The Chalfonts Community College

Success is an Attitude!

Child Missing in Education Policy

2026 - 2027

Last Reviewed on:	September 2026
New Review due:	September 2027

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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, and it can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including abuse and neglect.

The LA has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and help them back into education. This policy highlights what we will do as a school to help the LA with its duty.

1. Legal framework

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

- Education Act 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Children Act 2014
- 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)
- DfE (2023) 'Working together to improve school attendance' Updated August 2024
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education
- DfE (2023) 'Working together to safeguard children' Updated June 2025
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education' Updated September 2025
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code' Updated March 2022

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Admissions Policy

2. Definitions

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 an LA, and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition also encompasses 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. Reasons for 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

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
- Risk of substance abuse
- Risk of travelling to conflict zones

Staff will be aware that early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding relating to CME and to help prevent the risks of a pupil going missing in the future. All staff will be made aware of our unauthorised absence procedures and this policy to ensure they know how to respond to possible cases of CME.

4. Children at 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:

Students 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 LA Traveller Education Support Services or 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 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

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5.1 The school will enter students 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 student 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.

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

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 students' attendance through a daily register.

5.6 The school will agree with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of students who are regularly absent from school, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.

5.7 Where a student 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 student 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 student 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 Students 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.

All Staff members

5.12 All staff will be alert to the potential need to implement early help for a student 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 students to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated to the DSL or their deputy.

The LA

5.15 Under the Education Act 2011, the LA has a duty to establish the identities of children in the area who are not registered students at a school and are not receiving education provision otherwise.

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

5.17 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.

5.18 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.

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

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

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

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

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

5.24 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.

5.25 Pupils with SEN statements, or EHCP's plans, are able to be home educated. If the statement/EHC plan sets out the provision that the student 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.

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

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

5.28 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

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

5.30 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.

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

5.32 Where requested, meeting with the school, LA, and other key professionals to consider whether home education would be in the best interests of their child, particularly where they have SEND, are vulnerable, or have a social worker – ideally, this would be done before a final decision has been made.

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 The school will ensure that staff are familiar with these procedures and when they need to be followed.

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

7.5 The school uses a secure internet system, egress, to allow schools to transfer student information when a child moves to another educational setting.

7.6 If a student with a social worker is absent from school for an unexplained reason or they are missing from education, the school will inform the student's social worker.

8. Safeguarding

8.1 As a school we recognise that children missing from education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. Where there are concerns that a student missing from education is linked to a safeguarding issue, action will be taken in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

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

8.3 For the purpose of this policy, **"reasonable enquiries"** are defined as limited, investigative powers that the school may undertake to determine a child's whereabouts and whether they may be in danger.

8.4 The DSL will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to the children's social care or police.

8.5 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
- Follow local information sharing arrangements, and making enquiries via other local database 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 student 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 or newsletters.

9.2 Students 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 student will attend the school.

9.3 Once a student 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 student.

9.4 Where a parent/carer notifies the school that a student 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 student will live
- The new address
- The date from when it is expected the student will live at this address

9.5 Where a parent notifies the school that the student 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 student is subject to a School Attendance Order. If a parent notifies the school, the student will be deleted from the school register and the LA informed.

10. Removing a student from the admissions register

10.1 The school will inform the LA of any student 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 student is not unable to attend school.
- The LA and school are unable to determine the student'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 resumes (e.g. following the summer break), and the relevant person has indicated the student will not attend the school, or, the student does not meet the academic entry requirements for sixth form.
- The school will notify the LA that a student 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 student's name is actually removed.

10.2 If a student'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 student
- The full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the student lives
- At least one telephone number of the parent/carer with whom the student lives
- The full name and address of the parent/carer who the student is going to live with and the date the student is expected to start living there, if applicable
- The name of the student'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.

10.3 Where the name of a student with a social worker is to be removed from the admissions register, the school will inform the students's social worker.

11. Monitoring and review

11.1 This policy is to be reviewed annually by the DSL and the principal.

History

Date	Issue	Status	Comments
October 2022	1	New	
January 2024	2	Update	Legal framework documents change of dates
July 2025	3	Update	July 2025 Reviewed date changes for KCSIE
October 2025	4	Update	Dfe Dates changed New Format/Dates
September 2026	5	Update	Date change