



Policy No: 1.5

APPLEFORD SCHOOL
LOST CHILDREN, LATE COLLECTION AND CHILDREN MISSING
FROM EDUCATION

This policy applies to the whole school, including boarding

This policy, which applies to the whole school, is publicly available on the school website and on request; a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required), may be obtained from the School Office.

We have a whole school approach to safeguarding, which is the golden thread that runs throughout every aspect of the school. All our school policies support our approach to safeguarding (child protection). Our fundamental priority is our children and their wellbeing; this is first and foremost.

All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this Policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours including activities away from school. This Policy should be read and understood in conjunction with our Safeguarding – Child Protection, Behaviour Management, Attendance and Whistleblowing Policies, the Staff Code of Conduct and the Lost and Missing Children Procedures. This Policy takes full account of the child protection procedures agreed by Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (WSVPP); *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)* DfE: September 2025 and the statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children* as amended and currently in force (HM Govt: December 2023). This policy also takes into consideration the *National Minimum Standard (NMS) for residential special schools (RSS)* Appleford school complies with:

- Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and schools (DfE: September 2025);
- Summary of responsibilities for children Missing education: Statutory Guidance (September 2025);
- Children Missing Education: Policy and procedure Checklist (September 2025)

The Policy, which is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office. All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours including activities away from school. This policy has also been influenced by the Anna Freud document “School attendance and mental wellbeing” which is for school leaders, senior mental health leads and classroom teachers.

Monitoring and Review: This policy is subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by Dr Peter Gardner (Proprietor and Managing Director), the Advisory Board and Mr David King (Headmaster). The Proprietor will undertake a full annual review of this policy and procedures, inclusive of its implementation and the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged. This discussion will be formally documented in writing. The Proprietor recognises the expertise staff build by undertaking safeguarding training and managing safeguarding concerns. Any deficiencies or weaknesses recognised in arrangements or procedures will be remedied immediately and without delay. All staff will be informed of the update/reviewed policy, and it is made available to them in either a hard copy or electronically.

Signed:

Dr Peter Gardner (Proprietor and Managing Director)

Policy Agreed: September 2025

Date Published: September 2025

Next Review: September 2026

Mr David King (Headmaster and Company Director)

Appleford School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all children fulfil their potential

Our staff will follow the school's separate procedures for dealing with pupils who go missing, particularly on repeat occasions. They should act to identify any risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or exploitation. Appleford will put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for pupils who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. Staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns. Details will be recorded, as is appropriate on CPOMS.

Statement of Procedure when parents fail to collect a pupil or when a child goes missing:

Appleford School fosters a close link with parents to ensure that pupils develop good habits and a positive attitude to school attendance. Where a pupil has not registered and the parents have not contacted the school, the School Office makes every effort to check the reason for absence by 9.30am. Pupils who arrive late report to the School Office and receive a late mark in the register. The School Office advises Class Teachers and Houseparents' when they have ascertained reasons for lateness / non-attendance so that registers may be appropriately marked.

Pupils who leave school for appointments or off-site activities must be signed out before departure. Teachers may sign out groups of pupils for off-site Games lessons / School Outings / Educational Visits (Learning Outside the Classroom) (LOtC) and similar activities. A current activity list must be placed with the Reception for Fire wallets.

Pupils are not allowed to leave the school premises during the school day unless accompanied by a parent or a person named by the parent. Exceptions may apply where the parents have given the school written permission for a specific occasion (eg birthday party),. Any change in the arrangements for collection of a pupil must be notified to the School Office. Any proposed absence (eg for dental visits, holidays, etc) must be agreed with the Headmaster. Parents / Carers are required to complete an absence request form for all periods extending half a day.

After school boarding pupils in Year 10 and above are only allowed to visit the local shop and/or park without a member of staff when they have permission from their house parent. The pupil is then only allowed to visit the local shop and/or park if they are in a group of minimum two or more pupils, with their mobile phones.

In the event of a parent / guardian failing to collect a pupil:

- the School will make every effort to contact the parents;
- if parents cannot be contacted the emergency contact numbers will be used;
- if no contact can be made on any of the given numbers and the pupil is not collected, the Headmaster will be informed;
- it will be the decision of the Headmaster as to what further action is taken and the School staff will offer every assistance as appropriate.

If a pupil is missing from class or the play area without the permission of the person in charge, the Office must be notified immediately. There are a limited number of situations where a pupil could be lost and these are:

- where a pupil wanders off on an educational visit / off-site activity;
- where a pupil is taken from the school by an unapproved adult;
- where a pupil absconds for a reason known only to the pupil.

A check of the premises should be made and at the same time, the pupils should be asked whether they have seen or heard anything which might help locate the missing pupil;

Follow-up: once the situation has been resolved it is important to establish how and why the circumstance arose and to ascertain whether there is anything that the school could reasonably do to avoid a recurrence of this situation. It may be necessary to discuss with the parents steps that they could take to avoid recurrence e.g. ensuring that the school has current contact details etc

Children Missing from Education

Patterns of children missing education can be an indicator of either abuse or safeguarding risks. A relatively short length of time a child is missing does not reduce risk of harm to that child, and all absence or non-attendance should be considered with other known factors or concerns. It may indicate early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

DSLs and staff should consider: Missing lessons:

- Are there patterns in the lessons that are being missed? Is this more than avoidance of a subject or a teacher?
- Does the child remain on the school site or are they absent from the site?
- Is the child being sexually exploited during this time? Are they late because of a caring responsibility?
- Have they been directly or indirectly affected by substance misuse?
- Are other pupils routinely missing the same lessons, and does this raise other risks or concerns?
- Is the lesson being missed one that would cause bruising or injuries to become visible?

Single missing days:

- Is there a pattern in the day missed?
- Is it before or after the weekend suggesting the child is away from the area?
- Are there specific lessons or members of staff on these days?
- Is the parent informing the school of the absence on the day?
- Are missing days reported back to parents to confirm their awareness?
- Is the child being sexually exploited during this day? Do the parents appear to be aware?
- Are the pupil's peers making comments or suggestions as to where the pupil is a t?

Continuous missing days:

- Has the school been able to make contact with the parent? Is medical evidence being provided?
- Are siblings attending school (either our or local schools)?
- Did we have any concerns about Radicalisation, FGM, forced marriage, honour based violence, sexual exploitation?
- Have we had any concerns about physical or sexual abuse?

The School will view absence as both a safeguarding issue and an educational outcomes issue. The School may take steps that could result in legal action for attendance, or a referral to children's social care, or both.

Within any case of children who are missing both push and pull factors will need to be considered. Push factors include:

- conflict with parents/carers; Feeling powerless;
- being bullied/abused; Being unhappy/not being listened to;
- the Toxic Trio (domestic violence, mental ill-health and drug/alcohol misuse as defined by Ofsted). Working Together notes these issues rarely exist in isolation.

There is a complex interaction between the three issues. Pull factors include:

- wanting to be with family/friends;
- drugs, money and any exchangeable item;
- peer pressure;

- for those who have been trafficked into the United Kingdom as unaccompanied asylum seeking children there will be pressure to make contact with their trafficker.

As a school we will inform all parents of children who are absent (unless the parent has informed us). If the parent is also unaware of the location of their child, and the definition of missing is met, we will either support the parent to/directly contact the Police to inform them.

We will follow-up unexplained absences of any child with a telephone call from the School on the morning of the first day of absence and notify Social Services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a child who is on the child safeguarding register. The DSL shall also inform the applicable local authority of any child who has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the School and the local authority. Additionally, the DSL will notify the applicable local authority (within which the child resides) when not at Appleford School of any child who is going to be deleted from the admission register where the child:

- has been taken out of school by his/her parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education; has ceased to attend Appleford School and no longer live within reasonable distance of Appleford School;
- has been certified by a doctor as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend Appleford School before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend Appleford School after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- has been permanently excluded;
- is in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and Appleford School does not reasonably believe he/she will be returning at the end of the period or, has been permanently excluded;
- where the child fails to attend school regularly or is absent without leave for more than 10 school days (continuous);
- when we remove or add a pupil's name to the admissions register at non-standard transitions ie where a compulsory school aged child leaves a school before completing the school's final year or joins a school after the beginning of the school's first year

The applicable local authority must be notified as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than the time of deleting the pupil's name from the register. This will assist the local authority to fulfil its duty to identify pupils of compulsory school age who are missing in education and follow up with any pupil who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

Pupils being withdrawn from School: If a pupil is withdrawn from the School, all efforts will be made to identify the school to which the pupil is being admitted; their confidential educational and pupil protection records will be sent separately. If the parent/guardian/carer fails to provide information regarding the new school, an urgent referral will be made to Children's Services. Educational records sent to our school concerning a pupil who is not registered by the parent will be returned and the school advised to refer to their Local Authority Education Welfare Service. A pupil's name will only be removed from the School's Admission Register in accordance with the Child Registration Regulations. Further information is contained in our Admissions Policy.

We also understand our duty to provide information to the local authority for standard transitions if requested. We also appreciate that there is an overlap with *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (KCSIE 2025) which recognises children missing education as a safeguarding issue particularly when a child leaves with no known destination. In addition to reporting to Wiltshire we also inform the local authority where the child is normally resident. We also understand that our right to remove a child is also subject to the terms and conditions of our school/parent contract. We recognise that from September 2016 (due to the absence of illness or unavoidable cause) that we have the right to delete a pupil for non-return within 10 school days after authorised leave of 10 school days or more, or after 20 school days unauthorised absence but this does not arise until Appleford School and the local authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries as to the pupil's whereabouts and failed. As such, Appleford School recognises that it is a criminal offence not to report, as required.

Notifiable Incidents: This is an incident involving the care of a pupil that meets any of the following criteria:

- A pupil has died (including cases of suspected suicide) and abuse or neglect is known or suspected;
- A looked after pupil has died (including cases where abuse is **not** known or suspected);
- A pupil has been seriously harmed and abuse or neglect is known or suspected;

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- A pupil in a regulated setting or service has died (including cases where abuse is **not** known or suspected).

Any such incident should be reported to Integrated Front Door 0300 456 0108 , Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) coordinator telephone: 0117 342 5277.-Also Ofsted and the DfE are to be informed along with the *Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences* (RIDDOR) in accordance with the regulations.

In accordance with Children Missing Education; Statutory guidance for local authorities and schools DfE 8th September 2025, we comply with the following sections added to the DfE guidance.

- Who are Children missing Education
- General principles
- Legal duties
- Information sharing (local)
- Information sharing (national)
- Children at risk of harm
- Children in temporary accommodation
- School attendance orders (SAO's)
- Admissions
- Use of data
- Accountability for CME
- Removing names from the admissions register
- Adding names to the admission register
- Using Get Information About a Pupil (GIAP) and school to school (S2S) to ascertain if a CME is on a school admission register elsewhere

Therefore, Appleford School complies with the following grounds for notification to Local Authority for additions / deletions from the Admissions Register:

1. Where the pupil is registered at Appleford School in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, and another school is substituted by the local authority for the child named in the order, or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
2. Except where it has been agreed by the proprietor of Appleford School the pupil is also registered at more than one school.
3. Where a pupil is registered at more than one school the proprietor of any other school at which the child is registered has given consent to the deletion.
4. Where the pupil has ceased to attend Appleford School and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at a registered school.
5. Except in the case of a boarder that the child has ceased to attend Appleford School and no longer ordinarily resides at a place, which is a reasonable distance from the school, at which the child is registered.
6. In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence from Appleford School and has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted: the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause, and the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
7. The child is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend Appleford School before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither the child nor parents has indicated to Appleford School the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
8. The child has been continuously absent from the Appleford School for a period of not less than ten school days and (1) at no time was the child's absence during that period authorised by the proprietor; (2) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend Appleford School by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (3) the proprietor of Appleford school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the child is.
9. The Child is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court, or of an order of recall made by a court, or the Secretary of State, with the order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.

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10. That the child has died.
11. In the case of a child on roll at Appleford School has ceased to be a pupil at Appleford School.
12. That the child has been permanently excluded from Appleford School.
13. Where— (1) the child is a boarder at Appleford School (2) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the child; and (3) those charges remain unpaid by the child's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.