

# **Children Missing in Education Policy**

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## 1. Background

All children are entitled to a full time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children missing education (CME) risk underachieving, being victims of abuse, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life. Effective information sharing between parents, schools, colleges, and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children are safe and receiving suitable education.

Children missing from education, particularly persistently, are at significant risk of underachieving and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life because they do not benefit from the opportunities that a high-quality education provides. They are also at significant risk of being victims of harm, exploitation and radicalisation. The drivers behind the factors that lead to CME can often be complex and variable, including: children who have never been registered at a school, children who have been taken off a school roll (e.g. by their parents or because they have not returned following a leave of absence and reasonable efforts have been made to locate the child), and children excluded from school, who are not being provided with suitable education at home or in another setting. It may also indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage.

Our response to children missing from education supports identifying such abuse and also helps prevent the risk of them going missing in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where going missing from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Once CME are identified, it is vital that these children are supported to access suitable education. The DfE has published a comprehensive school attendance strategy for staff to use which includes:

- ["Working together to improve school attendance"](#) guidance, which sets out expectations for schools, trusts, governing bodies and local authorities to manage and improve levels of school attendance.
- Establishing a better flow of pupil level attendance data – [collecting data directly from schools' electronic registers](#) to help the system identify those in need of support earlier.
- Specific support for the most vulnerable children, including through the [Supporting Families](#) programme.

Staff should be aware of this strategy and the procedures set out in this policy for identifying and dealing with unauthorised absence and children missing from education. It is vital therefore that each academy staff, the Trust, the local authority and other agencies work closely together to help safeguard our children

This policy meets the requirements of the following documents:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), DfE September 2023
- [Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities](#), DfE September 2016.
- Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (added by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)

- Education Act 1996 (section 7, 8, 14 and 19)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 4 and 38)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016

## 2. Definitions

A child is defined as missing in education if they haven't returned to school for 10 school days after an authorised absence (under regulation 8(1)(f)(iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) or 20 consecutive school days without authorised absence (under regulation 8(1)(h)(iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

Children particularly at risk of going missing from education include children who:

- Are at risk from harm or neglect
- Come from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families
- Come from families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families.

Children can become missing from education for a number of reasons:

- Fail to start appropriate provision and never enter the system
- Withdrawal by parents/carers
- Fail to complete a transition between schools/academies
- Children from refugee and asylum seeking families
- Children from families who are highly mobile e.g. parents in the Armed Forces, Gypsy, Romany and Traveller families and economic migrants
- Children at risk of a forced marriage
- Children subjected to female genital mutilation
- Children experiencing abuse and neglect
- Failure to return after a school/academies holiday
- No return after a period of suspension.

## 3. Hatton Academies Trust Academy Responsibilities

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that academy staff follow the requirements of legislation and this policy. The day to day management of CME may be delegated to other staff but their role should be clearly set out in their job description.

The law requires all schools and academies to have an admissions register and an attendance register. A pupil must be placed on the admissions register on the first day on which the academy has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the academy. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the academy should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity to prevent the child from going missing from education.

Academies must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. Attendance should be monitored and any issues addressed. The local authority must be informed of

any pupil who fails to attend regularly, or has been absent without the academy's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

Each Academy should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

Where a pupil has not returned to the Academy for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the Academy and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the Academy does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Each Academy must also arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a suspension.

#### **4. Hatton Academies Trust Procedures**

##### **4.1 Registers and admissions**

It is important that the admissions register is accurate and kept up to date. Academies should regularly encourage parents to inform them of any changes whenever they occur e.g. through newsletters and the website.

Where a parent notifies an academy that a pupil will live at another address, all academies are required to record on the admission register:

- The full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
  - The new address; and
  - The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.
- Where a parent of a pupil notifies the academy that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in the future, the academy must record in the admission register:
- The name of the new school; and
  - The date on which the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

The Academy is required to notify the local authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register. The academy will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This does not apply to pupils who are registered at the start of the academy's youngest year group.

##### **4.2 Day 1 to Day 9 of non-attendance**

The Attendance Officer will attempt to contact parent/carer/family/neighbours every day as to the whereabouts of the pupil. This should include the usual academy attendance management processes such as truancy call system, telephone calls and texts, email, letters to the family and home visits. They should record that they have completed these procedures.

If a child does not attend at the beginning of each term and contact has not been made by the parent/carer then the Attendance Officer will be alerted and a home visit will occur. Should there be any concern then the Attendance Officer will alert safeguarding teams and education entitlement services.

If there are previous concerns regarding a pupil the social services will be contacted on the first day of non-arrival. This contact will be made by the DSP (or Deputy) for child protection or another senior member of staff.

Throughout the year pupils are monitored daily to ensure that each pupil is accounted for. Home visits and contact will be made as necessary. Education Entitlement Service team will be alerted on day 10 if a student is not seen or contact cannot be made.

#### **4.3 Non-arrival of new pupils expected in a Trust Academy**

Pupils who do not arrive on the first day at the academy or pupils whose parents'/carers contact the academy to inform that they do not require the place, this will be investigated as follows:

1. The Admissions Officer, informs the Principal or other senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance.
2. The Principal/SLT lead for CME liaises with the Attendance Officer regarding any issues from the feeder school.
3. Attendance Officer makes an attempt to contact the family. If unsuccessful within 3 school days the Attendance Officer will refer the matter to NNC Admissions.
4. Information from the parent/carer for pupil non-arrival is also to be referred to the NNC Admissions Department to confirm the pupil(s) has an alternative place.
5. Check with local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known.
6. Check Key to Success or school2school (s2s) systems.
7. Check with agencies known to be involved with family.
8. 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 Office.

#### **5. Data systems**

The final stage in all cases is pupil information should be entered / amended on the SIMS.net. Common Transfer File (CTF) guidance makes it clear that academies are strongly encouraged to send a CTF when a pupil leaves to attend another school or academy. Hatton Academies Trust academies are required to do so in order to support avoidance of CME and other child protection issues.

#### **6. Removal from role**

Pupils must not be deleted from any Trust Academy's role until confirmed. An accurate reason for leaving should be entered. The DfE guidance linked to above explains that where a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point (i.e. not including pupils who have completed the academy's final year) for any of the fifteen reasons set out in the 2006 regulations (see Appendix A), the academy must notify the LA as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. An academy can remove a child from roll when directed by EIP or Virtual School only when they have confirmation the new county's attendance team has taken responsibility for the child being missing in education within their county.

In a small number of cases, pupils removed from the admission register would be a standard transition but their transfer to another school would be a non-standard transition and vice-versa. For example, a pupil leaving a primary school at the end of Year 2 is a non-standard transition, but their transfer to a junior school at the beginning of Year 3 is a standard transition. In such cases, only the school where the non-standard transition occurs is under an automatic duty to notify the local authority. The local authority would need to make a request for the information from the other school, if they required information on the standard transition.

The DfE encourages academies to send a Common Transfer File to the new school using the secure internet system school2school. This also has a searchable area for information on pupils.

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with:

- a. the full name of the pupil;
- b. the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- c. at least one telephone number of the parent with whom the pupil lives;
- d. the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- e. the name of pupil's destination school and the pupil's expected start date there, if applicable; and
- f. the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register (see Appendix A).

**Appendix A. Grounds for deleting a pupil from the academy admission register**

<b>Grounds for deleting a pupil of compulsory school age from the school admission register set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended</b>	
1	8(1)(a) - where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
2	8(1)(b) - except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he has been registered as a pupil at another school.
3	8(1)(c) - where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion.
4	8(1)(d) - in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.
5	8(1)(e) - except in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered.
6	8(1)(f) - in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1 A), that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted;</li> <li>(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and</li> <li>(iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.</li> </ul>
7	8(1)(g) - that he is 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 nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
8	8(1)(h) - that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and:



	<p>(i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);</p> <p>(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and</p> <p>(iii) the proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.</p>
9	8(1)(i) - that he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.
10	8(1)(j) - that the pupil has died.
11	<p>8(1)(k) - that the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and:</p> <p>(i) the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school; or</p> <p>(ii) the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form.</p>
12	8(1)(l) - in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school.
13	8(1)(m) - that he has been permanently excluded from the school.
14	8(1)(n) - where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.
15	<p>8(1)(o) where:</p> <p>(i) the pupil is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy;</p> <p>(ii) charges for board and are payable by the parent of the pupil; and</p> <p>(iii) those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.</p>