

The Boston Witham Academies Federation

Children Missing Education Policy



Approved by:	Board of Directors	Date: 2 nd September 2020
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Last reviewed on:	June 2020
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Next review due by:	July 2021
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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.

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

Legal framework

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

DfE (2018) 'Working together to safeguard children'

DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'

DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

DfE (2019) 'School attendance'

The Education Act 1996

The Education Act 2002

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Children Act 1989

The Children Act 2004

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)

Definition of Children Missing Education

For the purpose of this document a child missing education is defined as:

Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by the Local Authority, and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere suitable to their needs, that is, their age, ability, aptitude, SEND. And any child who is not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, privately, or in alternative provision) and who has been out of any education provision for a substantial period of time (practice nationally is four weeks).

The process of looking for learners who are absent from the academy and their whereabouts are unknown starts as soon as the academy has sufficient evidence to confirm this. Usually on

day three of an absence and where no contact has been made with the family to ascertain the reason for the learner's absence.

Definition of Children at Risk of Missing Education

Children and young people with poor school attendance are often the most vulnerable and are more likely to become children missing from education.

It is the responsibility of the academy to ensure a learner attends once they are on roll of the academy. A learner is not considered to be a CME whilst the academy has knowledge that the learner remains in the area and the academy remains the nearest available, however learners can still be logged with the Local Authority if a learner is absent for 10 consecutive days and where the academy have had contact with the family, as a Pupil Not Attending Regularly (PNAR).

For the purpose of this document a Child at Risk of Missing Education is defined as:

Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is on roll of a school but has less than 50% attendance in a school term

Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is subject to a modified/reduced timetable for more than one school term.

Children on reduced timetables are recorded via Children Services Performance Data. This information is recorded through:

<https://lccdataexchange.lincolnshire.gov.uk/less-than-25-hours/>

'Full time' is not defined in statute however there is the following expectation in Lincolnshire in relation to the number of hours a learner is engaged in educational activities:

Key stage one: 21 hours per week

Key stage two: 22.5 hours per week

Key stage three: 24 hours per week

Key stage four: 25 hours per week

An academy is required to input details of any learner who is on a reduced timetable, as per the above. For any learner who is on a reduced timetable without an assessment, the Local Authority will contact the academy to look at what support can be offered.

Why children go missing from education

Children and young people can go missing from school or agreed education provision for a wide variety of reasons. Their personal circumstances or those of their families may contribute to the withdrawal process. Children can go missing when there is no systematic process in place to identify them and ensure they re-engage with appropriate provision.

The most common reasons why children miss education include:

- Failing to register at school at age five
- Failing to make successful transition from nursery to primary and primary to secondary
- Cease to attend, due to exclusion (formal withdrawal)
- Mid-year transfer of school
- Unable to find a school place after moving into the Local Authority
- Victims of bullying
- Frequent moves of house including periods of homelessness or periods in a refuge
- Transience/ family mobility
- Family breakdown
- Frequent absence leading to low attendance (especially Year 10 and Year 11)
- Disaffection resulting in parents withdrawing the learner
- Involvement in youth offending

Certain vulnerable groups are more likely to be affected by the factors listed, these are:

- Young people who have committed offences
- Children living in women's refuges
- Children of troubled families i.e. suffering bereavement, trauma, domestic abuse, homelessness etc.
- Young runaways
- Children with special educational needs
- Refugee and asylum-seeking children
- Travelling families
- Looked after children
- Teenage parenthood
- Children with mental health
- Young carers
- Children who are permanently excluded from school
- Young people being forced into marriage
- Young people victims of female genital mutilation
- Child trafficking
- Young people involved in substance misuse

The Local Authority records all children who are not in suitable education as Children Missing in Education. Within this wide category, children can be in one of the following:

- Location of child unknown
- Child referred from other authority, child possibly within the local authority borders
- Location of child known but not in education
- Child returned to education but at risk of missing education in near future

- Child returned to education through school attendance order.

Aside from these reasons, if a learner is missing from the academy, particularly repeatedly, this can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, such as the following:

- Abuse and neglect – including sexual abuse or exploitation and criminal exploitation
- Mental health issues – such as risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of FGM or risk of forced marriage

Roles and responsibilities - Academies

Academies have a duty under section 10 of the Children’s Act 2004 to work in partnership with the Local Authority with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in the authority’s area.

Section 175 of the Education Act puts a duty on all schools to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes identifying children who are not receiving education.

Each academy will enter learners on the admissions registers at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the academy, or the day that the academy has been notified, that the learner will attend.

In the event that a learner fails to attend the academy on the agreed or notified date, the academy will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence.

Each academy will keep an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents to inform them of any changes.

Each academy will monitor learners’ attendance through a daily register.

By the time a learner has been absent from an academy for five consecutive days, and where we have had no contact with the family, we will have carried out all reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of the learner and engaging them in education. This will include text and telephone contact, email, unannounced home visits including visits to neighbours where appropriate, contact with staff and external agencies that may be involved with the family. Once all enquiries have been exhausted, and on day five of the learner’s absence, a risk assessment and Child Missing in Education log is completed, the Local Authority will be notified via the Lincolnshire County Council Data Exchange that the learner is missing education. See Appendix 1.

The academy will notify the Local Authority after 10 consecutive days absence from the academy, without permission (Pupil Not Attending Regularly).

Where a learner has not returned to the academy for 10 school days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the academy without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the academy will remove the pupil from the admission register as per Regulation 8 (1), paragraphs f and h (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016.

Every academy will notify the Local Authority if any learner is to be deleted from admission as outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016).

Learners who remain on roll at an academy are not necessarily missing education, but will be monitored and attendance will be addressed when it is poor.

Each academy will arrange full-time education for excluded learners from the sixth school day of a fixed-period exclusion.

Every academy will provide information to the Local Authority regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the Local Authority.

All staff will be alerted to the potential need to implement early help for a learner who is frequently missing/goes missing from care or home.

All staff will be aware of the academies' unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

Where staff have concerns about learners relating to CME, staff will use their professional judgement and knowledge of individual learners to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated to the Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and academy DSL.

Roles and responsibilities – Parents/Carers

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

Parents/carers are responsible for notifying the academy in writing where they will be home-schooling their child, in order for the learner to be removed from the admissions register.

Parents/carers will notify the academy regarding any absences or changes to the learners education arrangements.

Parents/carers will notify the academy if their child will be leaving the academy due to a house and/or location move by completing a School Leavers Form. See Appendix 2.

Parents/carers are responsible for providing the academy with more than one emergency contact number where possible.

Sharing information with the Local Authority

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a duty to establish the identities of children in the area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving education provision otherwise. Where an academy becomes aware of any child of statutory school age that is not registered at a school, the information will be passed to the Local Authority.

Each academy will notify the Local Authority through the Lincolnshire County Council Data Exchange when a learner's name is to be removed from the admissions register at a non-standard transition point as per Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016.

We will notify the Local Authority of:

- The full name of the learner
- The full name and address of any parent with whom the learner lives
- At least one telephone number of the parent with whom the learner lives
- The full name and address of the parent who the learner is going to live with, and the date the learner is expected to start living there, if applicable
- The name of the learner's destination school and the learner's expected start date there, if applicable, and
- The grounds in Regulation 8 under which the learner's name is to be removed from roll.

The Local Authority will ensure that children identified as not receiving suitable education are returned to full-time education either at the academy or elsewhere.

Families moving from one Local Authority to another can sometimes lead to a child being lost in the system and consequently missing education. When a child moves the Local Authority will work with other Local Authorities, regionally or nationally, to ensure this does not happen.

Using Common Transfer Files to transfer learner information

The Department for Education provide a secure internet system – school2school – to allow schools to transfer learners' information to another school when a learner moves.

When a learner leaves an academy, this includes those learners defined as a Child Missing in Education, the academy will upload the common transfer file of learners who have left but their destination, next school, is unknown, or the learner has moved abroad or transferred to a non-maintained school. If learners arrive in a school and the previous school is unknown, the academy will contact the Local Authority who will be able to search the database. The Local Authority have a management Information System (MIS) so that schools can send a short version of a CTF called a CML (leavers) and CMJ (joiners).

Induction and training

The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education will be explained to staff during their induction.

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.

Safeguarding

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

In line with the Children Act 2004, each academy will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.

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

Where the whereabouts and safety of a child is unknown, the academy, in conjunction with the Local Authority, may carry out the following actions:

Make contact with the parent/carer, relatives and neighbours using all known contact details
Follow local information sharing arrangements and making enquiries via other local databases and agencies where possible.

Check with agencies known to be involved with the family.

Check with the Local Authority and school or academy from which the learner moved originally.

Check with the Local Authority where the learner lives, if this is different to where the school is located.

Conduct home visits and make enquiries with neighbours or relatives, if appropriate.

NB – this list is not exhaustive – the academy and Local Authority will use their judgement towards what reasonable enquiries are appropriate, once all the facts of the case have been taken into account.

Admissions register

Each academy will ensure that the admissions register is kept up-to-date at all times, and will encourage parents/carers to notify the academy of any changes as they occur, such as via email or newsletters.

Learners will be recorded on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the academy, or the day that the academy has been notified, as the date that the learner will attend the academy.

Where a parent/carer notifies the academy that a learner will live at another address, the academy will record the following information on the admissions register:

- The full name of the parent/carer with whom the learner will live
- The new address
- The date from when it is expected that the learner will live at the new address.

Where a parent/carer notifies the academy that the learner is registered at another school or academy, or will be attending a different school or academy in future, the academy will record the following information on the admissions register:

- The name of the new school or academy
- The date when the learner first attended, or is due to attend, that school or academy.

Parents/carers are able to elect to educate their children at home and will subsequently withdraw them from the academy, this can only be done once parents/carers intention to home educate is put in writing to the academy. This can happen at any time, unless the learner is subject to a School Attendance Order. If a parent notifies the academy in writing, the learner will be deleted from our admission register and we will inform the Local Authority.

Removing a learner from the admissions register

The academy will inform the Local Authority of any learner who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of the academy by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home-schooled.
- Have ceased to attend the academy and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the academy.
- Have been certified by a medical professionals as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend the academy before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither they nor

their parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the academy 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 academy 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 or academy 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 the academy within 10 school days after the period of authorised absence ended, and:
 - There is reason to believe the learner is not unable to attend the academy.
 - The LA and the academy are unable to determine the learner's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- Have been continuously absent from the academy for a period of not less than 20 school days, and:
 - The absence was not authorised.
 - There is reason to believe the learner is not unable to attend the academy.
 - The Local Authority and the academy is unable to determine the learner's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- Will cease to be of compulsory school age.
- The academy will notify the Local Authority that a learner 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 learner's name is actually removed.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed every year by the Trust Senior Education Welfare Officer and the Head teacher.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Lincolnshire County Council, Children Missing Education Risk Assessment.

Appendix 2 – Lincolnshire County Council, School Leavers Form.

Children Missing Education Risk Assessment- Appendix 1

Child's Details			
Full Name		DOB	
UPN		School	
Year Group		Traveller	
Gender		Ethnicity	

Child's Address	
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Parent's Details			
Relation		Full Name	
Telephone		Email Address	

Home Visit			
Date of Home Visit		Date Last Attended School	
Who Completed the Visit			
Outcome of Home Visit			

Home Visit Detail			

Additional Information to Help Locate the Child			

Risk Assessment	
Is there good reason to believe that the child may be the victim of crime?	
Does the child have a child protection plan?	
Is the child in care i.e. looked after by the local authority?	
Is the planned or current LA children's social care or LA adults' social care services involved?	
Is there a person present in the home or visiting the family who poses an on-going risk to children, or who is suspected of previously harming a child?	
Is the child at risk of sexual exploitation?	
Is the child at risk of radicalisation?	

Has there been LA children's social care or LA adults/social care or Criminal Justice System	
Does the child have an EHA or TAC?	
Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk?	
Is there any known history of drug or alcohol dependency within the family?	
Is there any known history of domestic violence?	
Is there concern about the parent/carer's ability to protect the child from harm?	
Was there any significant incident prior to the child's unexplained absence?	
Has the child been a victim of bullying?	
Does the child need essential medical or health care?	
Was the child noted to have a change in behaviour or mood -prior to the child's unexplained absence?	
Has the child ever gone missing without their family?	
Is there a history of poor attendance?	
Does this child have any Special Education Needs?	
Does this family have English as an additional language and does this make communication difficult?	
Does this child have a history of behavioural needs?	
Is this young person a young carer?	
Are there any parental vulnerabilities we should be aware of?	
Has there been any change in the child/family's financial circumstances?	

Further Risk Assessment Information			
Refers Detail			
Name		School	
Telephone		Email	

Leavers Form – Appendix 2

To be completed by a Parent or Guardian

Your child(ren)'s name(s) and date of birth(s)	
What date are you moving?	
Are the whole family moving?	
Is the move permanent? Yes or No. If no please state expected return date	
Last date your child(ren) will attend the school	
Are you moving having been posted? Yes or No.	
Current address	
New address	
If moving within UK:	
Are child(ren) in the admissions process in the new LA, if yes, give details of a) LA b) Schools applied for	a) b)
Name of new school (if within UK)	
If moving overseas:	
Name and address of possible/confirmed new school	

Contact details for new school e.g. phone number, email address, fax number	
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Flight details: a) Airline b) Date of travel c) Destination airport	a) b) c)
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Person providing information:	
Name	
Mobile Number	
Relationship to child	
Date:	Signature:

Please return this form to the School Office before your child leaves

Thank you