

Children Absent from Education Policy



Approved by: Penny Harris (Director) Jane Cox (Director) **Date:** 1st September 2025

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Next review due by: 1st September 2026

All policies are generated and reviewed with an awareness of equality and diversity in relation to pupils, staff and visitors. All policies are generated and reviewed placing safeguarding and wellbeing at the heart of all that we do.

This policy has been written with regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Department for Education's guidance Children Missing Education.

Introduction

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Supporting children who are absent from education helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. Children missing education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse 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.

See also:

Admissions Policy

Attendance Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the School leader to:

1. Understand that lack of attendance may be a safeguarding issue.
2. Monitor pupil attendance through an attendance register taken twice daily and address poor or irregular attendance.
3. Ensure knowledge of local procedures relating to CME.
4. Ensure that attendance is reported to the local authority in a way that has been agreed.

5. Inform the local authority including social workers/virtual school if relevant of any pupil who has been absent for ten days without permission
1. Inform the local authority of any pupil who has been deleted from the admissions register, other than those at a natural transition point, e.g. moving on to further education at 16. The grounds for such deletions and information to be provided to the local authority can be found in 'Children Missing Education; Statutory Guidance - DfE September 2016.
2. Inform the local authority if a pupil who has been placed at the school does not arrive on the agreed date.
3. Have robust and evidenced strategies in place to improve attendance for pupils with irregular attendance.
4. Work with the local authorities designated professional (EWO or similar) to address irregular attendance.
5. Arrange full-time education for suspended pupils from the sixth day of a fixed period suspension.
6. Keep involved professionals informed of extended absences or deletions from the admissions register.
7. Make reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of a child who has ceased to attend. This is a joint responsibility with the local authority. The term 'reasonable enquiries' recognises that this could be limited and allows flexibility in decision making. In many cases On Track pupils are educated away from their local community, making it difficult to access information. Any action taken should be recorded. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate – see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy).
8. Be aware of the local authority threshold document, which includes the criteria for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services.

Parents' responsibilities

1. Parents must ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving efficient full-time education.

Children at a particular risk of missing education

1. Children missing education may be suffering abuse or neglect. If this is suspected, child protection procedures should be followed.
2. Children who are missing, or who have run away from home may be in serious danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation or abduction. Child protection procedures should be followed.
3. Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families can become disengaged from education. The local authority should be informed if a GRT pupil leaves without identifying a new destination school.
4. Children from Armed Forces families move frequently, often at short notice. The local authority should be informed if such a pupil stops attending.
5. Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System are at risk of disengaging from education. These pupils will be supervised by the local Youth Offending Team.
6. Children who cease to attend school may be as a result of parents deciding to home educate, in which case the School leader should inform the local authority. If the reason for ceasing to attend school is unknown, the local authority must also be informed to allow them to investigate and ensure the child is receiving suitable education. In these circumstances schools should ensure that they have confirmation from the local authority prior to removing a child from its roll.
7. Children of new migrant families may not have yet settled into a fixed address, or may have arrived without the authority becoming aware, increasing the risk of a child missing education.

The local authority is required to appoint a named person to whom schools can make referrals about children who are missing education. Where there is concern for a child's welfare, this should be referred to local authority children's social care. If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed, the police should also be involved. Where there is a concern that a child's safety or well-being is at risk, it is essential to take action without delay.

Review

In order to ensure that this policy is relevant, if you have any comments please email directors@ontrackededucation.com