Missing and Uncollected Pupils Policy

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Approved/ Ratified:	Pat Hunt 10.11.26
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Document Version Control Log

Version	Modification Date	Synopsis of Changes
1.0	October 2025	
2.0	October 2026	Annual review: aligned with KCSIE 2026, the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, Working together to improve school attendance, Children missing education guidance and the EYFS framework (Sept 2026). Added sections on unexplained absence and pupils missing during the school day or on visits; strengthened uncollected pupil procedures.

Introduction
The welfare of all pupils at The Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust is of paramount importance. Pupils being absent from education for prolonged periods, or on repeated occasions, can indicate safeguarding concerns including neglect, abuse, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation (including county lines), mental health problems, substance misuse, domestic abuse, radicalisation, female genital mutilation, so-called honour-based abuse and forced marriage.
The Trust's response to persistently absent pupils or children missing education aims to identify potential abuse and prevent the risk of pupils becoming children missing education in the future.

This applies both to emerging issues and where children are already known to local authority children's social care (e.g., children in need, children with a child protection plan, or looked-after children).

Absence is followed up from the first day, in line with the "support first" approach in Working together to improve school attendance. Where a pupil has an allocated social worker, the social worker will be told on the same day about any unexplained absence.

All staff have a key responsibility to keep pupils safe, including the importance of effective information sharing.
All staff, including those who do not work directly with children, must read Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE) in full. Staffing ratios are designed to ensure every child is supervised while in our care.
This policy should be read alongside the academy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Attendance and Punctuality Policy, Educational Visits Policy and the Trust's Home Visit Policy and Children Missing Education Policy.

Legislation and Guidance
This policy has been written with regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (in force from 1 September 2026) and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, which replaced the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 from 19 August 2024.
- Working together to improve school attendance (statutory guidance from 19 August 2024).
- Children missing education (statutory guidance for local authorities and schools) and section 436A of the Education Act 1996.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers (effective 1 September 2026), which requires procedures for children who go missing or are not collected.
- The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, including Children Not in School registers as these provisions come into force.

Information for Parents

- Safeguarding policies are reviewed at least annually by the academy governing bodies and Trustees to ensure they are robust and effective.
- The policy is ratified annually by the Board of Trustees.
- Each academy will hold more than one emergency contact for each pupil wherever reasonably possible, and will ask parents to check and update these at least annually and whenever they change.
- New staff receive induction on pupil supervision and actions if a pupil goes missing or is not collected, and must read Part One of KCSIE 2026 in full. (The shortened Annex A version has been withdrawn.)
- Parents and pupils are made aware of:
    - Staff roles and arrangements for supervising pupils
    - Arrival and departure arrangements
    - Who is authorised to collect their child, and any password arrangements
    - Collection arrangements for breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and wraparound care
    - Registration procedures in morning and afternoon
    - Parents' responsibility to notify the school of absence
    - Security measures preventing unsupervised access or exit

Actions to be Followed if a Child Fails to Attend on the First Day

- All new pupils are placed on the admission register on their agreed start date.
- If a pupil does not attend, staff must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.
- The DSL will undertake reasonable enquiries and, if the pupil still has not attended, will notify the local authority at the earliest opportunity, in line with Children missing education guidance.
- If the pupil is believed to be in immediate danger, the police (999) and children's social care must be contacted without delay.
- Any changes affecting the pupil (e.g., change of address or school) should be recorded in the admission register.
- The academy must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register (a "new pupil return").

Actions When a Pupil is Absent Without Explanation

- Parents/carers must be contacted on the first morning of any unexplained absence. If there is no response, all emergency contacts must be tried.
- Pupils with a social worker, a child protection plan, looked-after pupils and other vulnerable pupils are prioritised. Their social worker or virtual school must be informed the same day.
- If contact cannot be made, the DSL will decide on next steps. These may include a home visit (in line with the Trust's Home Visit Policy), contacting other agencies, or asking the police to carry out a welfare check.
- All actions must be recorded on CPOMS.

Duty to Report

- The Trust monitors attendance and addresses poor or irregular attendance.
- The local authority must be informed of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have been absent without permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, as required by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- A pupil may only be removed from the admission register on one of the grounds in Regulation 9 of the 2024 Regulations. Where a pupil has been continuously absent without authorisation for at least 20 school days, the academy and the local authority must first carry out joint reasonable enquiries. The name may only be removed once these enquiries have failed to find the pupil, or if both agree there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will return.
- The academy will notify the local authority of every removal from the admission register, under any ground, as soon as the ground is met and no later than the time the name is removed (a "deletion return").
- Where parents choose to educate their child at home, the academy will notify the local authority and support its Children Not in School register arrangements once these come into force.

Procedures if a Pupil Goes Missing During the School Day or on an Educational Visit

- Any member of staff who believes a pupil is missing must tell a member of the senior leadership team or the DSL immediately. Other pupils must never be left unsupervised.
- Record the time and place the pupil was last seen, who they were with and what they were wearing. Check the register and any signing-out records.
- The senior leader will organise a search of the site, including classrooms, toilets, outdoor areas, cupboards and exits. Gates and doors will be checked, and CCTV used where available.
- If the pupil is not found after a thorough search, the Headteacher or DSL will call the police on 999 and contact the parents/carers. This should normally happen within 10–15 minutes, and sooner for Early Years pupils, pupils with SEND, vulnerable pupils or where there is a known risk.
- On an educational visit, the lead adult will keep the rest of the group together, inform venue staff and the academy, search the immediate area and contact the police, in line with the Educational Visits Policy.
- If a pupil leaves the site deliberately, staff must not put themselves or others at risk by chasing them. Staff may follow at a safe distance only if it is safe to do so and they have been authorised.
- When the pupil is found, check their welfare and inform the parents/carers and the police. The DSL will talk to the pupil about why they left and consider any safeguarding concerns, such as exploitation.
- The incident must be recorded on CPOMS and reported to the Trust Director of Safeguarding and Attendance. The Headteacher will review how it happened, and site security, to prevent it happening again. For Early Years pupils, the academy will consider whether Ofsted or the local authority must be notified.

Procedures if a Child is Not Collected on Time

Introduction

The Trust is committed to ensuring that all pupils are safe while in our care until they are collected by a parent, guardian, or carer, or until appropriate alternative arrangements have been made through children's social care (including the out-of-hours Emergency Duty Team) or the police. These procedures also apply to breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and wraparound care, and to Early Years pupils, for whom the EYFS requires them. Staff must act promptly and follow these procedures in cases where a pupil is not collected on time.

Step-by-Step Procedures

1. **Immediate Action**
    - As soon as a pupil has not been collected at the agreed time, they must remain with a member of staff in a safe, supervised area. Where possible, two members of staff should remain on site.
    - Calmly reassure the child and explain that staff are taking steps to contact their parent or carer.
    - Ensure the child is occupied with appropriate activities if necessary.

2. **Contacting Parents/Carers**
    - Immediately contact the pupil's parents/carers using the primary contact number.
    - If there is no response, call any additional emergency contacts listed for the pupil.
    - Record each attempted contact, including time, person contacted, and outcome.
    - Pupils must only be released to adults recorded as authorised to collect them, or to an adult the parent has nominated. Where the academy uses passwords, the agreed password must be given. Staff must confirm the identity of any adult they do not know.
    - If an adult who arrives appears to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or otherwise unfit to care for the child, staff must not release the child before speaking to the DSL. The DSL will consider contacting the police and children's social care.
    - Staff must never take a child home or transport them in their own vehicle.

3. **Escalation if No Contact is Made**
    - If no contact has been made within **30 minutes** of the agreed collection time, the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**, or the most senior member of staff on site, must be informed.
    - If no responsible adult has been reached within **one hour**, or sooner if there are concerns, the DSL will contact **children's social care** (out of hours, the local **Emergency Duty Team**) to agree next steps. This may include involving the **police**.

4. **Supervision and Care**
    - The child must remain under supervision at all times in a safe environment.
    - Staff must continue to attempt contact with parents/carers and emergency contacts while waiting for children's social care advice.
    - Any changes in the child's behaviour, distress, or physical needs should be monitored and recorded.

5. **Alternative Arrangements**
    - Children's social care may arrange for the child to be collected or placed in temporary care.
    - Staff must cooperate fully with children's social care and/or Police to ensure the child's welfare is maintained.
    - If appropriate, the DSL will liaise with the Trust to keep leadership informed of the situation.

6. **Documentation and Reporting**
    - All incidents of a pupil not being collected on time must be recorded on **CPOMS**
    - Documentation must include:
        - Time the child was due to be collected
        - Time and method of attempted contacts
        - Emergency contacts called and responses received

        - Actions taken by staff and DSL
        - Advice or intervention from children's social care or Police
        - Any distress or injury observed in the child
    - The record should also note any follow-up actions, including communication with parents/carers and review of procedures to prevent recurrence.

7. **Follow-Up and Review**
    - After the incident, the DSL and senior leadership should review the circumstances and consider whether further safeguarding action or parental guidance is required.
    - Patterns of repeated late collection should be addressed directly with parents/carers in line with the Trust's safeguarding and pastoral procedures.
    - Where a pupil is repeatedly collected late or not collected, the DSL will consider whether this indicates neglect or another safeguarding concern, and whether an Early Help referral is needed.
    - Staff should reflect on the incident and review procedures to ensure continuous improvement and child safety.