

# Children Missing Education policy



**Dorset**  
Studio School  

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LAND & ENVIRONMENT

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# **Dorset Studio School**

## **Children Missing Education Policy**

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## 1. Definition and Overview

The statutory guidance [children missing education \(August 2024\)](#) 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 (including travel to conflict zones), 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 \(August 2024\)](#).

## 2. Risks

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 why a child is missing education 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 experiencing mental health problems;
- Children at risk of a forced marriage;
- Children at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM);
- Children experiencing abuse and neglect.

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

Children who are missing out on education are at increased risk of being criminally exploited or being groomed and exploited by gangs.

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. See [Children Missing from Care, Home and Education Procedure](#).

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 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) work with young people (aged 10 to 18 years) who are involved with the Criminal Justice System. YOTs should work with the local authority CME officer to ensure that children they are working with are receiving, or return to, appropriate full-time education.

### 3. School responsibilities

As a result of daily admissions registration, schools are particularly well placed to notice when a child has gone missing. If a member of staff becomes aware that a child may have run away or gone missing, they should report this directly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) who should try to contact parents / carers to establish what has happened.

If contact is not possible, or the child is missing the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) should assess the child's vulnerability by making reasonable enquiries, and where appropriate refer (see also [Referrals Procedure](#)) any concerns about the child to Children's Social Care.

The school will monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. Ongoing attendance concerns will be relayed by the school to the local authority inclusion team.

In order to monitor attendance the school must ensure that an admission register is kept.

The school must ensure that a register is kept electronically and that a back-up copy of that register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy. The amendments set out the requirements of the register. It also sets out the rules regarding deletion of names from the register.

Key issues: A child is off register if:

- They are attending another school or schools and there is no school attendance order requiring attendance at that school;
- A parent of the pupil has told the school in writing that the pupil will no longer attend the school after a certain day and will receive education otherwise than at school;
- The pupil has not attended the school within the ten school days immediately after the end of the period of leave;
- Reasonable efforts have been made to find the pupils location but they have not been found or are refusing to attend and there is little or no likelihood of them attending;
- There is continuous absence for 20 or more days;
- The pupil has been sentenced to detention at his majesty's pleasure;
- The pupil has been permanently excluded;
- The Local Authority agrees the pupil is no longer attending the school.

In the more general circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, the Principal should inform the local authority inclusion team of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive school days without provision of reasonable explanation.

The school is required to notify the local authority within 5 school days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The school will provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.

The school is required to 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).

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

The Principal will inform the child's social worker immediately if a child who is Looked After or subject to a Child Protection Plan is missing.

In the following circumstances a referral to Children's Social Care 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 pupil has not returned to school for ten consecutive school days after a leave of absence or is absent from school for reasons statistically recorded as unauthorised absence for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil's name can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to find out the location and circumstances of the child or have succeeded but agree there are

no reasonable grounds to believe that they will attend the school again. In deciding there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again both school and local authority must agree, including that there are no reasonable steps that could be taken (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance. Neither ground for deletion applies if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

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

The term 'reasonable' also makes clear that there is a limit to what the school and local authority is expected to do.

In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the school and the local authority will carry out reasonable enquiries. This may include checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders who are involved. The school will 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 should be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).

Where the child's name has been removed from the school roll, but they have not been located, the Principal will arrange for the pupil's records to be retained until the child is located. They may be held centrally according to local arrangements.

Where the Principal 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 will 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 the school receives a new pupil without receiving information about the pupil from their previous school, the school will contact the local authority inclusion team.

## **5. Issues**

A child missing from education is not in itself a child protection matter, and there may be a reasonable 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.

The school will endeavour to deal with this problem in three ways:

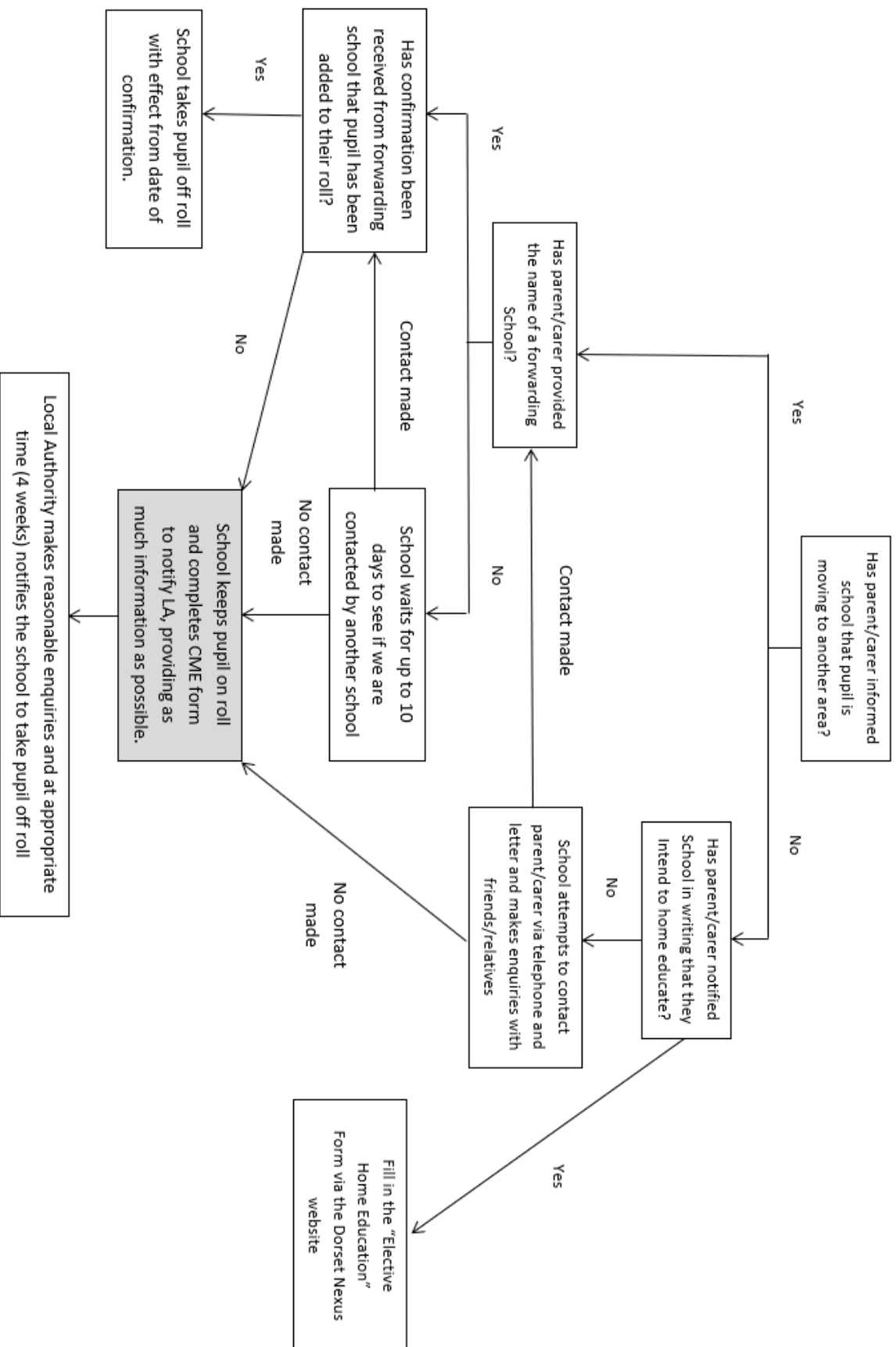
- By preventing poor school attendance and truancy;
- By acting once absence has occurred to establish children's safety and try to get them back to school;
- By taking action to trace children whose whereabouts are not known.

## 6. Further Information

This policy 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 \(August 2024\)](#);
- [Elective Home Education Guidelines](#);
- [Unregistered independent schools and out of school settings](#) - non-statutory guidance for local authorities;
- [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](#);
- The [Working Together to Improve School Attendance: Statutory Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities \(August 2024\)](#) emphasises the safeguarding duties placed on maintained schools by [Section 175 of the Education Act 2002](#).

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION FLOW CHART



## Appendix 2 – Reporting a child not in education

From September 2025, schools in Dorset are required to notify the Local Authority of a child missing education through the ACE system - <https://ace-dorsetcc.msapproxy.net/ace/>

The following information will be required to be submitted:

### Referrer Details:

Referrer First Name	
Referrer Surname	
Position in School	
Referrer Contact number	
Referrer email	
School (drop down)	

### Student Details:

Student's first name	
Student's surname	
Student may also be known as	
Year Group	
UPN (Unique Pupil number) if not know , please enter "unknown" in the box	
Student's date of birth	
Student's gender	
Ethnicity	

### Safeguarding Status:

Social care status	
SEN status	
Pupil Premium	

### CME Form:

Date last attended	
What has led you to believe the child/young person is missing education	
Are you aware of any other school aged children in the family home	
Do you have any addresses for this child/young person	

Have you had any contact with any adults in the family or connected to the family regarding this child	
Are there any agencies involved with the family e.g. family support, social care?	
Have you or any other professional involved with the child/young person considered completing the child sexual exploitation risk assessment tool?	
Please add ANYTHING else, no matter how small, that might help us to locate this child	

Parent/Carer Details

Parent/Carer title	
Parent/Carer name	
Parent/Carer surname	
Parent/Carer contact number	
Alternative number	
Second Parent/Carer name	
Second Parent/Carer surname	
Second Parent/Carer contact number	
Alternative number	
Parent/Carer and Student address (or last known address)	
Post Code	
Parent email	