



Stormont School

7g CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION POLICY

Last reviewed: Autumn 2023

Next review: Autumn 2024

Reviewed by: Deputy Head

The policy will be published on the website for current and prospective parents, governors, volunteers and staff.

INTRODUCTION

All staff should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of 145 substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so-called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their school or college's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures. (KCSIE 2023)

This policy is based on the Department for Education (DFE) document 'Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities September 2016' and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

This guidance includes the following key points:

1. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.
2. Children missing education 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. 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.
3. 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. Local authorities should focus their resources effectively in intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

ADMISSIONS REGISTER / FIRST ATTENDANCE

The School will enter all pupils' details on the electronic Admissions Register by the first day that the pupil is registered to attend the School. This will include contact details for at least two emergency contacts. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date the School will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the Local Authority at the earliest opportunity.

ATTENDANCE REGISTER

The School will record and monitor the attendance of all pupils through "taking a register" for each form at the start of both the morning and afternoon school sessions. The Local Authority will be notified in cases where:

- a pupil is absent from school, without authorised permission, for a period of 10 days or more
- a pupil has not returned to school after an authorised absence of ten consecutive days, except in exceptional circumstances where the school has been notified that a child is being educated elsewhere e.g. where a child is accompanying a parent on an overseas work placement and arrangements have been made to continue short term education whilst overseas or where the pupil is unable to attend school because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

The School will monitor the overall attendance statistics for pupils and there may be circumstances where, if this falls below 85%, Safeguarding concerns apply and the DSL will be notified. The DSL and Head will decide whether a referral to the Local Authority should be made. It is the responsibility of Form Teachers to regularly monitor attendance for children in their class and to inform the DSL / Head of Learning Support / Head (as appropriate) should there be any concern relating to the attendance of a pupil.

EXCLUDED PUPILS

In the unlikely event that any pupil is temporarily excluded from the School for a period exceeding 5 days then School will make arrangements for the pupil to continue her education at home.

MAINTAINING RECORDS

The School will take steps to ensure that contact details held in the electronic Admissions Register are kept up to date. Parents are encouraged to notify the School of any changes whenever they occur. When a pupil joins the school after the age of 5 the name of the pupil's previous school will be recorded. When a pupil leaves the School the destination school, where known, will be recorded.

SHARING INFORMATION WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

The School will notify the Local Authority when a pupil of compulsory school age leaves the School at a non-standard transition point e.g. other than at the end of the Summer Term at the end of Year 6. The School will provide the Local Authority with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives
- at least one telephone number (two wherever possible) of the parent(s) with whom the pupil lives
- where applicable the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil will be going to live with and the date the pupil is expected to start living there
- the name of the pupil's destination school and anticipated start date if known
- the reason/grounds why the pupil has left the school

The School will notify the Local Authority when a pupil joins the School and is added to the Admissions Register at a non-standard transition point. This would normally apply to all children except Nursery pupils and Reception pupils who have not yet reached compulsory school age. Notification will be provided within five days of the child starting at the School.

If requested, the School will provide the Local Authority with details of pupils joining or attending the school at 5 years of age.

To help safeguard children in Hertfordshire please contact:

csf.cme@hertfordshire.gov.uk

The Children Missing Education (CME) Officers will then check on all school aged children (aged 5 - 16) where it appears they don't have a school place and are not being taught outside of the school system.

Jacqui Ellis - CME Officer – West area – covering Watford & Three Rivers, St Albans & Dacorum, Hertsmere

Wendy Hasler – CME Officer – East area – covering East Herts & Broxbourne, Stevenage & North Herts, Welwyn & Hatfield

A child is not defined as missing from education if they have a school place but are not attending regularly, if they are being home educated or if they attend alternative provision such as a college or Education Support Centre.

Please do not contact the CME officer with enquiries relating to removal from roll. These should always be directed to the Attendance Duty Line:

East Area

Email: attendancedutyeast@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Tel : 01992 555261

West Area

Email: attendancedutywest@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01442 454778

UNKNOWN WHEREABOUTS OF A CHILD

Where the whereabouts of a child is unclear or unknown, it is reasonable to expect that the local authority and / or the School will complete and record one or more of the following actions:

- make contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours using known contact details;
- check local databases within the local authority;
- follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies e.g. those of housing providers, school admissions, health services, police, refuge, Youth Justice Services, children's social care, and HMRC;
- check with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and/or the Border Force;
- check with agencies known to be involved with family;
- check with local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known;
- check with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved;
- check with the local authority where the child lives, if different from where the school is;
- in the case of children of Service Personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS); and
- home visit(s) made by appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessment and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s) and relatives.

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive, and so local authorities and the School will treat each case on its individual merits and use its judgement, ensuring all of the facts of the case have been taken into account. It will be recognised that the type of reasonable enquiries required to try to locate a child will differ from case to case and additional enquiries to those suggested above may be necessary. Making these enquiries may not always lead to establishing the location of the child, but will provide a steer on what action should be taken next, for example, to contact the police, children's social care and, in cases where there may be concerns for the safety of a child who has travelled abroad, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CHILDREN AT PARTICULAR RISK OF MISSING EDUCATION

Staff should be aware that children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected the School will follow the local child protection procedures as stated in the School's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy.