



Children Missing in Education Policy

The DFE defines Children Missing Education as:

“All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being (suitably) educated otherwise (eg privately or in an alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more)”

Introduction

This policy is applicable to all Pre-Prep and Prep pupils, including those in the EYFS. The policy has regard to the School's Safeguarding Policy, Supervision of Pupils Policy, Registers Policy and Missing Child Policy and the guidance and advice contained in Keeping Children Safe in Education (January 2021) and Children Missing Education (September 2016).

Awareness of 'where children are' at any time is of fundamental importance to ensuring they remain within the reach of systems and procedures for their protection, not only in school but also in the wider community. Keeping children safe is a responsibility in law:

- For schools
- For parents and carers
- For local authorities

This policy focuses on three key areas:

- Keeping children identified in the education system (i.e. on roll at a school at all times)
- Keeping track of children during the school day
- Dealing with regular non-attenders

If children go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, it is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. The School will follow the procedures laid down by our Local Authority should a pupil fail to attend school regularly or has been absent from school without the School's permission for a continuous period of ten school days or more. The School will inform the Local Authority where a pupil's name is going to be deleted from the Admission Register on certain grounds. These are when a child has been taken out of school to be home educated, when a family has apparently moved away, when a child has been certified as medically unfit to attend, or when a child has been permanently excluded. Additionally, the School will inform the Local Authority of any pupil who is going to be added or deleted from the School's Admission Register at non-standard transition points in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

This will assist the Local Authority to:

- fulfil its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing 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, neglect or radicalization.

The School is aware that it has a duty to provide information to the Local Authority for standard transitions if requested. Should a child leave with no known destination the school will report this to the Local Authority and also inform the local authority where the child is normally resident.

Starting at School

When a child is registered to join our school and does not arrive, for the first ten school days the school will make discreet enquiries as to the whereabouts of the child. This should include trying to contact the parents/carers by telephone, email or letter. If the child joining Avon House is transferring from another school our Admissions Lead will contact the previous school to establish if the child has re-registered with them. If a child is starting school for the first time and moving from a nursery setting to Avon House, the Admissions Lead will contact the nursery provider to ascertain if the child is still registered and attending their setting. If the child is not attending the out-going school or nursery the Admissions Lead will contact the local authority.

Monitoring Attendance

We monitor children's attendance through our daily registration. Registration is electronic and carried out for the two school sessions (morning and afternoon).

Children's attendance is monitored by the school office staff daily and then reviewed half termly by the Deputy Head. Staff are alert to patterns of regular absence and will inform the DSL in line with other safeguarding concerns. If a child is absent, or fails to return from an agreed holiday, we will follow the normal procedures for investigating the absence, using 'reasonable enquiries'.

Absences

The School expects to be notified by parents or legal guardians of all pupil absences either in advance of the day or at the start of the day they are absent. The School has procedures for following up on any unexplained absences to:

- ascertain the reason of absence
- ensure that proper safeguarding action is taken
- identify whether the absence is approved or not
- identify that the register has been filled correctly

Any absences for which the reason remains unknown by the close of registration are followed up by school office staff who will contact parents in the first instance or, if necessary, the child's emergency contacts. The School will always aim to ascertain the reason for absence on the first day of absence. From the first day that a child does not attend School and there is no explanation or authorisation of the absence and/or the School is dissatisfied with the reason given for the absence, the following steps will be taken:

- The Deputy Head will make contact with the parents/carer to seek reassurance that the child is safe at home.
- The outcome of the contact will be assessed and if there are any concerns the DSL will be consulted to consider the child's vulnerability. A referral to children's social care will be made where there are any concerns that a child may be at risk of harm or suffering harm. Prolonged or repeated absences, or particular patterns of absence or lateness (with no satisfactory explanation) are treated by the School as potential safeguarding issues and in these instances the School will follow the procedures laid down by the Local Authority.

When a pupil leaves the School, the School will make contact with the receiving school to ensure the child is registered at the school. If a Child Protection file has been created, the DSL will then forward the appropriate records to the receiving school. When a pupil leaves the School without clear indication of a receiving school, the School will contact the Local Education Authority.

Missing Pupil Incident Book

The school must keep a written record of any incident of a missing pupil including:

- The pupil's name
- Relevant dates, times and when the pupil was first noticed missing
- The action taken to find the pupil
- Whether the police or children's services were involved
- Outcome and resolution of the incident
- Any reasons or information given by the pupil/s
- Any concerns or complaints about the handling of the incident
- A record of the staff involved

Missing Child Procedure

It is important to distinguish between a pupil's absence from school for an unknown reason (Children Missing from Education) and a pupil's disappearance from a lesson or activity on or off site after arrival at school. Both are considered as potential safeguarding matters. The procedures to follow if a child goes missing when in the care of the School are outlined in the School's Supervision of Pupils and Missing Child Policies.

This Policy is cross referenced with our Safeguarding, Supervision of Pupils, Missing Child and Registers policies.

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