

Howes Primary School

Children Missing In Education Policy & Procedures





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1 Definition of Children Missing Education

In Children Missing Education - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2016), children missing education are defined as those who are not on a school roll or receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. Those who are regularly absent or have missed 10 school days or more without permission may be at risk of becoming 'children missing education'.

There will not always be a safeguarding concern for children and young people who are missing in education. Most children and young people are moving schools supported by their parents/carers, schools and local authority admissions services. A smaller number, however, are at risk of dropping out or disengaging from education and, being out of school, they are at risk of exploitation, going missing and significant harm.

2 Legal Frameworks

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' [click here](#)
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' [click here](#)
- DfE 'Children missing education' 2016 [click here](#)
- 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)
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2012)
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2014
- Howes Primary School Attendance Policy

3 Risks

These 'missing' children can be vulnerable; it is essential that all services work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible. It is important to establish, at the earliest possible stage, the reasons for the child being missing. Possible reasons that should be considered include:



- Failure to start appropriate provision and never enter the system
- Stopped attending, due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parent/carers
- Failure to complete a transition between schools
- Children from refugee and asylum -seeking families
- Children from families who are highly mobile
- Children at risk of a forced marriage
- Children experiencing abuse and neglect
- Children supervised by the Youth Justice System
- Children from migrant families
- Children who cease to attend school
- Children of service personnel

Keeping Children Safe in Education states:

“All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school’s or college’s unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.”

Children who remain disengaged from education are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk such as anti-social behaviour and/or sexual exploitation.

Families moving between local authority areas can sometimes lead to a child becoming 'lost' in the system and consequently missing education. When a child has moved, local authorities should check with other local authorities, either regionally or nationally, and share information to ascertain where the child is living. Once the location of the child is established, the relevant local authority must ensure that the child is receiving an education either by attending a school or otherwise. School records must be sent to transitioning schools within five days of the child leaving.



4 Roles & Responsibilities

4.1 The School

- The school will enter pupils on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the school, or the day that the school has been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.
- In the event that a pupil fails to attend the school on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence, and will consider notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity.
- 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 obtain two or more emergency contact numbers for parent(s)/carer(s)/other contacts. 6.1.5 The school will record on the MIS system details of any change of address notified by parents/carers.
- The school will monitor pupils' attendance through our daily register.
- The school will follow the TRCA Attendance Policy procedures for following up on absent children and especially for children who are persistent absentees to ascertain the reason for their absence.
- Pupils who remain on the school roll are not necessarily missing education but will be monitored and attendance will be addressed when it is poor.
- The school will agree with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of pupils who are regularly absent from school, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.
- 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 remove the pupil from the admission register, if agreed with the LA, if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.
- The school will notify the LA if any pupil 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).
- The school will inform the LA of children who are leaving the school, if the transfer did not take place via the Primary/Secondary admissions team within Coventry LA or within the normal transition rounds.
- The school will record the leaving date, the name and address of the new school and the proposed entry date on their records for all school leavers.
- The school will arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion.
- The school will provide information to the LA regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the LA.
- Children Missing from Education Referrals (CME referral form) can be completed by a school after a maximum 10 days' absence through a



secure email address: CME@coventry.gov.uk, telephone no: 02476 975434.

- Anyone with a concern that a child is missing from education can make a referral to the Attendance and Inclusion Team.
- Schools submit a CME referral form, but should consult the LGB before removing a pupil from the school register.
- For urgent concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, which requires immediate action, schools should call the Coventry City Council MASH Team on 024 7683 3060 or email on mash@coventry.gov.uk.
- Access to Education Team Email: cme@coventry.gov.uk Tel: 024 7697 5434 PO Box 15 Council House, Coventry, CV1 5RR

4.2 The LA

- Under the Education Act 1996, the LA has a duty to establish the identities of children in the area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving education provision otherwise.
- The LA will provide full-time education for permanently excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion.
- When it is brought to the LA's attention that a child may not be receiving a suitable education, the LA will serve notices on parents/carers to assure the LA that their child is receiving such an education.
- The LA will issue School Attendance Orders to parents/carers who fail to assure the LA that their child is receiving a suitable education, and the LA believes that the child should attend school.
- The LA will prosecute parents/carers that do not comply with a School Attendance Order.
- The LA will prosecute or fine parents/carers of school-registered children who fail to ensure their child attends school regularly.
- The LA will ensure that children identified as not receiving suitable education are returned to full-time education either at the school or elsewhere.
- The LA will ensure that the school demonstrates prompt action and effective early intervention procedures to ensure children are safe and receiving suitable education.
- The LA will apply to court for an Education Supervision Order for a CME.
- The LA will ensure that children who return to full-time education are appropriately supported, taking into account the reasons why they missed education in the first place.
- Pupils with special educational needs statements, or EHC plans, are able to be home educated. If the statement/EHC plan sets out the provision that the pupil should receive at home, or names a school where the provision will be received, but the parent/carer chooses to home educate the child, the LA will arrange the provision and ensure that it is suitable to the child's special educational needs. The LA will review this statement annually.
- The LA is responsible for liaising and sharing information with other agencies to support children who miss education.



- The LA is responsible for referring to the LA children's social care where there is concern for a child's welfare, as well as the police if there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed.

4.3 Parents/Carers

- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their children, who are of compulsory school age, are receiving suitable full-time education.
- 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.

5 Working with other Agencies

- Families moving from one LA to another can sometimes lead to a child being lost in the system and consequently missing education. When a child moves, LAs will work with other LAs, regionally or nationally, to ensure this does not happen.
- The LA will raise awareness of its procedures with local schools, partners and agencies working with children and families.
- To assist them in tracing CME, the LA has contacts with the Department for Work and Pensions, the UK Border Agency and HMRC.
- The school use a secure internet system, school2school, to allow schools to transfer pupil information when a child moves education setting.

In exceptional circumstances, a leave of absence can 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 authorised leave started.

6 Safeguarding

- The schools have a safeguarding duty towards their pupils and as such must investigate unexplained absences. The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. (Source KCSIE)
- 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 Learning



Mentor/Family Support Worker/ Lead CAF Officer or CAF Officer conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.

- The Learning Mentor will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to the children's social care via Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 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, in addition to the usual attendance procedures for following up absentees which include phone calls, letters, home visits:
 - Make contact with the parent/carer/other contacts, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
 - Make contact with sibling(s) school(s)
 - Make contact with known friends/parents within school
 - Check local databases
 - Check data transfer systems such as school2school or Key to Success
 - 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.

7 Admissions Register

- The 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. Where reasonably possible, the schools should hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil or student. This goes beyond the legal minimum and is good practice to give the school additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.



- Pupils will be recorded on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the school, or the day that the school has been notified, as the date that the pupil will attend the school.
- Once a pupil has been recorded on the admissions register, the school will notify the LA within five days, and will supply the LA with all of the details contained on the admissions register for the new pupil.
- Where a parent/carer notifies the school that a pupil 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 pupil will live
 - The new address
 - The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address

Where a parent/carer notifies the school that the pupil 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 pupil first attended, or is due to attend, that school
- Parents/carers are able to elect to educate their children at home, 'Elective Home Education'
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education> and will subsequently withdraw them from school. This can happen at any time, unless the pupil is subject to a School Attendance Order. If a parent/care notifies the School, the pupil will be deleted from our admission register and inform the LA. A parent / carer MUS write to the school. The school must not help the parent (as this could be viewed as coercion) it must be clear the reasons that the parent/ carer is taking up Elective Home Education.

8 Removing a Pupil from the Admissions Register

The school will inform the LA of any pupil who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents/carers and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home-schooled.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent/carer has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.



- 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.
- Are registered at more than one school, but have failed to attend the school and the proprietor of any other schools concerned have consented to the deletion.
- Have been granted authorised leave but have failed to attend school within 10 school 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 school days, and:
 - The absence was not authorised.
 - There is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school.
 - The LA and school is unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
 - Will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets, and the relevant person has
 - indicated the pupil will not attend the school, or, the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for sixth form.
- The school 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 pupil's name is actually removed.
- If a pupil's name is to be removed from the admissions register, the school will provide the LA with the following information: The full name of the pupil
 - The full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the pupil lives
 - At least one telephone number of the parent/carer with whom the pupil lives
 - The full name and address of the parent/carer who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable
 - The name of the pupil'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).



9 Missing Child during the School Day

At Howes, we have the highest regard for the safety of the children in our care. Staff will always be extremely aware of the potential for the children to go missing during sessions. Even when all precautions are properly observed, emergencies can still arise. Therefore, members of staff will

undertake periodic head counts, especially at the transition points between sessions [in addition to the registration procedures] If for any reason a member of staff cannot account for a child's whereabouts during a session at the school, the following procedures will be activated:

1. Registers must be completed within 30 minutes of the afternoon session commencing. The member of staff in question will inform the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the rest of the year group team that the child is missing, and a thorough search of the entire premises will commence. The staff team will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.
2. SLT will nominate two vigilant members of staff to search the area surrounding the entire premises (both inside and outside). All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the school.
3. If after 15 minutes of thorough searching the child is still missing, a member of the SLT will inform the police, the child's parent/carer, the Headteacher and the Chair of the Local Academy Committee.
4. While waiting for the police and parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, other members of staff will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children at the school.
5. The Headteacher or nominated person (in their absence) will be responsible for meeting the police and the missing child's parent/carer. The Principal or nominated person will co-ordinate any instructions by the police and do all they can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers.
6. Once the incident is resolved, the Headteacher and the staff team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement necessary changes (paying particular note to the relevant provisions of the school's site security).
7. All incidents of children going missing from the school will be recorded on CPOMs, and in cases where either the police or social services have been informed, OFSTED will also be informed as soon as is practicable.



10 Action and Responsibilities when the whereabouts of a Child 'subject to restrictions' is not known

A missing person's referral must be made by Home Office staff to the police, the UK Missing Person Bureau and the local authority children's social care in certain circumstances including

- When a child 'subject to restriction' is identified as having run away from their parents
- Where they are looked after and have gone missing from their placement
- Where they are being hidden by their parents and where there is concern for the child's safety because they are being hidden by, or have gone missing with, their family.
- A copy of the missing persons notification form must be emailed to the local authority duty desk and the UK MPB.
- If it is believed by Home Office staff that a child is being coerced to abscond or go missing, this must be reported as a concern that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm to the local police and children's social care services.

Notifications will also be made where a missing child is found by Home Office staff. See Home Office Guidance: Missing Children and Vulnerable Adults Guidance.

Local Authorities and Health agencies are responsible for:

- Reporting any missing child who is in their care to the police
- Notifying the Home Office when a child is reported missing to the police or is found.

The police are responsible for:

- Investigating all children reported missing by the Home Office – following receipt of a missing person's notification
- Conducting joint investigations with the Home Office where necessary
- Circulating a missing child on the Police National Computer (PNC).

The local authority will also notify the Home Office Evidence and Enquiry Unit when a child in their care goes missing or when a missing child returns or is found. The Home Office must maintain regular weekly contact with the local authority and the police until the child is found and record all contact with the police and local authority.



11 Action when the Child 'subject to restriction' is Found

11.1 Found by Home Office Staff

- The local police and local authority must be informed immediately. In consultation with the local police and local authority children's social care, a decision will be made as to where the child is to be taken, if they are not to be left at the address where they are encountered.
- The Home Office must follow up enquires with the local police and children/adult services in order to identify if there are any safeguarding issues.

11.2 Found by the Police or Local Authority

The Home Office Command and Control Unit [1] will be the single point of contact for the local police and the Evidence and Enquiry Unit [2] will be the single point of contact for local authorities to notify the Home Office that a child has been found.

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