




# CRICKLADE MANOR PREP

## Children Missing Education Policy

Whole School	Agreed	Published	Review Date
Yes (including EYFS)		01.11.2109	01.11.2020

This policy should be read in conjunction with our safeguarding and child protection policy. It takes full account of the child protection procedures agreed by Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership.

### **Children Missing from Education (CME)**

A child who is missing from an education setting is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Cricklade Manor Prep will put in place appropriate safeguarding responses if children are missing from school. We will follow-up unexplained absences of any student with a telephone call from the school office on the morning of the first day of absence and priority will be given to vulnerable children especially those on a Child Protection Plan. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will notify social services if there is an unexplained absence of more than two days of a student who is on the student safeguarding register. Cricklade Manor Prep works within the WSVPP details and as such, access the services for Children Missing Education within the Wiltshire. The school will follow the protocol to identify children missing from education. This applies to all starters and leavers at non-standard transition points. Any changes to our admission register will trigger notification to our Single Point of Contact (SPOC) at Wiltshire: Pupil Move (Pupilmove@wiltshire.gov.uk).

The school will view absence as both a safeguarding issue and an educational issue. Termly Persistent Absence data (80% attendance or below) will be reported to our SPOC, Karen Green, Assistant Team Manager at the Wiltshire Education Welfare Service (01225 757902, karen.green@wiltshire.gov.uk. The School Secretary will also inform the Head of any pupil who has been absent without the school's permission for 10 continuous school days. Additionally, the Registrar will notify Pupil Move of any student who is going to be deleted from the admissions register where the student:

- has been taken out of school by his/her parents and is being educated outside the school system e.g. elective home education; has ceased to attend Cricklade Manor Prep and no longer lives within reasonable distance;
- has been permanently excluded;
- has been removed from the admissions register at non-standard transitions i.e. where a child leaves Cricklade Manor Prep before completing Year 6.

### **Requests for special leave**

Parents requesting special leave must do so in writing to the Head. The absence may be declared authorised or may be refused. If leave is refused and the parents then take the child out of school, this becomes an unauthorised absence. The school will be mindful of risks to children including FGM and travelling to conflict zones.

### **Absence after a holiday**

After every holiday, including half term, the parents of any absent children are immediately contacted to ensure that the children have not gone on unauthorised extended leave. Any requests for extended leave in school time are refused unless parents can provide evidence of an emergency e.g. sickness, bereavement etc. In all cases parents are asked to provide a return date.

Patterns of children missing education can be an indicator of either abuse or safeguarding risks. A relatively short period a child is missing does not reduce the risk of harm to that child, and all absence or non-attendance should be considered with other known factors or concerns.

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Designated Safeguard Leads (DSLs) and staff should consider:

Single missing days:

- Is there a pattern in the day missed?
- Is it before or after the weekend suggesting the child is away from the area?
- Are there specific lessons or members of staff on these days?
- Is the parent informing the school of the absence on the day?
- Are missing days reported back to parents to confirm their awareness?
- Is the child being sexually exploited during this day? Do the parents appear to be aware?
- Are the pupil's peers making comments or suggestions as to where the pupil is?

Continuous missing days:

- Has the school been able to make contact with the parents? Is medical evidence being provided?
- Are any siblings attending school (either our or local schools)?
- Did we have any concerns about radicalisation, FGM, forced marriage, honour-based violence or sexual exploitation?
- Have we had any concerns about physical or sexual abuse?

Children Missing from Home or Care

Children who run away from home or from care provide a clear behavioural indication that they are either unhappy or do not feel safe in the place that they are living. Research shows that children run away from conflict, neglect, abuse, problems at home or school, or because children are being groomed by predatory individuals who seek to exploit them.

The association of chief police officers has provided the following definitions and guidance.

*A "Missing" person is: 'Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be the subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.'*

*An "Absent" person is: 'A person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.'*

All cases classified as Missing by the police will receive an active police response – such as deployment of police officers to locate a child. Cases where the child is classified as Absent will be recorded by the police and risk assessed regularly but no active response will be deployed. The Absent case will be resolved when a young person returns or new information comes to light suggesting that he/she is at risk. In the latter instance, the case is upgraded to Missing.

Within any case of children who are missing both push and pull factors will need to be considered.

Push factors include:

- Conflict with parents/carers;
- Feeling powerless;
- Being bullied/abused;
- Being unhappy/not being listened to;

- The Toxic Trio (domestic violence, mental ill-health and drug/alcohol misuse (as defined by Ofsted)). Working Together notes these issues rarely exist in isolation. There is a complex interaction between the three issues.

Pull factors include:

- Wanting to be with family/friends;
- Drugs, money and any exchangeable item;
- Peer pressure;
- For those who have been trafficked into the United Kingdom as unaccompanied asylum seeking children there will be pressure to make contact with their trafficker.

As a school we will inform all parents of children who are absent (unless the parent has informed us). If the parent is also unaware of the location of their child, and the definition of Missing is met, we will either support the parent to/directly contact the police to inform them.

### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Sexual exploitation of children is not limited by the age of consent and can occur up until the age of 18. CSE involves children being in situations, contexts or relationships where they (or a third person) receive 'something' as a result of them performing sexual activities. The something can include food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, or money. Child sexual exploitation can happen via technology without the child being aware; for example, being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. CSE can happen to a child of any age, gender, ability or social status. Often the victim of CSE is not aware that they are being exploited and do not see themselves as a victim.

### **Characteristics of Child Sexual Exploitation and abuse**

It is often planned and systematic—people do not sexually abuse children by accident, though sexual abuse can be opportunistic; grooming the child—people who abuse children take care to choose a vulnerable child and often spend time making them dependent; grooming the child's environment—abusers try to ensure that potential adult protectors (parents and other carers especially) are not suspicious of their motives.

Indicators of sexual abuse Some of the following signs may be behavioural indicators of sexual exploitation:

Children who:

- appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- associate with other young people involved in exploitation;
- have older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant;

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- suffer from changes in emotional well-being;
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late;
- regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education;
- stay away from certain people or avoid being alone with someone;
- display sexual behaviour that is inappropriate for their age;
- an unwillingness to remove clothes when changing for PE

**Students being withdrawn from school.**

If a student is withdrawn from Cricklade Manor Prep, name of contact, at (applicable name) Welfare Service will be notified so that all reasonable efforts can be made to confirm the school to which the student is being admitted; their confidential educational and student protection records will be sent separately. Educational records sent to our school concerning a student who is not registered by the parents will be returned and the school advised to refer to their Local Authority Education Welfare Service.

### CMP Procedures

- 1.1. Registers are completed twice daily by form tutors using the online system. The school office then check all registers. If a child has been marked as an unexplained absence the office will first physically check that the child is not on site and if they are not, a phone call is made to the parents/carers. The office will keep trying until contact is made and an explanation received. In circumstances where no contact can be made, the situation will be escalated to the SLT and DSL.
- 1.2. If a member of school staff becomes aware that a child may have run away or gone missing on or from site, they should immediately contact the School Office who will implement the Missing Child Procedure to search the site in order to locate the child and make contact with the parents/ carers.
  - 1.3. If this is not possible, or the child is missing, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should, together with the form tutor, assess the child's vulnerability by making reasonable enquiries, and refer any concerns about the child to Children's Services in accordance with the normal referral procedure.
  - 1.4. The school closely monitors attendance and addresses poor or irregular attendance by contacting the parents/carers to seek explanation. Pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.
  - 1.5. The school will inform the authority (Pupil Tracking Officer and Education Welfare Officer) of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive school days without provision of reasonable explanation.
  - 1.6. The school will notify the local authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.
  - 1.7. The school will notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the regulations, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.
  - 1.8. In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the school will carry out reasonable enquiries which may include checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords and other local stakeholders who are involved. These procedures will be carefully recorded.

**If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate) in accordance with the school's normal Safeguarding Procedure.**

## Appendix: Children Missing from Education

### WILTSHIRE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD GUIDANCE

This chapter was updated in November 2016 as the The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, have been amended by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 and should be re-read.

#### 1. Definition and Overview

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The statutory guidance [Children Missing Education \(September 2016\)](#) sets out the 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). Local authorities should be able to demonstrate that they have considered this statutory guidance and, where it is not followed, the local authority should have reasonable grounds for not doing so.

1. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have;
2. Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life;
3. Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Local authorities should focus their resources effectively in intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

[Statutory guidance for local authorities: Children missing education \(September 2016\)](#).

#### 2. Risks

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These 'missing' children can be vulnerable; it is essential that all services work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible. It is important to establish the reasons for the child being missing at the earliest possible stage.

Possible reasons that should be considered include:

- Failure to start appropriate provision and never enter the system;
- Stopped attending, due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parent/carers;
- Failure to complete a transition between schools;
- Children from refugee and asylum seeking families;
- Children from families who are highly mobile;
- Children at risk of a forced marriage;
- Children experiencing abuse and neglect.

Children who remain disengaged from education are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk.

Children who go missing or run away from home or care may be in serious danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation or abduction as well as missing education.

When families move between local authority areas it can sometimes lead to a child becoming 'lost' in the system and consequently missing education. Where a child has moved, local authorities should check with other local authorities – either regionally or nationally – and share information in order to ascertain where a child has moved. Once the location of the child is established, the relevant local authority must ensure that the

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child is receiving an education either by attending a school or the provision of electronic or distance learning packages where these are available.

Research has shown that many children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families can become disengaged from education, particularly during the secondary school phase. It is therefore important that schools inform the local authority when a GRT pupil leaves the school without identifying a new destination school, particularly in the transition from primary to secondary so that they can attempt to facilitate continuity of the child's education. Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly and their children can be at increased risk of missing education. Local authority Traveller Education Support Services (TESS), where these exist, or the named CME officer within the local authority, can advise schools on the best strategies for ensuring the minimum disruption to GRT pupils' education.

Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in the UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MoD [Children's Education Advisory Service \(CEAS\)](#) for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.

Children who have offended or are at risk of doing so are also at risk of disengaging from education. Local authority Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are responsible for supervising those young people (aged 8 to 18). YOTs should work with the local authority CME officer to ensure that children are receiving, or return to, appropriate full-time education.

### 3. Indicators

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#### Schools

As a result of daily admissions registration, schools are particularly well placed to notice when a child has gone missing. If a member of school/educational establishment/college staff becomes aware that a child may have run away or gone missing, they should try to establish with the parents/ carers, what has happened.

If this is not possible, or the child is missing, the designated safeguarding teacher/advisor should, together with the class teacher, assess the child's vulnerability by making reasonable enquiries, and refer (see also [Referrals Procedure](#)) any concerns about the child to Children's Services.

Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.

In the more general circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, the Head Teacher should inform the Pupil Tracking Officer and Education Welfare Officer of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive school days without provision of reasonable explanation.

Maintained schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their pupils. Further information about schools' safeguarding responsibilities can be found in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' the statutory guidance.

**All schools are required to notify the local authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.**

Schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the regulations, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the expectation is that the school and the local authority will have in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries. The type of procedures may include the appropriate person checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders who are involved. They should also record that they have completed these procedures. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral (see [Referrals Procedure](#)) should be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).



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**Other Agencies**

Where any agency in contact with children and families believes that a child is not on the roll of a school or receiving education otherwise, then this information should be passed to the Pupil Tracking Officer with any details they have of the child in question. If they have concerns about the welfare of the child they should refer to Children's Services.

**Pupil Tracking Officer**

The Pupil Tracking Officer (or CME Officer) should ensure through the Education Welfare Officer that reasonable enquiries are made - e.g. home visits, liaison with Children's Services and/or Housing - and notify the school if it appears that the child has moved out of the area.

If no information is forthcoming within 2 days, the Pupil Tracking Officer should alert her/his manager, who should inform Children's Services and the Police in writing.

**4. Protection and Action to be Taken**

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Head teachers should inform the Pupil Tracking Officer and the child's social worker immediately a child subject to a Child Protection Plan is missing.

In the following circumstances a referral to Children's Services and / or the police should always be made promptly:

- The child may be the victim of a crime;
- The child is subject of a Child Protection Plan;
- The child is subject of Section 47 enquiries;
- The child is looked after;
- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household;
- There is a history of the family moving frequently;
- There are serious issues of attendance.

Where a child on a school roll is missing, the child's name may not be removed from the school roll until s/he has been continuously absent for at least 4 weeks and both the school and the education service have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil and her/his family. After 4 weeks the child's Common Transfer file should be uploaded to the Department for Education secure site for the transfer of pupil information when a pupil moves between schools. The CME Officer in the Local Authority must also be informed.

In these circumstances the child's name is kept on a centrally held register, and should be clearly identified as missing from education.

Where the child's name has been removed from the school roll, but s/he has not been located, the Head Teacher should arrange for the pupil's records to be retained until the child is located. They may be held centrally according to local arrangements.

Where a Head Teacher has been notified by a parent that a pupil is receiving education other than at school, and has removed the child's name from the school roll, notification must be given to the education service within 10 school days; the pupil's records should then be transferred to the education service to be stored in accordance with local arrangements.

If a school receives a new pupil without receiving information about the pupil from his or her previous school, the school should contact the Pupil Tracking Officer.

If the Pupil Tracking Officer becomes aware the child has moved to another school s/he should ensure that all relevant agencies are informed and arrangements made to forward records from the previous school.

## 5. Issues

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A child missing from education is not in itself a child protection matter, and there may be an innocent explanation for this. However, regular school attendance is an important safeguard and unexplained non-attendance can be an early indicator of problems, risk and vulnerability.

Schools should endeavour to deal with this problem in three ways:

- By preventing poor school attendance and truancy;
- By acting once absence has occurred to establish children's safety and try to get them back to school;
- By taking action to trace children whose whereabouts are not known.

### Further Information

This guidance should be read in the context of the statutory duties upon local authorities and parents as set out in the following:

- [The Education Act 1996 section 436A](#);
- [The Education Act 2002](#);
- [The Children Act 1989](#);
- [The Children Act 2004](#);
- [Statutory guidance for local authorities: Children missing education \(September 2016\)](#);
- [Elective Home Education Guidelines](#);
- [School Admissions Code](#);
- [School to school service: how to transfer information](#);
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#), as amended (Education law regarding pupil registration where a child is on a school roll); [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#); as amended [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#).

In particular the guidance provides for professionals seeking to exercise their duty under the following Acts to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- [Section 175 of the Education Act 2002](#);
- And [Section 11 of the Children Act 2004](#).

Additionally, this guidance seeks to ensure that the duty to co-operate to improve the well-being of children under section 10 of the Children Act 2004 is discharged. All schools will have a designated teacher for looked after children. These teachers are ideally placed to assist when identifying those looked after children currently in school who may be at greater risk of going missing from education.