ST ANDREW'S CofE Primary School

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME) PROCEDURES

POLICY INFORMATION

Policy Title	Children Missing Education (CME) Policy
Status	Statutory Safeguarding Procedure
Date Approved	October 2026
Review Date	October 2027
Lead Responsibility	Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
Applicable To	All Staff
Related Guidance	Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance, Working Together to Safeguard Children, Working Together to Improve School Attendance

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1. Statement of Commitment

At St Andrew's Church School, the safety, welfare and education of every child is our highest priority.

The school is committed to ensuring that all children receive a suitable full-time education and that robust procedures are in place to identify, locate and support any child who may be missing education.

The school recognises that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and adopts a child-centred approach at all times, considering what is in the best interests of the child when making decisions regarding attendance, admissions and children missing education.

Children missing education are at significant risk of underachievement, social exclusion, abuse, neglect and exploitation. A child who goes missing from education, particularly repeatedly, may be at risk of:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Serious violence
- Modern slavery or human trafficking
- Forced marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Radicalisation
- Domestic abuse
- Neglect
- Emotional abuse
- Abuse linked to culture, faith or belief

Children Missing Education (CME) is therefore both an educational and safeguarding concern. Children need the right help at the right time, and timely intervention is essential.

This policy applies to all pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

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2. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy should be read alongside:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children

- Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- Education Act 1996
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Relevant Cambridgeshire Local Authority procedures

The school recognises its statutory responsibility to work with Cambridgeshire Local Authority to identify, locate and safeguard children who are missing education.

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3. Definition of Children Missing Education

A child missing education is a child of compulsory school age who:

- Is not registered on a school roll and is not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school; or
- Has disappeared from education and their whereabouts are unknown.

The school recognises that children missing education can be at increased risk of harm and therefore all concerns must be treated as safeguarding concerns.

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4. Children at Greater Risk of Becoming Missing Education

The school recognises that some children may be at greater risk of becoming missing education and may require additional monitoring and support.

These groups include:

- Children subject to Child Protection Plans
- Children in Need
- Children receiving Early Help support
- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Children with medical conditions
- Young carers
- Children experiencing mental health difficulties
- Children at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Children at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- Children who have experienced frequent school moves
- Children who are electively home educated
- Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- Children experiencing family breakdown, homelessness or domestic abuse

The school will work collaboratively with families, the Local Authority and partner agencies to reduce the risk of children becoming missing education and ensure appropriate support is provided.

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5. Roles and Responsibilities

Regional Schools Board

The RSB will:

- Ensure effective safeguarding and attendance arrangements are in place.
- Monitor attendance and safeguarding information.
- Ensure statutory duties relating to CME are fulfilled.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented consistently.
- Ensure attendance and admissions procedures are followed.
- Ensure statutory notifications are made to the Local Authority.
- Oversee investigations where pupils are at risk of becoming missing education.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL and Deputy DSLs will:

- Oversee all Children Missing Education concerns.
- Assess safeguarding risks linked to poor attendance and absence.
- Make referrals to Children's Services, Police and other agencies where appropriate.
- Liaise with the Local Authority CME Team.
- Maintain accurate records of enquiries and actions taken.
- Monitor vulnerable pupils and those at risk of becoming CME.
- Support staff in responding appropriately to concerns.

All Staff

All staff have a responsibility to:

- Promote good attendance.
- Follow safeguarding procedures where concerns arise.
- Report concerns immediately to the DSL.
- Maintain accurate attendance records.
- Share information appropriately and promptly.

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6. Information Sharing

Effective information sharing is essential to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

The school will share information, where appropriate and lawful, with relevant agencies in order to:

- Safeguard children.
- Locate children who may be missing education.
- Support attendance and educational outcomes.
- Enable timely intervention where concerns arise.

Staff should be aware that data protection legislation is not a barrier to sharing information where there is a safeguarding concern. Decisions to share information will be necessary, proportionate, relevant and appropriately recorded.

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7. Attendance and Early Identification

The school recognises that poor attendance can be an indicator of safeguarding concerns.

Particular attention will be given to pupils who:

- Are persistently absent.
- Are severely absent.
- Have unexplained patterns of absence.
- Have poor punctuality.
- Have experienced multiple school moves.
- Are subject to Child Protection Plans.
- Are Children in Need.
- Are looked after or previously looked after.
- Are receiving support from Early Help services.

Attendance concerns will be monitored in accordance with current DfE guidance and the school's Attendance Policy.

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8. First-Day Absence Procedures

The school operates robust first-day response procedures.

Where a pupil is absent unexpectedly:

1. Registers will be checked promptly.
2. Parents/carers will be contacted on the first day of absence.
3. All available contact methods will be used where necessary.
4. Concerns will be escalated to the DSL if contact cannot be established.
5. Further enquiries may include emergency contacts, previous settings and partner agencies.
6. Home visits may be considered where safeguarding concerns exist.
7. Referrals to Children's Services or the Police will be made where a child's safety may be at risk.

All actions and attempts to make contact will be recorded.

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9. Pupils Failing to Start School

Where a child fails to attend on the agreed admission date:

- Staff will immediately inform the Headteacher and DSL.
- First-day contact procedures will be implemented.
- Reasonable enquiries will be undertaken to establish the child's whereabouts.
- Appropriate safeguarding referrals will be made where concerns exist.
- The Local Authority will be informed where a child appears to be missing education.

A child will remain on roll until the legal requirements for removal from the admission register have been met.

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10. Notification of Pupil Arrivals

The school will notify Cambridgeshire Local Authority of additions to the admission register in accordance with statutory requirements and locally agreed procedures.

Information shared may include:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Home address
- Parent/carer details
- Previous school attended
- Date of admission

The school will ensure admission register information is accurate and up to date from the first day of attendance.

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11. Notification of Pupil Leavers

Before removing a pupil from roll, the school will undertake all reasonable enquiries to establish:

- The child's destination school or educational provision.
- The family's future address.
- Contact details for parents/carers.
- Any safeguarding concerns.

The school recognises that children leaving with no confirmed destination represent a significant safeguarding concern.

Where a pupil transfers to another school, records will be transferred promptly, including completion and transfer of a Common Transfer File (CTF) where required.

The school will notify Cambridgeshire Local Authority of deletions from the admission register in accordance with statutory requirements and local procedures.

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12. Elective Home Education

Where parents indicate their intention to educate their child at home, the school will follow current Local Authority and Department for Education guidance.

A pupil will remain on roll until:

- Written notification has been received from parents.
- Appropriate procedures have been completed.
- The Local Authority has been informed where required.
- The legal grounds for deletion from the admission register have been met.

Where safeguarding concerns exist, these will be discussed with the Local Authority and relevant agencies prior to removal from roll.

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13. Prolonged and Unexplained Absence

The school will inform the Local Authority of pupils who:

- Fail to attend regularly.
- Are absent without permission for a prolonged period.
- Cannot be located despite reasonable enquiries.
- Are at risk of becoming missing education.

Where a pupil's whereabouts cannot be established despite reasonable enquiries by both the school and the Local Authority, statutory procedures relating to deletion from the admission register will be followed.

Where safeguarding concerns arise at any stage, referrals will be made immediately to Children's Services and/or the Police.

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14. Reasonable Enquiries

Reasonable enquiries may include:

- Contacting parents and carers.
- Contacting emergency contacts.
- Checking sibling attendance.
- Liaising with the Local Authority.
- Contacting previous or receiving schools.
- Contacting health services where appropriate.
- Liaising with Children's Social Care.
- Undertaking home visits where appropriate.
- Liaising with the Police where necessary.

All enquiries and outcomes will be fully documented.

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15. Admissions Register

The school will maintain an accurate admissions register in accordance with statutory requirements.

Parents are expected to notify the school promptly of changes to:

- Home address
- Telephone numbers
- Emergency contacts
- Family circumstances affecting a child's welfare

The school recognises that maintaining accurate admissions register information forms a critical part of safeguarding arrangements and supports efforts to identify and locate children who may be missing education.

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16. Record Keeping

The school will maintain accurate records relating to:

- Attendance concerns
- Safeguarding concerns
- Contact with families
- Referrals to external agencies
- Communications with the Local Authority
- Admissions and deletions from roll
- Decisions made and actions taken

Records will be maintained in accordance with safeguarding, data protection and records retention requirements. Staff will ensure that concerns, actions, decisions, rationale and outcomes are clearly recorded.

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17. Staff Training

All staff will receive:

- Safeguarding training
- Regular safeguarding updates
- Attendance procedure training
- Information relating to Children Missing Education responsibilities

All staff are expected to read and understand Part One of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and receive regular safeguarding updates throughout the academic year. Staff must understand their responsibilities in relation to attendance, safeguarding and children missing education and know how to report concerns promptly.

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18. Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- Attendance analysis
- Safeguarding audits
- Local Authority feedback
- RSB monitoring
- Review of CME cases and outcomes

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if legislation or statutory guidance changes.

RELATED POLICIES

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Elective Home Education Procedures

APPENDIX 1: REMOVAL FROM THE ADMISSION REGISTER

The school will only remove a pupil from the admission register in accordance with the grounds prescribed within the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and any subsequent amendments.

Before any deletion takes place, the school will:

1. Ensure the legal grounds for deletion have been met.
2. Complete all reasonable enquiries.
3. Consider safeguarding implications.
4. Notify the Local Authority as required.
5. Maintain a clear audit trail of decisions and actions.

No child will be removed from roll solely because they have poor attendance or have been absent from school. Safeguarding considerations will underpin all decisions relating to deletion from the admission register.
