# Oakfield Primary School

# Children Missing Education Policy

Last updated: October 2025

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## 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 Local Authority with its duty.

Signed by:

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| | Headteacher | Date: | |
| | Chair of governors | Date: | |

## 1. Legal framework

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

- DfE (2018) 'Working together to safeguard children'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2022) 'School attendance'
- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended in 2018)
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2018)
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2014)

## 2. Definitions

2.1. For the purpose of this policy, a "child missing education" is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by a Local Authority, 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, SEND.

## 3. Why children miss education

3.1. There are a number of reasons as to why children miss school, including the following:

- 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
- Poor levels of attendance, non-attendance and lateness

3.2. Aside from these reasons, if a child is missing from school, particularly repeatedly, this can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, such as the following:

- Abuse and neglect – including child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE), potentially involving county lines
- So-called 'honour-based' abuse – including risk of FGM or risk of forced marriage
- Mental health issues – such as risk of substance abuse
- Risk of travelling to conflict zones

## 4. Children at particular risks of missing education

4.1. As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, the Local Authority 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 will be made immediately to children's social care (and the police if appropriate). The LA officers responsible for CME will check whether 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 Education Inclusion Team (01724 29700) 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 and runaways** – should the school suspect a child has gone missing or 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.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

**The school**

5.1. 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.

5.2. 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 - see Reporting Absence flow chart.

5.3. The school will aim to hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

5.4. The school will keep an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents to inform them of any changes.

5.5. The school will monitor pupils' attendance through a daily register (Scholar Pack) taken once in the morning (8.50 am) and once in the afternoon (1.15pm).

5.6. 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.

5.7. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 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.

5.8. 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).

5.9. Pupils who remain on the school roll are not necessarily missing education, but will be monitored and their attendance will be addressed when it is poor.

5.10. The school will arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed-period exclusion.

5.11. The school will provide information to the LA regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the LA.

**Staff members**

5.12. All staff will be alert to the potential need to implement early help for a pupil who is frequently missing or goes missing from care or home.

5.13. All staff will be aware of the school's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

5.14. Where staff have concerns about pupils relating to CME, staff will use their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated to the

Designated Safeguarding Officer, Designated Safeguarding Lead or their deputy.

**The LA**

5.16. 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.

5.17. The LA will provide full-time education for permanently excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed-period exclusion.

5.18. 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 to assure the LA that their child is receiving such an education.

5.19. The LA will issue School Attendance Orders to parents who fail to assure the LA that their child is receiving a suitable education, and the LA believes that the child should attend school.

5.20. The LA will prosecute parents that do not comply with a School Attendance Order.

5.21. The LA will prosecute or fine parents/carers of school-registered children who fail to ensure their child attends school regularly.

5.22. The LA will ensure that children identified as not receiving suitable education are returned to full-time education either at the school or elsewhere.

5.23. The LA will ensure that the school demonstrates prompt action and effective early intervention procedures to ensure children are safe and receiving suitable education.

5.24. The LA will apply to court for an Education Supervision Order for a CME.

5.25. 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.

5.26. Pupils with SEN 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/carer 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.

5.27. The LA is responsible for liaising and sharing information with other agencies to support children who miss education.

5.28. The LA is responsible for sharing the fact that a child has a social worker with the school.

5.29. 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**

5.30. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children, who are of compulsory school age, are receiving suitable full-time education.

5.31. Parents 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.

5.32. Parents will notify the school regarding any absences or changes to the pupil's education arrangements.

## 6. Induction and training

6.1. The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education will be explained to staff during their induction.

6.2. All staff will receive annual safeguarding and child protection training, including an update on the various safeguarding concern possibilities that CME could represent, any changes to the early help process and staff members' role in this process.

## 7. Working with others

7.1. 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.

7.2. The LA will raise awareness of its procedures with local schools, partners and agencies working with children and families.

7.3. To assist them in tracing CME, the LA has contacts with the Department for Work and Pensions, the UK Border Agency and HMRC.

7.4. The school uses a secure internet system (CPoms) to allow secure transfer of pupil information when a child moves education setting.

## 8. Safeguarding

8.1. 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.

8.2. In line with the Children Act 2004, the school will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the DSO conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.

8.3. The DSO will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary and after discussion with the DLS will make a referral to the children's social care or police.

8.4. 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/carer, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Check local databases
- Check school data transfer system (CPoms)
- 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.

## 9. Admissions register

9.1. 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, dojo or newsletters.

9.2. 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.

9.3. 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.

9.4. Where a parent/carer 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/carer with whom the pupil will live
- The new address
- The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address

9.5. Where a parent 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

9.6. Parents 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 notifies the school, the pupil will be deleted from our admission register and inform the LA.

## 10. Removing a pupil from the admissions register

10.1. The 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 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 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 they nor their parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- 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.
- Will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets, and the relevant person has indicated the pupil will not attend

the school, or, the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for sixth form.

- The pupil was admitted to receive nursery education and since completion has not transferred to Reception, or a higher class, at the school.

10.2. 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.

10.3. 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/carer with whom the pupil lives
- At least one telephone number of the parent/carer with whom the pupil lives
- 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
- 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 section 10 of this policy.

## 11. Monitoring and review

11.1. This policy is reviewed every two years_by the DSL and DSO.

11.2. This policy was reviewed in line with the updated 'Keeping children safe in education' policy from September 2024.

**Absence Reporting Flow Chart** (to support swift and timely actions to be taken)

Register completed at 8.50 am daily by the class teacher, Attendance Officer to make daily checks.

Non-attendance reported by parent / carer on the first day of a child's absence (as per attendance policy) by 9.30 am

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| If reason for non- attendance has not been reported by the parent / carer by 9.30 am, Attendance Officer to contact parents immediately to seek reason for absence, or other authorised numbers from the contact list. In the case of CIN or LAC pupils, Learning Mentor to contact social worker. | If non - attendance has been reported, the appropriate code is entered into the register and Attendance Officer to request daily updates via phone call and medical evidence, where necessary |

If after 24 hours, the child remains absent from school with no reason for absence having been reported, a home visit to be carried out by the Learning Mentor + 1.

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| If the child is not seen or there is no one at home when the home visit takes place, a courtesy slip is left at the address explaining that school called and to make contact with school as soon as possible. Ask neighbours if possible. Refer to Children's Services immediately if there are any safeguarding concerns raised by neighbour, or if the house is empty. | If the child is seen on the home visit and appropriate reason given for absence, parents to be reminded of legal obligation to report absence, ask for any medical evidence and Attendance team to monitor. |

If no contact made after 48 hours, a further home visit to be carried out by Learning Mentor + 1.

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| **If the child is not seen or there is no one at home when the visit takes place and there are concerns about the welfare of the child, Children's Services to be contacted, or...** | If the child is seen on the home visit and appropriate reason given for absence, parents to be reminded of legal obligation to report to school on the first morning of absence, ask for any medical evidence and Attendance Team to monitor daily. |

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| If there are no immediate safeguarding concerns and the child is not known to any other agencies, Education and Inclusion Officer to be informed if the child has not attended for 10 consecutive days without providing reasonable explanation. | |