



Children Missing Education Policy

Children Missing Education Policy (Including EYFS)

Policy Review Date: September 2025

Reviewed By: J Callaway, SLT & Board of Governors

Next Review: September 2026 (or following incident, legislation or interim guidance)

September 2025 Reviewed & ratified by:

Headteacher: Mrs J Callaway

Chair of Governors: Dr Catherine Kidd :

This policy is available on the school website and up on request.

Updates and Amendments to Policy

Date	Section Heading	Update Details	Page N°
Sept 2020		Updates in line with KCSIE 2020	
Sept 2021		Updates in line with KCSIE 2021	
Sept 2022		Updates in line with KCSIE 2022	
Sept 2023		Updates in line with KCSIE 2023	
Sept 2024		Updates in line with KCSIE 2024 (highlighted in yellow)	
Sept 2025		Updates in line with KCSIE 2025 (highlighted in green)	

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- **Legislation**

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

DfE (2018) 'Working together to safeguard children'

DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education'

DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

DfE (2020) 'School attendance'

DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'

Education Act 1996

Education Act 2002

Children Act 1989

Children Act 2004

Education and Inspections Act 2006

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Attendance Policy

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children missing from education (CME) risk underachieving, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life, and it can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including abuse and neglect.

- **Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy, a "child missing education" CME, is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by a Local Authority, 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, SEND.

- **Why children miss education**

There are a number of reasons as to why children miss school, including the following:

Failing to be registered at a school at the age of five

Failing to make a successful transition

Exclusion

Mid-year transfer of school

Families moving into a new area

Aside from these reasons, if a child is missing from school, particularly repeatedly, this can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, such as the following:

- Abuse and neglect – including child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE), potentially involving county lines
- So-called ‘honour-based’ abuse – including risk of FGM or risk of forced marriage
- Mental health issues – such as and including risk of substance abuse
- Risk of travelling to conflict zones

Staff will be aware that early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding relating to CME and to help prevent the risks of a pupil going missing in the future. All staff will be made aware of unauthorised absence procedures and this policy to ensure they know how to respond to possible cases of CME.

- **Children at particular risks of missing education**

As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education. The following list indicates pupils who are most at risk of missing education:

Pupils at risk of harm or neglect – where this is suspected, Wirral child protection procedures will be followed; however, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made immediately to children’s social care (and the police if appropriate). The Local Authority officers responsible for CME will check whether 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 Local Authority will contact the police.

Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families – when a GRT pupil leaves the school without naming their next destination school, the school will contact the Local Authority (LA) and seek further support.

Children of service personnel – the school will contact the Ministry of Defence Children’s Education Advisory Service for advice to ensure continuity of education for these children.

Missing children and runaways – should the school suspect a child has gone missing or run away, the DSL / Headteacher will consult the DfE for advice on missing children.

Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System – in this case, LA youth offending teams are responsible for supervising children (aged 8 to 18). Where a young person is registered at the school prior to custody, the school will keep the place open for their return.

Children who cease to attend school – where the reason for a child who has stopped attending a school is not known, the LA will investigate the situation.

Children of migrant families – there is an increased risk of a child missing education if they are part of a new migrant family who may not yet have settled into a fixed address, or may have arrived into an LA area without the authority becoming aware.

- **Roles and responsibilities**

School

School will notify the **Wirral authority (the LA)** when a pupil’s name is removed or added to the admission register at non-standard transitions, i.e. where a compulsory school-aged child leaves the school before completing the school’s final year or joins a school after the beginning of the school’s first year.

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 notify the LA at the earliest opportunity.

School will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

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

School will monitor pupils’ attendance through a daily attendance register. An appropriated response is needed when a child has poor attendance or is regularly missing education. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

School must inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- have been certified by an appropriate medical practitioner 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 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 proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- have been permanently excluded.

The school will inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or 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 (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

The school will notify the LA if any pupil is to be deleted from the admission register

School will contact the Wirral Admissions section: Tel: 0151 666 4600.

This should be done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register. It is essential that school complies with this duty, so that the local authority can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, or those 'unexplainable and / or persistent absences from education' follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

School will also comply with its duty to provide information to the local authority for standard transitions if requested.

Staff members

All staff will be alert to the potential need to implement early help for a pupil who is frequently missing or goes missing from care or home.

All staff will be aware of the school's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

Where staff have concerns about pupils relating to CME and their welfare, staff will inform the DSL or their deputy.

The Local Authority (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.

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 to assure the LA that their child is receiving such an education.

The LA will issue School Attendance Orders to parents 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 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 SEN 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 sharing the fact that a child has a social worker with the school.

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.

Parents

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

Parents 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 will notify the school regarding any absences or changes to the pupil's education arrangements.

- **Induction and training**

The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education will be explained to staff during their induction.

All staff will receive annual safeguarding and child protection training, including an update on the various safeguarding concern possibilities that CME could represent, any changes to the early help process and staff members' role in this process.

- **Working with others**

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. The school will ensure that staff are familiar with these procedures and when they need to be followed.

The school ensures that pupil information is transferred securely when a child moves education setting.

If a pupil with a social worker is absent from school for an unexplained reason or they are missing from education, the school will inform the pupil's social worker.

- **Safeguarding**

The school recognises that children missing from education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. Where there are concerns that a pupil missing from education is linked to a safeguarding issue, action will be taken in line with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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 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 Children's social care services or the 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, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Check local databases
- **Check data transfer systems**
- **Follow local information sharing arrangements, and make 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 make enquiries with neighbours or relatives, if appropriate**

Please note: 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.

- **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 newsletter.

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 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 are able to elect to educate their children at home 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 notifies the school, the pupil will be deleted from our admission register and inform the LA.

- **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 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 they nor their parent 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 (as set out in Children Missing Education 2013).
- The pupil was admitted to receive nursery education and since completion has not transferred to Reception, or a higher class, at the school.
- In addition the school has the right to remove a pupil subject to the terms and conditions of the school's own school/parent contract.

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), as outlined in [section 10](#) of this policy.
- Where the name of a pupil with a social worker is to be removed from the admissions register, the school will inform the pupil's social worker.

Wirral Attendance Service Contacts:

• School Attendance: schoolattendance@wirral.gov.uk

• Enforcement Action: educationpenaltnotices@wirral.gov.uk

• Children Missing from Education: cme@wirral.gov.uk

• Elective Home Education: ehe@wirral.gov.uk

• Children in Entertainment / Child Employment Licensing: childlicensing@wirral.gov.uk

- **Monitoring and review**

This policy is reviewed annually by the DSL / headteacher.

This policy was reviewed in line with the updated 'Keeping children safe in education' policy from September 2025.