

# Lowton West Primary School



## Missing Child Policy

**Policy reviewed by N. Gould**

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**Ratified by Governing Body:**  
Dr G. Merrett (Chair of Governors)

**Review Date:** July 2026

# Lowton West Primary School

## Missing Child Policy

*Aiming High Together*



### **School Vision**

To inspire, achieve and succeed, we will aim high and build dreams and futures together.

### **Mission Statement**

***Providing the highest quality education, care and support for the whole school community.***

*Our mission statement is based on RESPECT:*

***R*** = *Recognising the needs of the individual child*

***E*** = *Ensuring a unique and engaging curriculum*

***S*** = *Supporting each other to learn and achieve*

***P*** = *Passionate about providing the highest quality education*

***E*** = *Encouraging creativity, self – expression and imagination*

***C*** = *Creating confident, resilient, life – long learners*

***T*** = *The voice of everybody is heard*

All the above statements help us to understand how we can all make a positive contribution to the school and the wider community.

### **We will do this through our core values:**

- Respect
- Resilience
- Kindness
- Confidence

We also, at Lowton West Primary School, strive to develop and uphold British Values.

The five British values that the Government has identified for schools to focus on are:

- Democracy
- The Rule of Law
- Individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- Developing personal and social responsibility
- Respect for British Institutions

## **Statement of intent**

This policy ***is in place to ensure that the school*** maximises opportunities and minimises risks to children's well-being in relation to their:

- Physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
- Protection from harm and neglect;
- Education, training and recreation;
- The contribution made by them to society; and
- Social and economic well-being.

The aim of this policy is to provide a minimum standard of safety for children at Lowton West Primary School and who are missing from, or who go missing from school, and give rise to concern that they may be classified as missing whereabouts unknown. It provides:

- a) a timescale for taking steps to safeguard a child who is missing from school;
- b) a description of the steps which can be taken;

and a framework for consideration of relevant issues at each stage – with a view to helping practitioners to identify situations where a child is vulnerable to harm, or is being harmed, and in need of a specific safeguarding response. This guidance should be used in conjunction with the ***Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy***.

**N.B. This policy links closely to, and should be read in conjunction with, the LA's 'Children Missing Education Policy' (see Appendix 2).**

### **Whole School Prevention:**

Every effort is made to ensure that safety of the pupils whilst they are in the school's care. To prevent a child going missing all children are registered via SIMs twice a day, promptly at the start of the school day and after lunch. The completed SIMs registers are viewed by the school office so that they can follow up any absences and call parents.

When there is a trip off the school premises then it is the responsibility of the staff taking the trip to ensure that a regular register is taken and double head count made.

The children are supervised at all times, whether in the classrooms before school starts, during break time, meal times, PE or Games lessons and before/after school facilities.

**At the end of the school day, the Key Stage 1 and Foundation Stage children are only allowed to leave the school premises if their parent or an adult approved by their parents has come to collect them.**

**Children in Key Stage 2 either walk home (older pupils) or are collected by a parent/carer. The children are only allowed to leave the school premises if their parent or an adult approved by their parents has come to collect them. Older children who walk home are reminded to walk sensibly as they leave the school premises. Parental permission is required from parents for an older pupil to walk home alone.**

**If nobody arrives to collect a child, the class teacher will take the child to the school office and make enquiries as to the whereabouts of the parent. The child will be supervised by a member of school staff until the parent arrives to collect him/ her.**

Following after-school activity clubs, no child is allowed to leave the school premises alone unless written permission has been given by the parent for the child to walk home. Club leaders collect permission slips prior to the club starting. On the permission slips, parents/ carers are asked to indicate who is collecting their child from the after-school or club or to give permission for their child to walk home. If no approved adult is there at the given pick up time, enquiries will be made and the child will be supervised until they are collected.

When a child is collected from school during the school day whether due to illness or a prearranged appointment, they must ALWAYS be collected from the school office so that they can be signed out to record the fact that they are no longer on premises. This is recorded in the **'Children Leaving the Building' file**. Pupils are not allowed to leave the school premises on their own during the course of the school day.

It is the responsibility of the member of staff on duty whether teaching or supervising play to ensure that the children remain safe. All staff must ensure that the external gates to any outside area are locked when pupils are playing outside (with the exception of the main car park front gate).

If pupils leave the classroom security to work in other parts of school, the class teacher must ensure that adequate supervision is maintained at all times and all pupils are accounted for on return to the classroom. Pupils going to/ returning from the toilet should also be monitored by staff.

All visitors to the school are asked to report to the School Office.

Parents who come to school during the school day or after the day has ended are requested to report to the school office. All external gates and doors are closed and/or locked by the caretaker at the start and end of the school day.

The Infant gates and junior gates are opened and supervised by staff from 8.40 – 8.55am. At the end of the day, the caretaker ensures that the external doors are closed by 2.45pm, including the hall fire exit doors and Year 4 fire exit door. The caretaker opens the Infant and Junior gates at 3.00pm. The caretaker closes the Infant and Junior gates at 3.30pm.

After School providers will collect children from the classrooms at the end of the day.

Staff members should endeavour not to use the Junior gate or the Infant gate during the day. However, if they do need to use these gates, they MUST ensure that it the gates are immediately closed behind them and SHOULD NEVER LEAVE A GATE OPEN, even for a moment.

The Caretaker or office staff member will open the gates leading onto the Junior playground for vehicles to access when necessary, e.g. binmen, grounds maintenance. The caretaker or office staff member will supervise the gates whilst the vehicles gain access then will ensure that the gates are closed and locked so that nobody else can gain access to the grounds. The caretaker or office staff member will then open the gates and supervise whilst the vehicle/ persons leave the premises and ensure that the gates are locked immediately so that nobody else can gain access to the grounds.

\*The caretaker or office staff member will ask all people accessing the school grounds to sign in at the school entrance first and sign out afterwards. If a member of the school office is not available (e.g. well before the start of the school day), the caretaker will escort them to the school entrance and show them where to sign in/ out (then give them a Visitors badge). The caretaker (or a staff member if the caretaker is not on site) will ensure that the school grounds are clear before allowing any vehicle onto the site. The caretaker (or a staff member if the caretaker is not on site) will remain with the visitor(s) and supervise them during the school day if necessary.

**\*THESE GATES WILL NEVER BE LEFT OPEN AT ANY TIME WITHOUT SUPERVISION FROM THE CARETAKER OR A STAFF MEMBER.**

If there is an event on the school field (e.g. sports day, rugby/football match) or the school playground (e.g. basketball match), parents will be allowed access to the playground or field via the external gates. Prior to the event, the SLT will decide at what time the gate should be opened and the caretaker (or a staff member) will be given the responsibility of opening the gate at the specific time. All children then taken out onto the playground/ field must be supervised by staff at all times. It is the class teacher/ extra-curricular club leader's responsibility to ensure that pupils are supervised at all times, **including going to the toilet (eg on sports day).** Double headcounts should be taken:

- before the children go out onto the field/ playground,
- before the children return into school,
- once the children are back in the classroom.

If there is an event taking place on the school playground/ field, the caretaker and all staff should ensure that all external doors are kept shut at all times so that any visitors cannot gain access into school. If any visitors try to gain access via an external door, they should not be allowed access and should be told that they have to enter the school via the main entrance. If deemed necessary, staff members may be asked to supervise certain areas during these events.

During coffee mornings and other events in which parents are invited into school, staff will be asked to supervise given areas to ensure that no visitors gain unsupervised access around school. If a parent does gain unsupervised access, staff members should immediately ask the parent to leave that area and return to the main entrance, explaining that they must report to the school office. An appropriate member of staff will then be contacted to help them with their enquiry and to escort them around the school if necessary.

**If there is not a Teaching Assistant available during an organised event, the teacher must inform the Headteacher or a member of the SLT staff prior to the event so that alternative arrangements can be made.**

All staff members using codes for doors must ensure that codes are kept confidential. They should ask children/ parents/ visitors to stand away from the door whilst they enter the code and should cover the door lock with their free hand as they punch in the code.

**Missing Child Procedure** (for a child who goes missing during the school day):

**Procedure 1** - If a child is noted to be missing from the school premises:

- One member of staff should call the register to check and establish which child is missing.
- Check with the school office immediately and find out whether the child has another commitment e.g. music lesson, play rehearsal, school trip, external appointment, etc. and inform the staff member on duty in the school office of the situation.
- The Headteacher or a member of the SLT should be notified immediately and told where the child was last seen. Time is of the essence, and prompt action must be taken.
- All available staff will immediately help to check grounds and rooms to ensure the child has not hidden or been locked in anywhere within the boundary. There should be a thorough search of classrooms, play areas, storage areas, toilets, school building and grounds.
- The staff member on duty in the school office, Headteacher or member of staff will contact the police and the parents (unless there are known reasons connected with the child's welfare which indicate that this should not be done.) This phone call should occur no less than 10-15 minutes after the child's absence was first noted.
- A written record of the incident and any action taken should be made as soon after the incident as practicable.

**Procedure 2** (If a child insists on leaving the premises):

- If a child insists on leaving the premises with the knowledge of the staff and cannot be persuaded by them to stay on premises, parents will be contacted immediately. If it is thought that the child may be a danger to himself or others, then reasonable force to return the child to the school

premises should be used. If it is deemed necessary, the police will be called.

- If appropriate, and enough staff are available to enable one to leave the premises with a mobile phone, they will follow from a distance and observe as to where the child is going. If there are not enough staff to leave the premises to observe the child, police will be called and the parents contacted.
- A written record of the incident and any action taken should be made as soon after the incident as practicable.

### **Procedure 3 (If a child goes missing on a school trip):**

- If a child goes missing on a school visit, the teacher(s) in charge must ensure that the remaining children are safely cared for by the other staff and adults.
- Staff on the school trip should ask the pupils to stand with their designated person and carry out a headcount to check that no other children have gone astray.
- A member of staff/ or more than one member of staff should carry out a search of the immediate vicinity.
- The venue staff should be notified as soon as possible.
- A member of staff should contact the police using the mobile phone and report the child as missing.
- A member of staff should contact the School and inform the Headteacher (or member of the SLT) / school office immediately.
- The Headteacher/ SLT member of staff/ school office staff will contact the parents immediately and inform them of the situation.
- At an indoor or outdoor venue, the venue staff may contact the police. However, it is up to the teacher(s) in charge to ensure that the police have been contacted either by themselves or by a member of the venue staff.
- A written record of the incident and any action taken should be made as soon after the incident as practicable.

**Acting to safeguard a child who is missing from school** (a child who does not turn up at school and is classed as an unauthorised absence)

### **Missing children who do not attend with the new intake in September**

We always seek to engage parents and carers as partners in ensuring that their children are safe and able to attend school.

If a child does not appear in Reception Class (new intake in September), the school will follow the LA's 'Children Missing Education CME and Pupil Mobility' policy (checklist/ flowchart/ guidance).

Concern for a child may be so high that a referral may be made to the police immediately the child is found to be missing. Alternatively, information may

emerge over the course of time which raises the level of concern about a child's welfare and a referral should then be made to the police and LA children's social care.

**N.B.** Advice will always be sought from the Local Authority when needed and the LA's 'Child Missing Education' checklist will be followed by the school.

### **Extended leave of absence**

Extended leave of absence should be authorised by the headteacher, at which point a return date is set. In these cases the time line for enquiries starts from when the child does not attend school on the expected return date, not from the day the extended leave started.

### **Recording actions**

Information known or received, people spoken to, decision and actions – and the reasons for taking them, are recorded.

**Day One** The school identifies that a child is not in school.

1. A staff member trained to do so, telephones the child's home to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent/carer (person with parental responsibility for the child) that the child is safe at home. If a parent has already informed school via telephone/letter of the reason for absence, this telephone call won't be necessary.
2. The results of this telephone call could be that:
  - a) There was no answer at the home;
  - b) The person who answered was not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or is safe;
  - c) The parent/carer answered the call: the child is not with them or not safe and the parent is concerned;
  - d) The parent/carer answered the call: the child is not with them or not safe and the parent is not concerned;
  - e) The parent/carer answered the call and gave a reason as to why their child is absent from school
3. In the case of a), b), and d) the staff member who made the telephone call should contact the school's designated child protection person, who will assess the degree of vulnerability of the child.
4. In the case of c) the staff member who made the telephone call should advise the parent to contact the police if they are concerned that their child is missing.

School may also suggest to the parent to:

- Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searching for the child

- Contact the family GP and Accident and Emergency Centres near where the child lives and goes to school, in case he/she has sustained an injury and been taken in for medical treatment
- Keep school informed/ alert school if they feel that school can help to locate the child in any way.

5. In the case of e), if the parent gives a reason for the child's absence and says that the child will be off for a particular length of time (e.g. rest of week due to nature of the illness), this will be recorded in the book and the staff member will not have to contact the parent again (unless the child didn't turn up after the given period of time). The staff member will ask the parent to keep the school informed by ringing again if the child is going to be off for a longer period due to the particular circumstances of the absence.

If a reason is given for the absence and the child does not turn up again the next day, the office staff should again contact the parent to find out why the child is off school.

Parents will be asked to e-mail or ring school before 8.55am (and by 9.15am at the latest) if their child is not going to be in school that day.\* Regular reminders will be put into the newsletter asking parents to contact school.

Schools will need to make arrangements for communicating with families who use English as a second language, e.g. school will liaise with the EMAS Team in order to access interpreters.

The Senior Leadership Team will closely monitor the attendance of pupils subject to a Child Protection plan, Children Looked After, pupils who are at 'Child In Need' and any other vulnerable pupils, including pupils with SEND.

This policy will be read in conjunction with Wigan LA's 'Children Missing Education (CME) and Pupil Mobility Policy'.

**The LA guidance will be followed in all cases.**