



Holte School

Children Missing Education Policy

Lead member of staff:	Lee Farmer (Assistant Headteacher, Pastoral)
Legislation Status: (Statutory/Non-Statutory)	Statutory
Local Authority Model Policy or School Written Policy:	School Written Policy
Required on school website:	Yes
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Signed By Chair Of Governors: Ms C Hardy	C Hardy

1. Aims and objectives

1.1 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.

1.2 Legal framework - The Local Authority (LA) has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and help them back into education. This policy highlights what Holte School will do to help the LA with its duty.

The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Article 2 of protocol No 1 states: "No person shall be denied the right to education"

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 requires all local authorities to make arrangements to establish the identities of children of compulsory school age in their area who are not registered pupils at a school, and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

Regulations 8(f) and 8(h) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, place a duty on schools and local authorities to jointly carry out reasonable enquiries to try and locate pupils absent from school whose whereabouts are unknown.

1.3 This policy complies with the following statutory guidance:

- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2015
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2022
- DfE 'Children missing education' 2016
- Birmingham Local Authority – CME guidance 2021

1.4 At Holte School we are committed to creating a safe and inspiring place for all children to learn and develop, where children's rights are respected, their talents are nurtured and they are able to thrive as individuals and as a community. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is at the heart of our ethos and our curriculum.

The four guiding principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the child state that:

- All children are entitled to the same rights without discrimination of any kind.
- All actions concerning children will take into account the best interests of the individual child or group of children as the primary consideration.
- All children have the right to survival and development.
- Children have the right to express their views in all matters affecting them.

Holte School is committed to the guiding principles of the Convention and is actively committed to promoting all articles of the convention in all areas of the school and its work. The following articles are protected and promoted through this policy – 6, 12, 18, 19, 28, 29.

2. Children Missing Education

2.1 **Definition** - 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).

2.2 A child missing in education includes:

- A child who is not at their last known address and:
- has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or:
- has left school suddenly and their destination is unknown.

This policy does not cover those children not receiving education due to a family not taking up an offer of a school place from the School Admissions Service.

2.3 This policy does not refer to children who are missing from view or absent from Home or Care. When a child goes missing from the home, or from care, or where the school has significant safeguarding concerns for the child, the school will refer these children immediately to the Childrens Advisory Support Service (CASS), and/or to the Police.

2.4 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) as per Holte School's safeguarding procedures. 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 academy 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 Birmingham CASS or the Police to take advice. This includes children involved in County Lines.
- 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 the academy 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Parents/carers

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving efficient full-time education. Some parents may elect to home educate their children and may withdraw them from school at any time to do so (unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order). Where a parent notifies the school in writing of their intention to home educate, the school must inform the local authority using the Birmingham City Council EHE referral form, before deleting the child from its admission register. Birmingham City Council EHE Telephone: 0121 464 7215 Email: home.education@birmingham.gov.uk

Children with special educational needs (SEN) and have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan can be home-educated. Where the EHC plan sets out special educational provision that the child should receive at home, the local authority is under a duty to arrange that provision. Where the EHC plan names a school as the place where the child should receive his or her education and the parent chooses to home educate their child, the local authority must assure itself that the provision being made by the parent is suitable to the child's special educational needs and this must be reviewed annually. SENAR Telephone: 0121 303 5489 Email: senar@birmingham.gov.uk or mycareinbirmingham.org.uk

Parents have a responsibility to inform the school or Local Authority of their child's new school destination and home address if they are moving to a new school, at any time during the period of statutory education.

3.2 Holte School

The school has a safeguarding duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils and in respect of this they should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have the same safeguarding duty under section 157 of the Education Act. This duty will be executed by the Assistant Headteacher, Pastoral and Pastoral Leads.

We will monitor pupil attendance through a daily register and will address poor attendance whenever this occurs. Any child whose whereabouts are known but continues to have unauthorised absences, will be assessed to determine if they have additional needs and require support such as an FCAF, referral to Early Help, or to the school nurse or CASS, etc.

If there are no additional needs and the parent does not consent to additional support, or support has been put in place and it has not impacted on attendance, the school will place the child on the 'Fast-track on Attendance' programme.

We will also arrange full-time education for suspended pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. If the pupil is permanently excluded, the Local Authority will arrange provision from the sixth day onwards.

If a child is absent from school and their whereabouts is unknown, schools have a duty to carry out a reasonable enquiry **jointly** with the local authority to ascertain the whereabouts, which might be a result of:-

- The family moving within the city but the parents fail to inform the school of the house move or transfer to a new school.
- The family move out of the city and relocate to a new area within the UK but parents fail to inform the school.
- The family relocate abroad and fail to inform the school of their destination.
- The family is displaced as a result of 'crisis' e.g. domestic violence, homelessness.
- Parent/school disagreement and parents withdraw the child from school.
- Family separation.

In these instances, all schools should ensure the following actions are taken and recorded:

- Call the CME Team to conduct 'background checks' on the family
- Consider the likely reason for the absence – has the family been granted leave of absence or is the school aware of an extended trip abroad; has the child been absent due to sickness or unavoidable cause? If not:
- Make a first day of absence call to the parents to establish the reason for the absence and to confirm the child's whereabouts.
- Check with all members of staff who the child may have had contact with.
- Check with the child's friends, siblings and known relatives at this school or other schools.
- Make enquiries with other professionals who have been involved with the child.
- Make telephone calls to any numbers held or identified.
- Conduct a visit to the last known address of the child within the first three days of the child's absence.
- If possible, enquire of neighbours about the location of the family.
- Send a letter to the last known address and record the outcome.
- The Assistant Headteacher – Pastoral will refer the child to the BCC 'CME' team within the first five days of the child's absence and inform BCC's CME officer telephone: - 0121 303 4983, and complete the 'Missing Pupil' referral form. Referrals should be made to cme@birmingham.gov.uk

3.3 Local Authority role and duties

Birmingham City Council has procedures in place to prevent children at risk of becoming CME. When the CME Officer receives referrals from schools, they will undertake a joint enquiry with the school to try to locate the family and ensure the child is in receipt of a suitable education.

The CME Officer will ensure the referral is checked to see if the child/family is known to Children's Social Care (CSC) by accessing the 'CareFirst' database. If known to CSC, the CME Officer will contact the named CSC officer to alert them to the child's missing education status.

The CME Officer will assess all referrals to ensure that the school's reasonable enquiry is underway and that any safeguarding concerns identified by the school are clearly noted and have been promptly referred to the CASS and/or the Police.

Any significant safeguarding concerns highlighted within the referral but not reported to CASS and/or the Police by the school or referrer will be actioned immediately and appropriately by the CME Officer and will be discussed with the Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead of the referring school to ensure that such concerns are appropriately escalated in the future.

After the initial checks, all referrals will be flagged on BCC's Central Pupil Database, 'Impulse,' as 'child missing' and a note to this effect will be placed on the child's record. This will enable any Birmingham professional accessing the child's education record to be alerted to the child's current status and prompt them to share any appropriate intelligence on the child's current whereabouts with the CME Team.

An email confirming receipt of the referral will be sent by the CME Officer to the referring school.

4. Reasonable enquires and the admissions register

4.1 Procedures following completion of joint reasonable enquiries

The CME Team will complete a series of checks to try and locate the child and ensure the child is in receipt of a suitable education. These checks include:

- Checking the Central Pupil Database “Impulse” for information on the child’s destination.
- Checking the Birmingham City Council Data Warehouse. The Data Warehouse allows access to the Electoral Register; the list of Birmingham City Council Housing Tenants; and various other Council services and will ascertain if the parent/carers are still registered at last known address.
- Checking with the Home Office Intelligence/UK Borders Agency in respect of suspected family movements abroad where necessary.
- Checking NHS and GP records via access to the Child Heath Service database.
- Accessing DfE databases; including Key to Success’ and School to School (s2s),
- Using social networking sites such as ‘Facebook’ to try and locate the parents/carer of the pupil.
- Undertaking home visits to locate children and families if necessary.
- If at any stage of the enquiry into a child’s whereabouts schools or BCC have concerns for a child’s safety, an immediate referral must be made to CASS by completing and submitting a ‘Request for Support’ referral form to secure.cass@birmingham.gcsx.gov.uk (secure email).

The School and the CME Team will aim to complete their joint enquiry as quickly as possible and will inform any other associated professional of the outcome.

Upon completion of the reasonable enquiry the CME Team will confer with the child’s school to confirm the outcome. The vast majority of children are found with their families and are in receipt of suitable education. A collaborative agreement will be made between the school and the CME team on the appropriateness of removing the child from the school roll. This is essential, to safeguard against premature/illegal deletions from roll. Evidence of such agreement will be maintained by the school for scrutiny.

Where the child/family are not found, and the risk assessment indicates no obvious safeguarding concerns, the case will remain ‘open pending further enquiries’ in the archive system and will be systematically uploaded to the BCC Data Warehouse to alert key partners with system access, including the Police, to notify the CME team of any information which may confirm the current whereabouts of the child.

4.2 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.

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/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

Where a parent/carer 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/carer notifies Holte School in writing, the pupil will be deleted from our admission register once the LA has been informed. A pupil will not be deleted from the register unless the LA confirms that the school can do so on receipt of the relevant referral. The school will keep the child's place at the school open for a period of two weeks.

4.3 Removing a pupil from the admissions register

Holte 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 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 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 Holte School and the proprietor of any other schools concerned have consented to the deletion.
- The LA and school are 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 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. When a pupil is removed from roll an 'off-roll' form will be completed, including evidence of why the pupil is being removed from roll and will be checked by the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral and Headteacher. No student will be removed from roll without the permission of the Headteacher. Procedures for removing a child from the school's register will be monitored as part of the quality assurance procedures.

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 8 of this policy.

4.4 Pupils attending alternative provision and managed moves

Pupils attending the alternative provision and a host school as part of a managed move will remain dual registered with the school and the alternative provision or host school for the duration of their placement. When a pupil successfully completes a managed move, they will be removed from the school's roll with the agreement of parents. Attendance is monitored on a weekly basis in accordance with the school's attendance policy. Any pupil identified as CME will be referred by the alternative provision's attendance officer in conjunction with Holte School. A copy of a CME referral will be retained for the school's records.



