is not collected from the School by an authorised adult and the staff can no longer supervise their child on the School premises, the procedures as set out in this policy will be applied.

Inevitably parents occasionally find it impossible by reason of unforeseeable events to collect their child from the School at the normal end of the teaching day or after a school club. Usually, they are able to telephone to inform the School. Under these circumstances the School will accommodate the pupil in the Late Stay (known as Owls) facility.

At the end of every session, the School will ensure that all pupils are collected by a parent, carer or designated adult. If an adult unexpectedly fails to arrive to collect a pupil, the following procedures will be activated:

- The pupil will be taken to the Owls facility. Usual charges as notified to parents from time to time will be levied for the use of the Owls facility. Owls' charges are also published on the School's website in the Parent Handbook.
- If a pupil is not collected from Owls by the end of the session at 5.30pm, a further additional charge will be levied and the Owls staff will attempt to contact the parent, or failing this, the emergency contact person.
- Until all pupils are collected, two Owls staff will remain on duty with a senior member of staff also on duty.. There will always be at least two members of staff on site.
- All reasonable attempts will be made to contact the parents or nominated carers. The pupil will not leave the premises with anyone other than those named on the pupil information sheet or in the pupil's reading diary. If, after repeated attempts, no contact with either the parent or emergency contact person is made, the Teaching Assistant on Owls duty will inform the Deputy Head (in their role as DSL) or Head if the Deputy is unavailable.
- The pupil will remain in the care of the School's two staff members and the senior member of staff on duty until they are collected by the parent, carer or designated adult. Under no circumstances are staff to go to look for the parent, nor will they take the pupil home with them.
- If no contact has been made with a parent or emergency contact by 6.00pm, the Head or Deputy Head must be advised and kept updated. At 7.00pm, the Head/Deputy Head will

contact Children's Social Care via the Local Authority Emergency Duty Team on 01733 234724 and act on the advice received.

Incidents of late collection will be recorded by the Deputy Head and discussed with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity.

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

All incidents of pupils going missing whilst in the care of the School, will be recorded on an Incident Report Form (see Appendix 3) which will be kept on the pupil's file in SIMS and in a central record of all such incidents. All incidents will be reported to the Head of the Upper School who will advise the Chair of Governors as appropriate. 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.

Where there are specific record keeping requirements under this policy, these are set out below:

- If a pupil is uncollected, a full written report will be recorded in the pupil's file.

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 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 Board of 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 (SLT)	Designated Safeguarding Lead – Pelican School
Authorised by	Jonathan Scott On behalf of the Board of Governors
Circulation	Governors / Perse Pelican School Reception / staff / parents / pupils [on request] Published PersePortal and available from the School Office on request
Status	Complies with **Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2026, EYFS Statutory Framework (DfE, September 2025), Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (SI 2014/3283), DfE Statutory Guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026), Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE August 2024), Children Missing Education (September 2025), 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?
- Is there any reason to believe the pupil might have been abducted (e.g. custody dispute) or otherwise at risk?
- Does the pupil have family or family friends in the vicinity?
- 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 issues or special educational needs that the pupil may have;
- the pupil's home address and telephone number and details of their parents/guardians;
- any relevant background information on the pupil's school record or home situation;
- any relevant comments made by the pupil or other pupils.

Appendix 2

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Incident Report Form

Name of Child: Date:

Child's Class: Time:

Name and Role of Person completing Report Form:

Description of the Incident Signed:

Action Taken to Prevent a Recurrence of the Incident Signed: