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CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION (CME) POLICY			

Statement of intent

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.

The LA has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and help them back into education. This policy highlights what our school will do to help the LA with its duty.

The reasons why children go missing from home or care are complex and frequently involve a number of 'push' and 'pull' factors which should not be viewed in isolation from a child's daily life experiences. Every absence or missing occurrence will warrant professional attention, and a consistent and coherent response in order to safeguard children from any risk of harm. Any missing episode will always be treated as a clear indicator that something is not right in the child's life.

The following safeguarding principles underline this policy:

- The safety and welfare of the missing child is paramount;
- Locating and returning the missing child to a safe environment is the main objective;
- Whenever there are concerns that a child who has been, or is missing, has suffered or is likely to suffer, Significant Harm, the West Yorkshire Consortium Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures will be followed.


This policy applies to all children who are absent or go missing, including;

- All children under 18 who go missing from their family home;
- All children in the care of a local authority Children's Home within West Yorkshire;
- All children in the care of a West Yorkshire local authority, placed outside of West Yorkshire with a host authority;
- All children in the care of a West Yorkshire local authority, placed with local authority foster carers;
- All children placed in private establishments or with Independent Fostering Agencies within West Yorkshire, where compliance with this policy is specified in the contract or placement agreement;
- Children in the care of a responsible local authority who are placed in West Yorkshire (as the host authority); and
- All children admitted to hospitals and mental health units in West Yorkshire

Legal framework

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

- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2018
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2019
- DfE 'Children missing education' 2016
- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2011
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016)

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- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended in 2016)
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2012)
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2014

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, a CME is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by an LA, 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, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Child	Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.
Missing child	A child reported as missing to the Police by their family or carers.
Absent Child	A child not at a place where they are expected or required to be.
Child Looked After	A child who is looked after by a local authority by reason of a Care Order, or accommodated under section 20 of the Children Act 1989
Away from placement without authorisation	A Child Looked After whose whereabouts are known but who is not at their placement or place they are expected to be and the <i>carer has concerns or the incident has been notified to the local authority or the Police.</i>
Responsible local authority	The local authority that is responsible for a Child Looked After's care and care planning.
Host local authority	The local authority in which a Child Looked After is placed when placed outside of the responsible local authority's area.
Absconded	When a missing child is subject to a court order, such as curfew or bail conditions.


N.B. For the purposes of this protocol a child who has run away or who is missing will be defined as a missing child when the episode has been reported to the Police.

The Police categories of missing do NOT incorporate Children Looked After who are 'away from placement without authorisation'.

Why children miss education

Keeping Children Safe In Education (KCSIE 2022) states: 'All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their schools or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.'

The most common reasons for children missing school include the following:

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- 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

Children at particular risks of missing education

As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, the LA will make a judgement on a case-by-case basis. The following list indicates pupils who are most at risk of missing education:

Pupils at risk of harm or neglect – where this is suspected, local child protection procedures will be followed; however, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children’s social care (and the police if appropriate). The LA officers responsible for CME will check 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 LA 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 LA. If necessary, the school will consult the LA Traveller Education Support Services/named CME officer for advice on the best strategies to ensure minimal disruption to the GRT pupil’s education.

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/runaways – should the school suspect a child has gone missing/run away, an appropriate staff member 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

The school


- The 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.

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- 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 consider notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity.
- The school will keep an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents/carers to inform them of any changes.
- The school will monitor pupils' attendance through our daily register.
- The school will agree with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of pupils who are regularly absent from school, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.
- Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admission register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.
- The school will notify the LA if any pupil is to be deleted from the admission register in the circumstance outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016).
- Pupils who remain on the school roll are not necessarily missing education, but will be monitored and attendance will be addressed when it is poor.
- The school will arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion.
- The school will provide information to the LA regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the LA.

The 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.
- The LA will provide full-time education for permanently excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion.
- 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/carers to assure the LA that their child is receiving such an education.
- The LA will issue School Attendance Orders to parents/carers 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/carers 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.

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- Pupils with special educational needs 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/carers 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 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/carers

- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their children, who are of compulsory school age, are receiving suitable full-time education.
- Parents/carers 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/carers will notify the school regarding any absences or changes to the pupils education arrangements.


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.
- To assist them in tracing CME, the LA has contacts with the Department for Work and Pensions, the UK Border Agency and HMRC.
- Paradise Primary School uses a secure internet system, to allow schools to transfer pupil information when a child moves education setting

Safeguarding

The schools have a safeguarding duty towards their pupils and as such must investigate unexplained absences. The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. KCSIE 2018

- 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 designated safeguarding lead (DSL)/SMT conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.
- The DSL/SMT will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to the children's social care via Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or police.


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- School's Child Protection Policy 2021-22 states: 'To raise concerns about children, members of staff should contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) by telephone to discuss the referral. They should then complete the online Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) and submit this to the MASH. The school will follow up referrals if we do not receive feedback from social care.'
- 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/carers, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
 - Check local databases
 - Check data transfer systems such as Key to Success
 - Follow local information sharing arrangements, and making 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 making enquiries with neighbours or relatives, if appropriate

NB. 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. The school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each student. This goes beyond the legal minimum and is good practice to give the school additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.
- 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/carers 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/carers with whom the pupil will live
 - The new address
 - The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address

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- Where a parent/carers 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/carers 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/carers notifies Paradise Primary School, the pupil will be deleted from our admission register and inform the LA.

Removing a pupil from the admissions register


Paradise Primary 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/carers 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 a medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school and neither he/she nor his/her parent/carers has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school.
- 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.

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/carers with whom the pupil lives
- At least one telephone number of the parent/carers with whom the pupil lives

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- 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
- Start Date On roll of Pupil and Last Date On Roll
- 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 the above section of this policy.

Responding to a child who is absent

Absent: A child not at a place where they are expected or required to be.

When a child is absent and parents/carers have not informed the school, then the school will call the parents to determine the reason for absence. (See attendance policy)

When a child is absent from home, parents/carers and the school should consider the child's individual circumstances and any additional vulnerabilities (such as their age, level of understanding, friendships / associations and / or substance misuse).

Periods of absence may involve children staying out longer than agreed, either purposely, accidentally or to test boundaries, and may include:

- Not arriving home at an agreed time;
- Staying out at a known location
- Being with friends;
- Attending a known address;
- Being at the home of family members


In these types of situations it is appropriate to initially consider the child as absent, and at this stage it would not be necessary to report the child as missing to the Police

When a child is absent, the child's parent/carers/school should take all reasonable and practical steps to establish the whereabouts of the child confirm their well-being and return them home.

Police assistance to return an absent child home should only be sought if:

- Access to the child is being denied;
- There is evidence to suggest the child is at risk of harm; or
- It is necessary to prevent a breach of the peace.

If the child refuses to return, their parent or carer and /or the child's social worker will need to make a decision about whether to allow the child to temporarily remain at that location. When the child is subject of a Social Care Single Assessment and /or a S47 Child Protection Enquiry, is a Child in Need or subject to a Child Protection Plan or is Looked After, any decision to allow them to remain at an alternative location, and the reasons for this, must be clearly recorded on their electronic record.

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Reporting a Missing Child to the Police

Missing: A child whose whereabouts cannot be established and who has been reported to the Police as missing. They will be considered as missing until located and their well-being or otherwise is confirmed.

When a child is reported as missing, the Police will request the following information to assess the level of risk (if any) the child is likely to face:

- Name and gender of the child (including all names and aliases), their date of birth and age;
- Description of the child and their clothing;
- The child's home address (and, if different, the child's family home address);
- The location the child is missing from, and details of when the child was last seen and the details of the person who last saw them;
- Whether this is out of character, and if they have been missing before, if so, how often, and what were the circumstances?*
- Circumstances of the missing episode, including any signs of pre-planning (have they taken any money, clothing? Did they tell anyone they intended to leave?);
- Whether the child has any illnesses or takes any medication; Whether they have mental health problems and /or if there are concerns for the child's emotional well-being;
- If the child has any issues with alcohol/drug misuse, and/or if the child has recently received any unexplained items or money;
- The child's mobile phone number;
- If any contact has been made with the child;
- Details of the child's social media profiles;
- Locations where the child may have gone, including places where they normally go, any places where they have been found previously, and details of any friends and associates they may be with;
- Name, address and telephone number of the reporting person and their relationship to the child; and
- Summary of all actions already undertaken to locate the child.


*The fact that a vulnerable child has a history of going missing (including any occurrences of absence) does not mitigate risk, and each report of missing will be considered in its own right.

Planning for the Child's Return

Planning for a child's return is extremely important, especially in relation to children who go repeatedly missing and / or those who are assessed as high risk. This planning may include identifying suitable alternative short term accommodation for the child. It is important that if alternative accommodation is required, that this is risk assessed and meets the child's needs. Children must not be placed in accommodation that leaves them vulnerable.

Consideration should be given as to who will support the child once they have been found / returned and to who is the most appropriate person to conduct an Independent Return Interview with the child.

When the child returns or is located, all individuals who were notified of the child's absence should be advised without delay so that they can support the child (and their family / carers).

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Missing Child during the school day

Our school has the highest regard for the safety of the children in our care. Staff will always be extremely aware of the potential for the children to go missing during school time.

Even when all precautions are properly observed, emergencies can still arise. Therefore, members of staff will undertake periodic head counts, especially at the transition points between lessons, break, lunch [in addition to the registration procedures] If for any reason a member of staff cannot account for a child's whereabouts during a session at the school, the following procedures will be activated:

- The member of staff in question will inform the Head/Deputy headteacher/Senior Management Team (SMT) and the rest of the year group team that the child is missing, and a thorough search of the entire premises will commence. The staff team will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.
- The Head/Deputy headteacher/SMT will nominate two vigilant members of staff to search the area surrounding the entire premises (both inside and outside). All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the school.
- If after 15 minutes of thorough searching the child is still missing, a member of the SMT will inform the police, the child's parent/carer, governing body. While waiting for the police and parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, other members of staff will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children at the school.
- The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher or nominated person (in their absence) will be responsible for meeting the police and the missing child's parent/carer. The Headteacher or nominated person will co-ordinate any instructions by the police and do all they can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers.
- Once the incident is resolved, the Principal and the staff team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement necessary changes (paying particular note to the relevant provisions of the school's site security and risk assessment policy).
- All incidents of children going missing from the school will be recorded on the safeguarding system, and in cases where either the police or social services have been informed, OFSTED will also be informed as soon as is practical.

Contact number of the Police:

West Yorkshire Police, Dewsbury

Aldams Road, Dewsbury


WF12 8AR

01924 431059

Policy review

This policy is reviewed every two years by the DSL and the Headteacher

The scheduled review date for this policy is January 2021.

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Appendix A

Legislation

There are various statutory duties upon LAs and parents (supplemented by guidance) relating to the provision of education and the safeguarding of the welfare of children and which may be relevant to children missing education. The principal provisions are as follows:

- **Section 14(1) of the 1996 Education Act** provides that a local education authority must make sure there are sufficient schools for providing education in their area. For these purposes, the schools must be sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide all pupils with the opportunity of appropriate education (s. 14(2)). "Appropriate education" means, broadly education which is desirable in view of the pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes and the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school (s. 14(3)).
- **Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act** provides that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- A new duty under **section 436a of the Education Act 1996** now requires all local authorities to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of all children and young people residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. Suitable Education means full-time education suitable to his age, ability, and aptitude and to any special education need he may have. The duty applies in relation to children and young people of compulsory school age who are not on school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school (for example, at home, privately, or in alternative provision).
- **Section 437 (1) of the 1996 Education Act** provides that if it appears to a local education authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they must serve a notice in writing on the parent ("a school attendance order") requiring him to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education.
- **Section 19 (1) of the 1996 Education Act** requires every local education authority to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them. For these purposes, "suitable" education is defined as "efficient education suitable to the age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs the child (or young person) may have." (s.19(6)).
- **Section 19(4A) of the 1996 Education Act provides:**
 "In determining what arrangements to make under subsection (1) in the case of any child or pupil, a Local Authority shall have regard to guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State."
- **Section 175 of the Education Act 2002** (which came into force on June 1 2004) imposes a duty upon LAs and governing bodies to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. For these purposes, "functions" includes the powers and duties of LAs and governing bodies.