# Attendance and Missing Child Policy and Procedures

February 2025

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

## Introduction

At King's College School (the 'School'), we aim to create a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to School. The School believes that good attendance is the foundation for high pupil attainment and promotes and supports this through building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend School and are able to be punctual for lessons. The School monitors attendance through the procedures detailed in this policy and will act early to address any patterns of absence.

This policy is a whole-school policy including EYFS and the boarding provision. It is available on the School's website or upon request from the School Office. It has been drafted in compliance with *Working together to improve school attendance* (DfE, May 2022), *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, September 2024) and should be read in conjunction with the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy* which is 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 to be notified by parents / guardians of all pupil absences either in advance of the day or at the start of the day they are absent. 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 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*.

Children going missing, particularly persistently (including during the school day), can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues 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 children from 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 the local authority children's social care and need a social worker, 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.

## Expectations

Parents / guardians have a legal responsibility under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. Full attendance is essential to the development of our pupils, and they should be allowed to take advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each

year will, over their time at school, have missed the equivalent of two whole terms of learning.

Parents / guardians should:
- ensure their child attends school daily and on time; the school day begins at 0825 for all pupils.
- keep the School fully-informed of all matters that might affect their child's attendance;
- complete an Illness / Unexpected Absence Form, or telephone / email the School Office and Form Tutor either in advance or at the start of the day that their child is absent due to illness.
- try to make medical appointments outside of school hours, whenever possible;
- plan family holidays outside of term time;
- complete an Absence Request Form for any term time leave of absence at least 7 days in advance of the proposed date, where possible; and
- if attendance becomes a problem, work with the School to find ways to improve it which may include attending a meeting with the School Attendance Officer.

Pupils are expected to attend school every day during term time, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

Pupils should:

- attend all lessons and all relevant activities when at School;
- be punctual and arrive at lessons on time;
- arrive at lessons ready to learn and with the correct equipment; and
- sign-in at the School Office if they arrive after registration has already been taken.

The School will provide extra support for children from vulnerable groups should they need it to maintain good attendance. This might include pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, young carers, those from military families, or pupils with chronic medical needs.

## Responsibilities

The Governors have overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy. The Governors delegate daily management of safeguarding, including attendance monitoring and pupil supervision, to the Head.

The Head is responsible for the implementation of this policy and for monitoring attendance and absence data and reporting it to the Governors. Furthermore, the Head will support the relevant staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils, where deemed necessary, and the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.

The School Attendance Officer is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and is the member of the Senior Leadership Team responsible for the School's registration procedures and for delivering targeted early intervention and support to pupils and families where necessary in order to improve pupil attendance. The School Attendance Officer will seek support and guidance from the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO); should a pupil's attendance continue to be a concern despite any support strategies put in place, a referral will be made to the LAAO. This could result in a penalty notice / fine or prosecution being issued by Cambridgeshire County Council as per Section 444 Education Act 1996. The

School Attendance Officer and DSL is Mr J Rist who can be contacted at: jrist@kcs.cambs.sch.uk.

Form Tutors and subject teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a twice daily basis using the correct codes and submitting the information to the School Office as per the procedures detailed below.

All staff have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils; this includes identifying trends in attendance and lateness.

All staff contribute to pupil safety and welfare by providing appropriate supervision of pupils in accordance with the ratios and procedures as set by the Senior Leadership Team.

Staff in charge of the supervision of pupils have the responsibility to investigate why a pupil is absent and ascertain their whereabouts. This responsibility may be delegated to another member of staff to ensure the appropriate supervision of the remaining pupils is maintained.

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

| Task | Responsibility | Frequency of Review |
|---|---|---|
| Keeping the policy up to date and compliant with the law and best practice. | School Attendance Officer and School Bursar and Director of Operations. | As required, at least annually. |
| Monitoring the implementation of the policy, relevant risk assessments and any action taken in response and evaluating effectiveness. | School Attendance Officer and School Bursar and Director of Operations. | As required, at least termly. |
| Seeking input from interested parties to consider improvements to the School's procedures under the policy. | School Attendance Officer. | As required, at least annually. |
| Annual review | Governors, Head, School Attendance Officer, School Bursar and Director of Operations. | Annually. |

## Procedures for Monitoring Attendance

The School keeps an attendance register which monitors attendance for all pupils.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at both national and local authority levels through the Department for Education's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The Schools compares our attendance data to the national average, and shares this with the Governors.

The morning and afternoon registration periods are open for 30 minutes.

The attendance register is completed by each Form Tutor via iSAMS during the morning registration period which is open from 0825-0855 for all pupils.

The afternoon register is taken by Form Tutors or subject teachers within the following times:

- Pre-Prep: 1245-1315;
- Years 3-4: 1320-1350;
- Year 5: 1320-1350 on Mondays / Tuesdays / Thursdays / Fridays, and 1220-1250 on Wednesdays;
- Years 6-8: 1350-1420 on Mondays / Tuesdays / Thursdays / Fridays, and 1220-1250 on Wednesdays.

For School activities on site, staff should be aware of the pupils they should have in their care. This includes taking registers for clubs and activities after school via SchoolsBuddy.

For School activities off site (e.g. Games fixtures, educational visits etc), the list of pupils in attendance must be presented to the School Office prior to leaving site.

## Absence Recording and Late Arrival

The School expects parents to notify the School Office every morning that their child is absent unless prior permission has been granted. Parents / guardians may request a leave of absence in advance (e.g. medical appointment) via the Absence Request Form on the School Portal.

The School Office, in conjunction with Form Tutors, records any planned pupil absences in iSAMS once permission for the absence has been granted by the School Attendance Officer.

Pupils who arrive after the register is taken but before the registration period closes, are recorded as L (Late); which is still a present mark and authorised. Pupils who arrive after the register has closed (after the 30 minutes) are recorded as O (Unauthorised Absence) for that period.

Pupils who arrive after the registration period has closed at 0855, must sign in with the School Office on arrival.

The School Office will reconcile all pupils who are not present with received absence request forms. For those pupils whose absence remains unexplained, the School Office will contact parents / guardians as soon as possible and will follow the missing pupil procedures in this policy.

Pupil attendance and punctuality is monitored by Form Tutors and the School Attendance Officer. Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, parents / guardians will receive a letter informing them of the School's concerns and a request to speak to the School Attendance Officer to help address the issue. Should the lateness continue, parents / guardians will be invited to a meeting at School to discuss their child's lateness.

During off site activities, staff must make meeting times and locations clear to all pupils. Regular head counts must be undertaken especially when changing locations.

On site, pupils are registered for clubs and activities via SchoolsBuddy. At the end of the session, they must be signed out by the person collecting them.

A register is also kept in Late Stay.

The School has a variety of procedures to ensure that Boarding House staff are aware of the location of boarders in their care at all times before and after school, in the evenings and during weekends when choristers are resident. This includes registers for after school and evening activities, Saturday morning and at breakfast and dinner times. The Boarding House also uses a signing in and out board to record when boarders have left the School site.

## Definitions of Leave of Absence

The School expects attendance to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence.

### Authorised Leave

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil is away for a legitimate reason, such as illness. For persistent illness or a pattern of illness, the School may require supporting evidence from a medical professional.

Additionally, permission for an authorised leave of absence may be granted in advance for a short and exceptional, unavoidable circumstance. This could include, for example, a secondary school visit or a religious observance.

### Unauthorised Leave

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from School without the permission of the School, even with the support of parents / guardians. This could include visiting family or celebrating birthdays as well as medical appointments where supporting evidence of the appointment details have not been provided.

Any leave where permission has not been granted by the School Attendance Officer is considered unauthorised. Failure to inform the School when taking a pupil out during term time will be considered unauthorised leave.

Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unauthorised absence and all reasonable steps have been taken by the School to establish their whereabouts without success, the School will make an immediate referral to the Local Authority Attendance Team as the child will be classes as a 'child missing in education'. If there is social care involvement, then the Local Authority and the linked social worker will be informed before ten days.

### Guidance for Parents

Exceptional circumstances will be considered by the School Attendance Officer on an individual basis, such as attendance at a funeral. The following examples of requests for leave of absence do not meet the criteria of exceptional circumstances:

- Cheaper holidays / flights
- Holidays that overlap the beginning or end of term
- Visiting family who have different school holiday dates
- Family weddings for more than one day or visits to family abroad
- Relatives visiting
- Visits to more than 2 secondary schools during the school day

The Head, in coordination with the School Attendance Officer, has full discretion to address with parents any instance of unauthorised absence.

## Missing Pupils

A pupil may be identified as missing:

- If a pupil is unregistered and the absence is not confirmed by the home contact;
- On site, if a pupil does not arrive at a lesson or activity;
- Off site, if a pupil does not appear for a regular head count;
- By a report of a missing child from a fellow pupil.

## Missing Pupil Procedures

Any member of staff who discovers a discrepancy must notify the School Office immediately.

### 1. Pupils absent from School for an unknown reason:

- The School Office will produce a list of those pupils unaccounted for by 0900. This includes any pupils who are not marked as present and for whom the School has not received any information from parents / guardians regarding the absence.  The School Office will ensure the pupil's classroom is checked straightaway to ascertain their attendance. The same procedure occurs after afternoon registration no later than 15 minutes after the registration period closes.

- If the pupil has still not arrived, the School Office will then telephone the pupil's parents / guardians.  Wherever possible, the School holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

- The School Office will continue to try all telephone numbers available and email addresses until contact is made with the pupil's parents. If no contact is made, the School Office will inform the DSL no later than 0930 for morning registration and 30 minutes after the end of the registration period in the afternoon.

- If contact is made with the pupil's parents and they confirm the pupil is at School, the School Office will contact the DSL (or, if unavailable, a Deputy DSL) who will manage the incident and, where appropriate, initiate and oversee a search of the School site.  The DSL will then follow further procedures below.

### 2. Pupils identified as missing during the school day:

Upon receiving notification of a discrepancy, the School Office will:

- Check the signing in / out book in the School Office to see if there is a legitimate reason for the pupil's disappearance, e.g. early collection by a parent for an appointment;

- Check the fixture lists, visit forms and calendar to see if the pupil can be located;

- Contact the Library, First Aid Room, the 'Off-Games' room, the Music Department and the Learning Hub to ascertain the pupil's whereabouts;

- Where a pupil has not been registered at an after school activity, telephone parents / guardians to ascertain if the pupil has been collected early for any reason;

- A member of the Senior Management Team and one other member of staff will search the immediate vicinity. As part of the search process, the pupil's friends and classmates will be asked if they have any knowledge of the missing pupil's whereabouts.

- If the pupil is not found after 15 minutes, the Head (or in the Head's absence, the School Bursar) will be notified, if they haven't been already.

- The fire alarm will be set off to undertake a full School head count;

- If the pupil is still not located, the Head or School Bursar will contact the parents of the missing pupil;

- The Head or School Bursar will then contact the police;

- Once police arrive, all relevant information about the pupil will be given; the police will then take over the search;

- A decision will be taken by the Head and DSL, in accordance with the School's *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*, as to whether the School should also contact children's social care in line with local procedures;

- If a pupil is identified as missing off site, the visit Group Leader will carry out the search and will seek assistance from the venue, if applicable;

- The visit Group Leader will remain with the police to comfort the pupil when found and will maintain regular contact with the School.


### 3. Resolution of the incident

If the pupil is found on site or in the vicinity, School staff will make a concerted effort to persuade the pupil to return to their lesson or activity; if offsite, the Group Leader will endeavour to persuade the pupil to rejoin the group. If the pupil refuses to do so, staff members will continue to monitor the pupil's whereabouts and will contact parents / guardians for assistance in such circumstances.

When the pupil is found or the incident is otherwise resolved, the member of staff managing the incident will inform the Head and DSL directly, who will notify parents / guardians.

### 4. Investigation

Following the resolution of the incident, the Head and DSL will initiate a full investigation and produce a detailed written report which will be kept by the DSL and a summary will be kept in the School's incident log.  A copy of the report will be kept in the pupil's file. The incident will be reported to the Governors.

### UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI)

In the event that a pupil missing from education is sponsored by the School for a Child Student visa, the School will report to UKVI any unauthorised absence for a period of 10 consecutive days as per the Home Office requirement. If, however, the School has any immediate immigration concerns regarding a Sponsored Student, a report may be made at any time.

The report will be made by a Level 1 user via the Sponsorship Management System and in accordance with prevailing Student Sponsorship guidance.

## Training

The School ensures that 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 for Pupil Welfare Policy* which is available on the School Portal. 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 the 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.

The day to day responsibility to carry out a risk assessment under this policy is delegated to the DSL who has been properly trained in and tasked with carrying out the particular assessment.

## Recordkeeping

All records created in connection with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's *Data Protection and Retention Policy.*

The records 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. Staff must ensure that they follow the School's data protection policy and procedures when handling personal data created in connection with this policy.

## Monitoring and Review

This policy shall be reviewed every year as part of the School's annual review of safeguarding which is undertaken with the Governors; the policy will be updated as necessary.  In undertaking the review, the Head and DSL will take into account any incidents recorded and any issues raised by individual members of staff, parents, and pupils.

## Version Control

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| Date of last review | February 2025 |
| Date of next review | February 2026 |
| Policy owner | Head / School Attendance Officer / DSL |
| Authorisation | Rev Dr Stephen Cherry, Chair of Governors on behalf of the Board of Governors |