



Bill Quay Primary School

Children Missing
from Education
Policy

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Statement of intent

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances.

The Local Authority (LA) has a legal duty to identify when there are Children Missing from Education (CME) and help them back into education. This policy highlights what we will do to help the LA with its duty.

This policy complies with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Dfe 'Working together to safeguard children' 2018
- Dfe 'Keeping children safe in education' 2020
- Dfe 'Children missing education' 2016
- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004

Definition

Children Missing Education (CME) refer to all children who are of compulsory school age and are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time. At Bill Quay Primary School, we will refer a pupil to the Local Authority for further investigation if s/he has been continually absent for more than 10 school days without permission and the school has carried out reasonable checks and failed to establish the child's whereabouts and the reason for absence.

Compulsory School Age

Compulsory School Age – A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1st January and 31st March, they are of compulsory school age on 31st March; if they turn 5 between 1st April and 31st August they are of compulsory school age on 31st August; if they turn 5 between 1st September and 31st December they are compulsory school age on 31st December. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year they reach sixteen.

A **Parent** is defined in Section 576, Education Act 1996 as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural person, has parental responsibility for a child or young person

- Any person who has care of a child (having care of a child or young person means that the child lives with and is looked after by that person, irrespective of their relationship)

Identifying CME

Typically, there are the following categories of CME:

- On a school roll, not attending and family whereabouts unknown
- Of compulsory school age but not on a school roll and not receiving a suitable education otherwise
- Of compulsory school age but not on roll and whose whereabouts are unknown

Examples include:

- A child who has moved to Gateshead with no school identified
- A child who has left private schooling with no school identified
- A child who is deemed not to be receiving suitable education whilst being Electively Home Educated
- A child who was due to take up an allocated school place but has failed to attend, despite school checks
- A child who has 10 or more days of continuous school absence without explanation, despite school checks
- A child who is not at their last known address, despite school checks
- A child who has suddenly and unexpectedly left school and their destination is unknown, despite school checks

Children who are at a particular risk 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 – when 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) as per our safeguarding policies. The LA officers responsible for CME will check that 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, we will contact the LA.
- Children of service personnel – We will contact the Ministry of Defence Children’s Education Advisory Service to ensure continuity of education for these children.
- Missing children/runaways – If we suspect a child has gone missing/runaway, an appropriate staff member will consult the Dfe for advice on missing children.

- Children who cease will attend school – where the reason for a child who has stopped attending the 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

All schools have statutory safeguarding responsibilities (sections 157&175 of the Education Act 2002). Schools must investigate any unexplained absences. If a child fails to attend school, school staff must try to establish the family's whereabouts before making a CME referral. We will:

- Use contact telephone numbers to attempt to speak with the parent/carer or other family member.
- Speak to siblings and/or known relatives within the same school.
- Speak to friends of the child who is not attending.
- Speak with school staff of known siblings at other schools.
- Carry out a home visit to attempt to ascertain if the family are still in the same home at different times of the day.
- 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.
- In the event that a pupil fails to attend the school on the agreed or notified date, we will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence, and will consider notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity.
- Keep an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents/carers to inform them of any changes.
- Monitor pupils' attendance through our daily register.
- Agree with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of pupils who are regularly absent from school, or who have missed 10 days or more without permission.
- Arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth day of a fixed period exclusion.
- Provide information to the LA regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the LA.

The Local Authority

- 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 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 Academy Attendance Orders to parents/carers who fail to assure the LA that their child is receiving a suitable education, and the LA believes that they should attend school.
- The LA will prosecute or fine parents/carers of registered children who fail to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- The LA will ensure that children identified as not receiving suitable education are returned to full-time education.
- The LA will ensure that we demonstrate 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 fully supported, taking into account the reasons why they missed education in the first place.
- 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/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 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 believe a crime has been committed.

Parents/Carers

- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child 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 pupil's 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.

Safeguarding

- For the purpose of this policy, “reasonable enquiries” are defined as limited, investigative powers that we may action to determine a child's whereabouts and whether they might be in danger.
- In line with the Children Act 2004, we will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child might be at risk of harm.
- The DSL will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to the children's social care or police.

Where the whereabouts and safety of a child is unknown, we may carry out the following actions:

- Make contact with the parent/carer, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Check local databases
- Follow local information sharing arrangements, and making enquiries via other local databases and agencies where possible
- 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 our school is located
- Check with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service in the case of children of Service Personnel

Admissions register

We 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. 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 school.

Once a pupil has been recorded on the admissions register, we 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/carer notifies us that a pupil will live at another address, we 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

Where a parent/carer notifies us that the pupil is registered at another school, or will be attending a different school in future, we 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. If a parent/carer notifies us of this, then the pupil will be deleted from our admission register and the LA will be informed.

Removing a pupil from the admissions register

We will inform the LA of any pupil who will be deleted from the admissions register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents/carers and are being educated outside the academy system, e.g. home-schooled.
- Have ceased to attend 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 he/she nor his/her parent/carer has indicated the intension to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- Have been permanently excluded.
- 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 academy 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 days after the period of authorised absence ended.
- The LA and academy 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 days.

This policy was ratified by the Governing Body of Bill Quay Primary School on

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