



CHILD MISSING FROM EDUCATION POLICY

This Policy includes the Junior School and Senior School

Links to other policies:

Safeguarding Policy, FGM Policy

All children, regardless of their circumstances are entitled to a full time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children and young people who are not being educated quickly become at risk of failing academically and socially. If their whereabouts are unknown, they may be particularly at risk of physical, emotional and psychological harm.

Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school or who are registered but have not attended for 10 consecutive school days and the whereabouts of the family is unknown.

Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

For the purpose of this policy, a CME is defined as a child or young person of compulsory age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by an LA, and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition also includes children who are receiving an education, but one that is not suitable; this could include children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Who is a Child Missing from Education?

The children missing education that are the focus of this document are;

- Children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school, for example, at home, privately, or in alternative provision.
- Children of compulsory school age who are on a school roll but have not attended for a period of 10 consecutive school days (recorded as unauthorised absence) and the whereabouts of the family is unknown

Examples include:

- a child who has left one school with no destination school identified,
- a child not receiving suitable education,

- a child who has failed to take up an allocated school despite school checks,
- a child who has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, despite school checks,
- a child who is not at their last known address despite school checks,

This does not apply to children who are registered at a school who are not attending regularly.

Why do children go missing from education?

Children can go missing either when they fail to register with a school, or when they fall out of the education system and there is no systematic process in place to identify them and ensure they re-engage with appropriate provision. Their personal circumstances, or those of their families, may contribute to the withdrawal process and the failure to make a successful transition. For example this could be because of:

- Failing to be registered at the age of five
- Failing to make a successful transition
- Exclusion
- Mid-year transfer of education provision
- Families moving into a new area

Children at particular risks of missing education

As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, the School will make a judgement on a case-by-case basis. The following list indicates pupils who are most at risk of missing education:

- Pupils at risk of harm or neglect – where this is suspected, local child protection procedures will be followed; however, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children’s social care (and the police if appropriate) as per the school’s safeguarding procedures. The LA officers responsible for CME will check a referral has been made, and will contact children’s social care if this is not the case. Should there be a reason to suspect a crime has been committed or the child’s safety is at risk, the LA will contact the police.
- Children of service personnel – the academy will contact the Ministry of Defence Children’s Education Advisory Service for advice to ensure continuity of education for these children.
- Missing children/runaways – Missing children/runaways - Children who go missing or run away from home or care may be in serious danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation, radicalisation or abduction as well as missing education.
- Children who cease to attend Moorland School – there are many reasons why a child stops attending a school. It could be because the parent chooses to home educate their child. However, where the reason for a child who has stopped attending a school is not known, the local authority should investigate the case and satisfy itself that the child is receiving suitable education.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School

Moorland School will enter students on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the school that the pupil will attend.

In the event that a student fails to attend at school on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence.

The school will keep an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents/carers to inform them of any changes.

The school will monitor students' attendance through our daily register.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the school will inform the LA if they have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

The school will notify the LA if any student is to be deleted from the admission register in the circumstance outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016).

Students who remain on school roll are not necessarily missing education, but will be monitored and attendance will be addressed when it is poor.

All schools, including independent providers, have statutory safeguarding responsibilities (sections 157 & 175 of the Education Act 2002) and must investigate any unexplained absences. If a child fails to attend school, staff must try to establish the family's whereabouts before making a CME referral. Schools should:

- use all known contact telephone numbers to attempt to speak with the parent/carer or other family member,
- speak to siblings, known relatives, friends within the same school,
- speak with school staff of known siblings at other schools,
- home visit(s) to attempt to ascertain if the family are in the home
- discuss with their Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to agree whether the matter is CME or a school attendance issue.

A record should be kept of any attempt made to locate a child.

If having done all of the above the school has been unable to establish the pupils whereabouts a CME referral and registration certificate should be completed

Any partner agency or service involved with children has a duty to notify the Local Authority of any child or family who are missing from education via

Parents/carers

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving an efficient full-time education. Parents adhere to this duty by enrolling their child at a school. However, some parents may electively home educate their child (EHE). Section 576, Education Act 1996, defines a parent as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not,
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person,
- any person who has care of a child (having care of a child or young person means that the child lives with and is looked after by that person, irrespective of their relationship).

Parents/carers are responsible for notifying the school in writing where they will be home-schooling their child, in order for the child to be removed from the admissions register.

Parents/carers will notify the school regarding any absences or changes to the pupil's education arrangements. Any parents/carers requesting special leave must do so in writing to the Headteacher. The school will be mindful of risks to children including FGM (see Safeguarding and FGM policies).

SAFEGUARDING

For the purpose of this policy, "reasonable enquiries" are defined as limited, investigative powers that the school may action to determine a child's whereabouts and whether they may be in danger.

In line with the Children Act 2004, the school will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.

The DSL will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to the children's social care or police.

Where the whereabouts and safety of a child is unknown, the school, in conjunction with the LA, may carry out the following actions:

- Make contact with the parent/carer, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Check local databases
- Follow local information sharing arrangements, and making enquiries via other local databases and agencies where possible
- Check with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force
- Check with agencies known to be involved with the family
- Check with the LA and school from which the pupil moved originally
- Check with the LA where the pupil lives, if this is different to where the school is located
- Check with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service in the case of children of Service Personnel
- Conduct home visits via an appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessments, and making enquiries with neighbours or relatives, if appropriate

NB. This list is not exhaustive – the school and LA will use their judgement towards what reasonable enquiries are appropriate, once all the facts of the case have been taken into account.

Safeguarding children and vulnerable members of society are key priorities for us all. The Home Office, 'Missing Children and Adults, A Cross Government Strategy' outlines the Government's objectives which all agencies are expected to comply with:

- Prevention – reducing the number of people who go missing
- Protection – reducing the risk of harm to those who go missing.
- Provision – providing missing people and their families with support and guidance which includes signposting families to appropriate supportive agencies.

Safeguarding of all children is paramount and this policy must be considered in accordance with the Local Authority's safeguarding procedures.

ADMISSIONS REGISTER

Moorland School will ensure that the admissions register is kept up-to-date at all times, and will encourage parents/carers to notify the school of any changes as they occur, such as via email or newsletters.

Students will be recorded on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed that the student will attend the school.

Where a parent/carer notifies the school that a student will live at another address, the school will record the following information on the admissions register:

- The full name of the parent/carer with whom the student will live
- The new address
- The date from when it is expected the student will live at this address

Where a parent/carer notifies the school that the student is registered at another school, or will be attending a different school in future, the school will record the following information on the admissions register:

- The name of the new school
- The date when the student first attended, or is due to attend, that school

Parents/carers are able to elect to educate their children at home, and will subsequently withdraw them from school. This can happen at any time. If a parent/carer notifies Moorland School the student will be deleted from our admission register and the LA informed.

Removing a pupil from the admissions register

Moorland School will inform the LA of any student who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of the school by their parents/carers and are being educated outside the system, e.g. home-schooled
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order, and the school does not reasonably believe they will be returning at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.
- Have died.
- Have been registered at another school where it is not indicated this should be the case.
- Have been granted authorised leave but have failed to attend school within 10 days after the

period of authorised absence ended, and:

- There is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school.
- The LA and school are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- Have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 academy days, and:
- The absence was not authorised.
- There is reason to believe the student is not unable to attend school.

We will notify the LA that a pupil is to be removed from the admissions register as soon as any of the above criteria are met, and no later than the time at which the student's name is actually removed.

If a pupil's name is to be removed from the admissions register, Moorland School will provide the LA with the following information:

- The full name of the student.
- The full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the student lives.
- At least one telephone number of the parent/carer with whom the student lives.
- The full name and address of the parent/carer who the student is going to live with and the date the student is expected to start living there, if applicable.
- The name of the student's new school and their expected start date, if applicable.
- The grounds for removal from the admissions register under Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration). (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)

This policy complies with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2018
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2020
- DfE 'Children missing education' 2016
- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended in 2016)

Reviewed by Deborah Frost, September 2020

Next Review Date: September 2021