



S68 –Children Missing Education

Reviewed: Education, Policy & Safeguarding Committee
Approved: Full Governing Body

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Next Review Date: June 2027 by E,P& S with recommendation to FGB



This policy has regard to the following:

- DfE [Children Missing Education](#) (September 2025)
- DfE: [Working together to improve school attendance \(August 2024\)](#)
- Bi-Borough Children's Services: Children Missing Education Guidance for Schools (September 2024)
- <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/children-and-education/education-and-learning/children-missing-education-cme>

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy (S11) and the Admissions and Absences Policy (S01)

INTRODUCTION

As indicated in the Safeguarding Policy, the school will follow the DfE statutory guidance for local authorities contained in the publication, [Children Missing Education](#) (September 2025). This statutory guidance sets out key principles to enable local authorities in England to implement their legal duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, children missing education (CME).

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation particularly county lines. The School's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education must support identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, help prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. Being absent repeatedly may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, 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 completely missing from education in future. Staff should be aware of the School's children missing from education procedures.

Definition

A child missing (who is absent) from 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 (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).



Children at particular risks of missing education

As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, a judgement should be made 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.
- 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.
- 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.

PROCEDURE

Instead of reproducing in full the guidance from Children Missing Education (September 2025), the following essential points should be noted:

Pupils Joining the School

The School enters 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.

In the event that a pupil fails to attend the School on the agreed or notified date, the School undertakes reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence and will consider notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity. (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).



If a pupil starts at the school at a non-standard stage, the headteacher will inform the Bi-Borough within 5 days of his entry in the Admissions Register.

The School keeps an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents to inform them of any changes.

Pupils Leaving the School:

If a pupil ceases to attend the school, before the child's name is re-classified on the admissions register, the headteacher will satisfy himself that he has been officially registered at another school. If the headteacher were unable to identify such a new school they will contact the local education authority in which the boy's parents live and the Bi-Borough to report the fact before adjustments to the register are made. Furthermore, if a pupil leaves at a non-standard time, the headteacher will in any event inform the Bi-Borough.

Monitoring Pupil Attendance:

Where a child misses School without reason or satisfactory explanation either for a period of 10 School days, or where a boy is absent for 15 days cumulatively or consecutively because of illness, the school will be required to notify the local authority. The DSL will make a referral to social services, being alert to the possible reasons for this absence, and will refer all such concerns to the relevant local agencies. This may help prevent them from going missing in future.

The DSL will ensure that all concerns will be reported to the relevant local agencies; in all cases of doubt the relevant local agencies will be contacted for guidance. Such reports will also be made when a child is about to be deleted from the admission register for whatever reason.

The School holds more than one emergency contact number for every pupil, giving additional contact options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Where there is a concern about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger), there should be a conversation with the DSL to agree on a course of action with due regard to the referral thresholds of the local authority Safeguarding Children Partnership.

All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, will be recorded in writing and on MyConcern.

Notification

Schools in Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea must notify the CME Officer of any children thought to be missing from education missing.education@rbkc.gov.uk by following the CME mapping process and



completing the reasonable enquiries form. This information can all be found in the document “Bi-Borough Children’s Services: Children Missing Education Guidance for Schools”, Appendix B of the document outlines the Child Missing Education: Reasonable Enquiries Mapping process.