

# Larwood School

**Executive Headteacher:** Mr Pierre van der Merwe  
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## Version Control

V1.1	May 2024	Name of company change Sections 6.1 and 6.2 added

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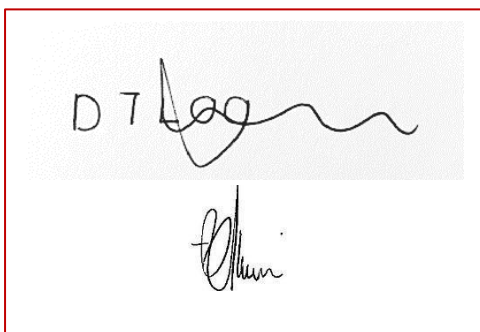


**Dan Login**  
Chair of Trustees

**Pierre van der Merwe**  
Executive Headteacher

## CHILDREN MISSING POLICY

Registered office:



Policy Number: 58  
Review Committee: ELT  
Type of Policy: Non-Statutory  
Review Period: Annually  
Approved: May 2024  
Next Review: May 2025

### 1. SCHOOL VISION (ETHOS AND PURPOSE)

Despite its deletion, the school remains committed to the Principles and Aims of ‘Every Child Matters’ and endeavours to achieve this through the following:

**Achieve Believe Expect and Enjoy**

**Achieve** all you can by listening, looking and learning

**Believe** in yourself, believe in others and be part of a positive team **Expect**

to learn, expect to grow and develop in all areas of your education **Enjoy**

every lesson, every day and enjoy your time at Larwood!

We aim for every child to experience an outstanding education whilst at Larwood School ensuring that they make progress in every area of their development. We will achieve this by:

- By providing a dynamic and flexible curriculum with emphasis on Literacy, numeracy and creativity. Ensuring that every child has a strong and respectful relationship with the adults that work with them.
- Providing a safe and secure environment which allows children to relax, have fun and enjoy themselves. All members of The Larwood School community are valued. We ensure that pupils are rewarded for getting things right and we apply consequences when they don't.
- By challenging children to succeed in all areas of school life, ensuring that pupils understand that we all make mistakes and that success comes in many forms. This may include improved behaviour, subject progression, and could be related to relationships and trust. All staff will ensure that **Therapeutic Thinking** is consistently used to engage, modify and aid pupils on their journey of improved progress.
- By working with other parties to ensure we get the very best out of our children. This includes parents, other professionals such as the Educational Psychologist, Attendance Officer, School Nurse, SEN Officers and Speech and Language specialists.
- We model the fact that we never stop learning and engender a love of learning for all, as this is vital for our children and us in the ever changing society that we live in.

### 2. OUR PUPILS WILL:

- Be encouraged in a variety of ways to engage in all activities to promote their progress, improve their behaviour, and make the necessary changes to engage in their own education. **They will achieve!**
- Experience consistent boundaries and expectation with staff trained in **Therapeutic Thinking**. We **expect** them to make changes!
- Value themselves and others and be able to set themselves realistic goals, and targets. We **believe** that our pupils can improve and we aim to help them **believe** this as well!
- Develop a sense of pride in themselves, their work and being part of ‘Team Larwood.’ They know that we **enjoy** working with them and hope they **enjoy** working

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with us!

- Go onto become life-long learners!
- Become more resilient as young people, moving forwards to secondary schools and further/higher education.
- Have their work and achievements praised and rewarded in a variety of ways to help develop their own self-esteem, alongside their social and emotional development
- Experience success! They will achieve, believe, expect and enjoy!

### 3. OUR STAFF:

- Are encouraging, empathetic, well trained and love working with our pupils.
- Will go the 'extra miles' to help pupils make the changes they need to make.
- Appreciate that they are preparing pupils for jobs that don't even exist right now!
- Promote the values of respect, responsibility, honesty, hard work, equality and appreciation of differences.
- Provide pupils with the opportunity to express themselves in a safe, productive and reassuring manner.
- Will promote educational development in the widest sense including intellect, creativity, and physical development.
- Promote the role of the family-whatever shape or form that may take.
- Provide a well-resourced, safe and welcoming environment for everybody.
- Use **Therapeutic Thinking** as a behaviour management process to enable our pupils to become able to self-regulate more often and with independence and enable and encourage love for learning for fun!
- Model the behaviour that we expect from pupils so that they can undertake the future roles that they would like and make a meaningful contribution to their communities and society.
- Liaise with parents, and other professionals to promote the very best outcomes for all of our pupils.

### 4. HOW WE WORK

This Policy is based upon protocols that have been agreed by the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and the Hertfordshire Children's Trust and was revised in August 2010 to take account of the statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home and care (published in July 2009). The Protocol also supports the requirements of local authorities in meeting National Indicator 71 Missing from Home and Care. NI 71 has now temporarily been dropped as a requirement from central Govt usage but as it is regarded as a useful indicator of performance it is still used in Hertfordshire. [5.4.2 Children Who Go Missing, including from School \(proceduresonline.com\)](#)

Children who go missing from home and care are amongst our most vulnerable children, and all agencies working with children and young people are expected to ensure their relevant staff are aware of this Protocol and implement it when working with children who go missing.

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***If you consider that a child or young person is at immediate risk, the police should be contacted as a 999 emergency.***

Running away should be seen as an indicator of underlying problems which may need further intervention. Some young people who run away from home will be 'children in need' and therefore entitled to services provided by the county council or local voluntary agencies. These might include advice, guidance and counselling for the young person and for their families. This protocol covers all partner agencies and the voluntary sector agencies covering children who run away and go missing from home.

### 5. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING MISSING CHILDREN SERVICE DELIVERY

The Operations Director, Safeguarding for Hertfordshire Children, Schools and Families and the Chief Superintendent Hertfordshire Constabulary are responsible for the policy and the procedures relating to the arrangements for monitoring missing children.

The Children Missing from Home and Care Strategy Group meets monthly for the purposes of developing the protocol and service responses, collating data on missing children, identifying trends and actions required, and reporting to the Improving Outcomes Group of the HSCB.

HCSB recognises that the full implementation of this protocol, with consistent responses that result in effective action for those who repeatedly go missing or runaway are critical to keep children safe.

The HSCB website can be accessed via this link: <http://www.hertssafeguarding.org.uk/>

### 6. DEFINITIONS

**A child who is absent from education can become a child missing education if they're removed from their school's register.**

**6.1 Children absent from education:** children who are persistently absent (absent repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods).

**6.2 Children missing education:** children of compulsory school age who aren't registered pupils at a school and aren't receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

6.3 Day pupil:

These pupils that attend school during the day between 9.00am and 3.20 pm Monday to Thursday and 9.00am-2.20 pm Friday

6.4 Attendance Expectations:

1. All families are encouraged positively to make sure their children attend every day.
2. Attendance is monitored daily to identify any pupils not in school. On a daily basis the parents of any absent pupils are contacted to find out the reason why.
3. After every holiday, including half term, the parents of any absent children are immediately contacted to ensure the children have not gone on unauthorised extended leave. Any requests for extended leave in school time are refused unless

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parents can provide evidence of an emergency, e.g. sickness, bereavement etc. In all cases parents are asked to provide a return date and if possible copies of flight details etc.

4. Any parents/carers requesting special leave complete a form which is submitted to the Headteacher. The school will be mindful of risks to children including FGM (See FGM Policy).
5. Weekly CCC (children causing concern) Meetings are held with attendance as a standing agenda item, to ensure all pupils at risk are identified and prompt action taken.

### 6.5 Children looked after:

The term “Looked After” was introduced by the Children Act 1989 and refers to children and young people:

- under the age of 18
- who live away from their parents or family
- are supervised by a social worker from the local council children’s services department.

A looked after child may either be accommodated (which means that the council is looking after them with the agreement, at the request or in the absence of their parents) or subject to a Care Order made by the Family Courts.

A child or young person can be subject to different legal rules either:

- the parent retains full parental responsibility, or
- alternatively, if a child is subject to a Care order, parental responsibility is shared between the council and the parents

### 6.6 Missing:

Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and when the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be the subject of crime, or at risk of harm to themselves or others.

### 6.7 Absent:

A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.

## 7. DAY TO DAY OPERATIONS TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE PUPILS

### THIS INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- Increased number of adults in all situations such as classes, playtimes and transitions.
- EHCP booklets including Behaviour Management Plans which assess and indicate how to respond to behaviours and risks associated with pupils.
- Routines that support the creation of a safe space culture.
- Regular reviews and alterations to the school environment such as high handles on doors for younger pupils and electro magnetically locked doors on key locations.
- Planning and risk assessments of activity, staffing and the nature of the individual child should all be made to prepare for events and make appropriate adjustments

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when needed.

### 8. EVERY SITUATION SHOULD TAKE NOTE OF THE FOLLOWING CONTEXTUAL FACTORS:

- The age of the child
- Time of day/night
- The legal status of the child
- Previous behaviour and history
- The emotional needs of the child e.g. whether there has been any variation in their mood or whether they have expressed any intention to harm themselves or others
- The specific learning needs of the child
- Whether the child has any serious health problems (e.g. diabetes or epilepsy) and requires regular medication
- Behaviour of the child as influenced by peer groups or others
- Whether the child is perceived as running to/running from someone/something
- The risk that the child may be targeted for sexual exploitation
- Previous history of going missing
- Possible location of child
- Information specific to child

**This is additional information following new policy published in January 2014. (Statutory Guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care-January 2014) This also applies to all pupils at Larwood no matter what their status.**

### 9. DEFINITIONS PROVIDED BY THE POLICE:

- **Missing from care:**  
Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.
- **Absent from care:**  
A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be

#### 9.1 Definition of CME

For the purpose of this document a child missing education is defined as: 'Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is not on a school roll being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, privately, or in alternative provision) and who had been out of any education provision for a substantial period of time (practice nationally is four weeks or more).'

### 10. DEPARTEMENT FOR EDUCATION

### 11. DEFINITION OF CHILDREN AT RISK OF MISSING EDUCATION

Children and young people with poor school attendance are often the most vulnerable

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and are more likely to become children missing from education.

Larwood School and the Local Authority recognise that the duty to identify children not receiving education does not apply in relation to children who are registered at school who are not attending regularly. The authority's CME strategy does however, include the reinforcement of duties that already exist for schools and therefore supports the monitoring of children at risk of missing education in the future.

The monitoring of children at risk of missing education is carried out in partnership with schools where attendance of individual pupils gives cause for concern with the aim of reducing the risk in the future.

### 11.1 Why children go missing from education

Children and young people can go missing from school or agreed education provision, for a wide variety of reasons. Their personal circumstances or those of their families may contribute to the withdrawal process. Children can go missing when there is no systematic process in place to identify them and ensure they re-engage with appropriate provision.

### 11.2 The most common reasons why children miss education include:

- Failing to register at school at age 5;
- Failing to make successful transition from infant to junior and primary to secondary;
- Ease to attend due to exclusion (formal/illegal withdrawal);
- Mid-year transfer of school;
- Unable to find a school place after moving into local authority;
- Victims of bullying;
- Frequent moves of house including periods of homelessness or periods in a refuge;
- Transience/family mobility;
- Family breakdown;
- Frequent absence leading to low attendance (especially Yr10 and Yr11);
- Disaffection resulting in parents withdrawing the pupil or 'being asked to leave';
- Involvement in youth offending.

### 11.3 Certain vulnerable groups are more likely to be affected by the factors; these are;

- Young people who have committed offences;
- Children living in women's refuges;
- Children of troubled families i.e. suffering bereavement, trauma, domestic violence, homelessness etc;
- Young runaways;
- Children with special educational needs;
- Refugee and asylum-seeking children;
- Travelling families;
- Looked after children;
- Teenage parenthood;
- Children with mental health issues;
- Young carers;
- Children who are permanently excluded from school;

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- Young people being forced into marriage;
- Children involved in substance misuse.

### 11.4 The Role of the Multi Agency Teams

To reduce the risk of children and young people falling out of the education system, the authority has developed teams and services that support the work needed in this area. These teams work closely together to ensure there is coherence and consistency within the system. These teams ensure that the process for identifying, investigating and finding CME is carried out.

The duties and responsibilities of these teams include:

- Tracking CME;
- Ensuring all notifications of CME are correctly recorded on the relevant databases;
- Investigating relevant databases
- Coordinating casework in relation to investigating CME including working closely with relevant services and agencies to determine appropriate provision for the child;
- Ensuring admission into school through the admissions process and the Authority's Fair Access Protocol where required;
- Reviewing and monitoring cases held until re-engagement in education is successfully secured through the CME/EWO team – Pupils missing out on education;
- Providing relevant reports for relevant agencies/boards
- Hold regular CME meetings to review complex and urgent cases;
- Raise awareness of the CME policy and practice including training/awareness raising events for school governors and partner organisations.

### 11.5 Key Stakeholders

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information. In order to fulfil the requirements of the CME policy the authority works in collaboration to ensure the early identification and intervention of children who are not receiving a suitable education. All stakeholders have a responsibility for CME.

Larwood School works closely with stakeholders to ensure the safety of a child. Key

stakeholders include:

- Children with Disability Social Work Team
- Complex Needs Nursing Team
- Children's Services including Admissions, Out of School Team, Equality for Minorities (Ethnic Minority and Travellers), Parent Partnership, Education Welfare Officers.
- Other schools and Academies including Support Centres;
- Health/PCT
- Voluntary Organisations;
- Police;
- CAMHS

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### **11.6 Reducing the Risk of Children Missing Education**

All DCC officers, schools, academies and the general public have a moral and corporate responsibility in relation to CME. Parents who do not ensure their children are accessing a 'suitable' education can be deemed as breaking the law. Anyone who becomes aware of a child or young person who does not appear to be accessing education should refer this child to the Children with Disabilities Social Work Team or Caroline Marriott, Head of SEN and Delivery at Milton Keynes Council.

The authority in partnership with the other agencies listed above aims to ensure that all colleagues in all agencies who become aware of a child who is living in the authority but not in identified education provision, will notify the authority.

### **12. THE ROLE OF CHILDREN SERVICES**

Individual services within the authority play a role in preventing the risk of CME. These services will address issues related to non-attendance/poor attendance/persistence absence at the same time as working in partnership with relevant agencies to monitor and investigate children who meet the criteria under the definition of CME and are at risk of missing education.

### **13. THE ROLES OF LARWOOD SCHOOL**

All schools have a duty under section 10 of the Children's Act 2004 in partnership with the local authority with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in the authority's area.

Section 175 of the Education Act puts a duty on all schools to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes identifying children who are not receiving education.

It is expected that schools and academies will have carried out all reasonable enquiries within their capacity to ascertain the whereabouts of the young person and engaging them in education prior to informing the local authority that the child is missing education.

The school will undertake reasonable actions to identify the whereabouts of the child. This includes telephoning all contact numbers, making enquiries with friends and family, making enquiries with schools attended by any siblings and wherever possible undertaking a visit to the home address. A written record will be made.

Concerns will be referred here: <https://thegrid.org.uk/assets/cme-guidance-jan2021-v3.doc>

### **14. SAFEGUARDING OF CME**

A significant number of children referred as missing education are either found in education following initial investigations or found but not in education and subsequently supported to return. There are a number of children who are not found in education as the family

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cannot be located following the normal investigations.

A child who is not found in education following CME investigations does not infer that the child is at risk. However, it is appropriate to escalate the concerns to consider potential risks to the child. A process is in place to facilitate this.

### 15. MONITORING THE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

At Larwood School it is the responsibility of the Headteacher and Trustees to work closely with Hertfordshire County Council and ensure systems and procedures in school are robust.

With regards to normal operating procedures at Larwood School, a child will be deemed 'missing' if they leave an activity and their whereabouts cannot be established after a detailed search of the area. As activities usually take place on the school site, this would entail searching the school buildings, or the grounds. It should be noted that:

- If the child leaves an activity, the protocol is for a member of staff to track the child
- If a child is tracked and leaves the site boundary (road crossing at the end of the drive, automatic contact with Police and parents would follow, although tracking would still take place if possible).
- A full search of the grounds may take up to 15 minutes

### 16. INFORMATION GIVEN BY HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY:

**If staff wish to report somebody missing they should do so using the police Non- Emergency number 101**

**In cases where urgent action/response is required 999 should be called**

***If staff need advice on missing person matters (NOT REPORTING A PERSON MISSING) they can contact the Harm Reduction Unit on the following numbers:***

- 1. 01707 638147**
- 2. 01707 638182**

**Any risk of or actual Child Sexual Exploitation should be reported immediately to the Police (Operation Halo)**

### 17. RETURN TO SCHOOL:

An independent return review would take place, following any child being found. The aim of this process would be to establish what led to the child going missing in the first instance, what measures to include as part of a risk assessment/behaviour management plan and what supportive strategies/agencies should also be used. This should take place within 72 hours of return and professional discretion must be used to judge when this would be most helpful for the young person concerned. Adjustments should be made to Behaviour Management/Care Plans where appropriate.

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If this behaviour was repeated, then it may be considered as ‘a normal pattern of behaviour.’ Policy dictates that a child that has run away 2 or more times, discussion must be held with family/local authority

### **18. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN:**

New policy emphasises the need for local authorities to place children in the most suitable place of care. This should help to minimise risk of running away or going missing. Each individual child will be considered if this is a factor when being placed in to residential provision at Larwood School. If a looked after child goes missing:

- Follow the protocols as outlined above.
- As part of the protocol, inform local police, local authority and parents/carers.
- As soon as practically possible, contact the social worker allocated to the child.
- Part of the 72 hour review process should decide if placement is still appropriate. An independent reviewer would normally be used in these circumstances.
- Actions should then be reflected in the child’s care/behaviour management plan.

### **19. IF A CHILD GOES MISSING DURING THE DAY:**

- Follow procedures outlined above.
- Child would be tracked and radio used to inform SLT where pupil was/had gone to/last seen. Go to channel 2 on the radio. When tracking use the radio to let others know where you are and what the situation is. For example, would the help of another member of staff stop the child from leaving the site.
- Call for assistance if needed using radio.
- If the child is within the school grounds, call their name and liaise with others to cover areas close to the last seen point of contact.
- If they leave the school grounds, maintain radio contact and make a dynamic risk assessment ensuring your own safety. If you continue to track and/or follow, maintain radio contact.
- Maintain radio contact so that calls can be made to the Police/parents/carers etc. if needed.

### **20. IF A CHILD GOES MISSING FROM AN OFF-SITE ACTIVITY OF TRIP:**

- Follow procedures outlined above.
- Appropriate risk assessments must be in place.
- If this a school trip away from site, protocols and arrangements must be in place before you leave. For example, the overnight year 5 and 6 residential trips staff are made aware of the arrangements in advance.
- Child would be tracked. Use mobile phones to inform SLT where pupil was/had gone to/last seen. Inform and work with local staff to help with situation at the time. Additional staff may be able to assist from school depending on the location.
- If the child is seen within the designated area, call their name and liaise with others

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to cover areas close to the last seen point of contact.

- If they leave the designated area, maintain mobile phone contact and make a dynamic risk assessment ensuring your own safety. If you continue to track and/or follow, maintain phone contact. Ensure the rest of the party are OK and know where you are.
- Maintain phone contact so that calls can be made to the Police/parents/carers etc. if needed.

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