



Children Missing Education Policy

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Definition of Children Missing Education
3. The Duty of Local Authority
4. The Role of Schools
5. Reports of children missing from home
6. Procedure for removal from Admission register
7. Vulnerable pupils
8. Related Legislation + useful links



1. Introduction

A child missing from education is defined as being of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, in independent schools or in alternative provision) or who has been out of any educational provision for four weeks or more.

- 1.1 All professionals working with children, as well as the wider community can help by remaining vigilant to children's safety. The law states that every child should be receiving an education, and we stand a better chance of ensuring a child's safety if we know where and how they are receiving this.
- 1.2 The Policy is intended to inform Local Authority (LA) officers, schools, governing bodies and other involved agencies about the policy and procedures to be followed in order to identify and maintain contact with children missing education. It also provides information on current developments for identifying those at risk of going missing from education.
- 1.3 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on Local Authorities in England and Wales to make arrangements to identify children and young people of compulsory school age missing education in their area.
- 1.4 The DFE document "Working Together to Safeguard Children – A guide to inter-agency working to Safeguard and promote the welfare of children, which was originally published in March 2010, and revised in 2013 and 2015 says "There is Children Missing Education (CME) named point of contact in every Local Authority. Every Practitioner working with a child has a responsibility to inform their CME Professions find children who are missing from education and identify those that are at risk of going missing from education; guidance was issued in July 2004, identifying and maintaining contact with children missing, or at risk of going missing from education.

2. Definition of Child Missing Education

<https://www.education.gov.uk>

A child missing from education is defined as being of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll nor being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, in independent schools or in alternative provision) or who has been out of any educational provision for four weeks or more.

3. Duty of Local Authority

- 3.1 As an LA, we have a duty under s436A of the Education Act 1996 to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in our area who are of compulsory school age but who are not registered pupils at a school or receiving some other form of suitable education. We therefore must identify all children within our area and ensure that they are either registered pupils at a maintained, non-maintained or independent school, or that they are receiving another form of suitable education.



3.2 The Local authority has a duty to act in accordance with the aforementioned Statutory Guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education, published in November 2013. This requires us to “put in place arrangements for joint working and information sharing with other local authorities and relevant partner agencies that come into contact with children and families”. The guidance makes clear that such “partner agencies” will include all types of education providers both maintained and independent schools, and local authorities are recommended to maintain a database of all school-age children, along with how they are educated.

3.3 As outlined above, the obligation under s436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify children who are not receiving a suitable education includes a duty under S437 of the same Act to intervene if it appears that a child is not receiving a suitable education. Local authorities also have a duty under S175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children through their educational obligations.

3.4 Missing out on learning is also linked to other problems in later life including

- Unemployment
- Homelessness
- Criminal and anti-social behavior
- Substance abuse
- Teenage parenthood
- Mental health and self-esteem issues
- Physical health issues
- Forced marriage

To limit the opportunity for children to go missing when they fall out of the education system, Wokingham Borough Council has a range of processes and procedures including:

- Regular monitoring of school attendance and auditing for school registers
- Maintenance of a “Central Register “of children at risk of missing education,
- Multi-agency meetings to track children out of mainstream education
- Monitoring of children educated by their parents (EOTAS)
- Identifying children who are “travelling”
- Multi-agency agreement on procedures to be adopted when children go missing or run away from home or from the care of the local authority
- A coordinated Admissions scheme



4. The role of schools

- It is understandable and appropriate that schools should be concerned about revealing personal information about pupils, However all information held by WBC is processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. Under paragraph 5 (C) of Schedule to Act, personal information can be disclosed where necessary for the exercise of any function given to any person under an enactment.
- When a child is expected to join a school and does not arrive, the school should initially try to contact the parents/carers by telephone or letter to find out why. If, after one week this has not been successful, the school should contact School Admissions Team to establish if the child has been registered elsewhere.
- If the child is not found to be on roll elsewhere, the school should contact their LA to investigate.
- If after four school weeks (20 school days) the child has not been located, the school should complete and submit a CME referral Form.
- If a child is absent from school for a prolonged period, or fails to return from an agreed holiday, the school should follow their normal procedures for investigating the absence. If this is not successful an Early Help Assessment request can be made to WBC for them to investigate further.
- If a child is absent from school because they are believed to have moved away, the parents and emergency contacts cannot be reached, the school should contact WBC
- When WBC has investigated, but not located the child and four school weeks (20 school days) have elapsed, schools should follow the procedure outlined in 3.4
- If there is a concern regarding the immediate safety of the child First Response must be contacted
- It is the decision of the Head teacher of the school as to when to remove a child from roll, however deletions from a school roll can usually be made after four school weeks (20 school days)continuous absence where all reasonable attempts have been made to trace a child and the CME team have been notified. In these circumstances the child's details should also be uploaded on the Teacher net s2slost pupils database.
- There is a statutory guidance when schools can delete children from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 8 of Education (pupil registration) Regulations 2006.

5. Reports of Children Missing from home

If a parent reports to a school that their child has gone missing from home they should advise them to contact the Local Police station to inform them that the child is missing.

6. Procedure for Removal from Admissions Register

There are strict rules on when schools can delete pupils from their admission register. These are outlined in Regulation 9 of the Education (pupil registration) regulations 1995 as amended.

When a pupil's name is removed from the admissions register, the school must clearly indicate the date and reason for the removal. In the event of a pupil moving to another School the name of the new school and the leaving date should be indicated in the releasing school's system.



7. Vulnerable pupils

If a child goes missing from your school, and

- Is looked after or subject of a protection plan
- It is suspected that they are being sent out of UK for a forced marriage or female circumcision or
- It is suspected they may have been abducted (particularly where there are domestic abuse circumstances).
- There is any concern regarding safeguarding or vulnerability

In the first instance, contact the duty social worker at the Referral & Assessment Team on 0118 9088002 without delay.

Related Legislation and useful links

- **Children Act 2004**
- **Children Missing Education – Dfe Statutory guidance for Local authorities**
- **Education Action 1996**