



The Children's House

Children Missing in Education Policy

This policy should be reviewed annually and as required by legislation.		
Action	Reviewer	Date
Review	EG/ MZ	Sep 2026
Approved by Chair of COM	BB/ SP	Sep 2026
Date for next internal review		Sep 2027

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION POLICY

Definition

In Children Missing Education - Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, children missing education are defined as those who are not on a school roll or receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

CME includes children who:

- are in the process of applying for a school place
- have been offered a school place for a future date but have not yet started
- are receiving elective home education (EHE) that has been assessed as unsuitable
- have been recorded as CME for an extended period, for example where their whereabouts is unclear or unknown

CME are not children who:

- are receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school (for example, pupils who are electively home educated or attending alternative provision) which is suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have
- are EHE but the local authority has not had an opportunity to assess whether the education being provided is suitable
- are registered at a school, even if they are persistently or severely absent from that school

Those who are regularly absent or have missed 10 school days or more without permission may be at risk of becoming 'children missing education'.

There will not always be a safeguarding concern for children and young people who are missing education. Most children and young people moving schools are supported by their parents/carers, schools and local authority admissions services. A smaller number, however, are at risk of dropping out or disengaging from education and being out of school, they are at risk of exploitation, going missing and significant harm.

Children Absent from Education

Children Absent from education are those who are persistently absent, either repeatedly or for prolonged periods.

A child who is absent from education can become a child missing education if they're removed from their school's register.

A child being absent from school repeatedly or for prolonged periods can act as a warning sign of potential safeguarding issues. Early intervention is essential, especially during transition points.

Risks

CME are at significant risk of underachieving, having poorer health outcomes, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) later in life. 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, at the earliest possible stage, the reasons for the child being missing.

Possible reasons that should be considered include:

- Failure to start appropriate provision and never entering the system
- Lack of attendance due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parent/carers
- Failure to complete a transition between schools
- Children from refugee and asylum -seeking families
- Children of new migrant families
- Children from families who are highly mobile
- Children at risk of a forced marriage
- Children experiencing abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Children supervised by the Youth Justice System
- Children who go missing from home or care
- Children with SEND whose needs are not being adequately supported
- Children who are excluded from school
- Children and young people supervised by the youth justice system
- Children of service personnel
- Children attending unregistered independent school

Children who remain disengaged from education are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk such as anti-social behaviour and/or sexual exploitation.

Families moving between local authority areas can sometimes lead to a child becoming 'lost' in the system and consequently missing education. Local authorities must identify CME. When a child has moved, local authorities should check with other local authorities, either regionally or nationally, and share information to ascertain where the child is living. 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 otherwise. (Section 436A of the *Education Act 1996*).

Recognition

Schools

As a result of daily registration, schools are particularly well placed to notice when a child has gone missing and they should maintain accurate admission registers. If the school Administrator or class teacher becomes aware that a child may have run away or gone missing, they should try to establish with the parents/carers, what has happened on the first morning of absence once registration is complete. If this is not possible, or the child is missing, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should, together with the class teacher, assess the child's vulnerability.

Enquiries into the circumstances surrounding a child who is missing from school can be effectively supported by schools adopting an admissions procedure which requires a parent/carers to provide documentary evidence of their child's identity. Schools should ensure that a family's contact details

are regularly updated. These checks, however, should not become delaying factors in the admissions process.

In Islington, children who are on a school roll, but who have been uncontactable for over 2 weeks are referred to as 'Missing Pupils'. Any cases of Missing Pupils should be referred to the Islington Access and Engagement Service.

In the circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, the Headteacher should inform PupilServices@islington.gov.uk of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive school days without provision of reasonable explanation by completing a Missing Pupil Alert Form (See Appendix 1). Prior to doing so, the school should have made enquiries to ascertain whether the child is still residing at the home address and is not attending or whether the child is missing.

The school must support 'reasonable enquiries' when a pupil's whereabouts are unknown.

The school must notify the local authority if a pupil is withdrawn for EHE or moves without clear destination.

Other Agencies

In Islington, pupils who do not have a school place are referred to as Children Missing Education and are managed through the School Admissions team.

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, this information should be passed to the PupilServices@islington.gov.uk with any details they have of the child in question.

Response

From the first day that a child does not attend school and there is no explanation or authorisation of the absence, the following steps should be taken:

- The school Administrator will contact the parents/carers (person with parental responsibility for the child) to seek reassurance that the child is safe at home
- The outcome of the contact should be assessed and if there are any concerns a consultation with the school/establishment Designated Safeguarding Lead should take place to consider the child's vulnerability

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

The answers to further questions could assist a judgement on whether or not to inform children's social care and the police

- In which age range is the child?
- Is this very sudden and unexpected behaviour?
- Have there been any past concerns about the child associating with significantly older young people or adults?
- Was there a significant incident prior to the child's unexplained absence?
- Has the child been a victim of bullying?
- Are there health reasons to believe that the child is at risk? e.g.: Does the child need essential medication or health care?
- Was the child noted to be depressed prior to their unexplained absence?
- Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk? e.g.: Rites of passage, female genital mutilation or forced marriage planned for the child?
- Has the child a disability and/or special educational needs?
- Have there been past concerns about this child and family which together with the sudden disappearance are worrying? e.g.
 - 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?
 - Is there any concern about extremist views?

Children missing from education but not missing from home

The length of time that a child remains out of school could, of itself, be an alerting factor of risk of harm to the child. A judgement as to timeliness is required in respect of the referral to the local authority and will be made on a case-by-case basis.

In exceptional circumstances, a leave of absence can be authorised by the Headteacher, at which point a return date is set. In these cases, the timeline for enquiries starts from when the child does not attend school on the expected return date, not from the day the authorised leave started.

Removing a child from the School Register

Where a pupil

- Has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, **or**
- Has been absent without authorisation for 20 consecutive days

If there are not reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or another unavoidable cause, the School must make reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts, and this must be done jointly with the LA.

The child can only be removed from the register **only when** the School has failed to establish their whereabouts, after making 'reasonable enquiries'

Notifications and Actions for Children Missing from Education where there are Safeguarding Concerns

If the answers to any of the points set out in the previous section indicate that there are concerns about the child's safety, then a referral should be made to Children's Social Care (CSCTreferrals@islington.gov.uk/0207 527 7400) and the Police on day one.

Children's social care, who must be contacted as soon as possible in these circumstances, will also liaise with the Police in order to identify, and act upon, any suspicion of child abuse or child related crime.

The school should work in collaboration with children's social care and the police, and the Designated Safeguarding Lead should participate in any strategy discussions, section 47 enquiries and child protection conferences which may arise.

Reasonable enquiry:

If the judgement reached on day one is that there is no reason to believe that the child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, then the school should delay making a referral to allow them to make further reasonable enquiries.

'Reasonable enquiries' when the whereabouts of a child are unclear or unknown, might include completing and recording **1 or more** of the following:

- Contacting parents, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Checking local databases within the LA, or the DfE's Key to Success or school2school systems
- Following local information sharing arrangements, making enquiries to:
 - Other local databases and agencies
 - Agencies known to be involved with the family
- Checking with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force
- Checking with the LA and school from which your pupil moved from originally, or any past LAs or schools that have educated your pupil
- Checking with the LA where your pupil lives, if it's different from the one where your school is
- In the case of children of service personnel, checking with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service
- Conducting a home visit, following the School's own risk assessment procedures and in consultation with the LA.

The speed at which these reasonable enquiries are made will depend upon any known or concerning factors that may arise through the enquiry process.

Further Actions

If the above response is unsuccessful, the school should contact the Islington Pupil Services (PupilServices@islington.gov.uk), referring the child as a missing pupil and providing the details of the completed enquiries made by the school. The local authority should make enquiries by visiting the child's home and asking for information from the family's neighbours and their local community - a risk assessment of this activity will be needed along with a decision about whether this is appropriate. Islington Pupil Services will also check databases within the local authority, use agreed protocols to check local databases, e.g., housing, health and the police; check with agencies known to be involved with the family, with any local authority the child may have moved from originally, and with any local authority to which the child may have moved.

The child's circumstances and vulnerability should be reviewed and reassessed regularly and jointly by Islington Pupil Services in consultation with children's social care and the police, as appropriate.

Children missing education are vulnerable and, when reviewed, plans should be put in place to proactively find children. As time progresses, missing education will become a more significant factor as well as needing to be considered alongside any other known factors that were already present.

Child missing from school for more than four weeks

A child may not be removed from the school roll before the end of four weeks, unless located in an alternative educational provision. After 4 weeks Islington Pupil Services will inform the school when they can remove them from the roll.

Transfer of information when a pupil changes school

The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (SI 2000/297) (as amended by SI 2001/1212 and SI 2002/1680) governs the transfer of information between schools.

- Regulation 10(3) states that 'The headteacher of the pupil's old school shall send the information within fifteen school days of the pupil's ceasing to be registered at the school'. However
- Regulation 10 (4) states that 'This regulation does not apply where it is not reasonably practicable for the headteacher of the old school to ascertain the pupil's new school or where the pupil was registered at his old school for less than four weeks'.

If Islington Pupil Services or any other agency becomes aware the child has moved to another school the service should ensure all relevant agencies are informed so that arrangements can be made to forward records from the previous school.

Changes to the Children Missing Education statutory regulations in September 2016 require that all schools must now report all starters and leavers to the local authority. This includes starters, no shows, and leavers that are outside of normal transition rounds, following the local authority's processes.

If a pupil's name is added to the School roll at a non-standard transition point

The LA must be notified within 5 days and given all the information held within the admission register.

If a pupil's name is to be removed from the school roll at a non-standard transition point

The School must inform the LA immediately, 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.

The School must provide the LA with the following information:

- The pupil's full name
- The full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the pupil lives
- At least 1 phone number for the parent/carer the pupil lives with
- The full name and address of the parent/carer the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there (if applicable)

- The name of the pupil's destination school and the pupil's expected start date (if applicable)
- The ground in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the register

Children who are Foreign Nationals and go Missing

Definitions

PLEASE NOTE: This section applies to children who are 'subject to restriction'. i.e., who have:

- proceeded through immigration control without obtaining leave to enter; or
- Left the border control area or Border Force accommodation without permission; or
- Been granted temporary admission; or
- Been granted temporary release or bail; or
- Released on a restriction order; or
- Served with a 'notice of liability to deport' or is the dependant of a foreign national offender whose status in the UK is under consideration by criminal casework - these dependants could be British Citizens or have extant leave.

Action and Responsibilities when the whereabouts of a Child 'subject to restrictions' is not known

A missing person's referral must be made by Home Office staff to the police, the UK Missing Person Bureau and the local authority children's social care in certain circumstances including:

- When a child 'subject to restriction' is identified as having run away from their parents
- Where they are looked after and have gone missing from their placement
- Where they are being hidden by their parents and where there is concern for the child's safety because they are being hidden by, or have gone missing with, their family.

A copy of the missing persons notification form must be emailed to the local authority duty desk and the UK MPB.

If it is believed by Home Office staff that a child is being coerced to abscond or go missing, this must be reported as a concern that the child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm to the local police and children's social care services.

Notifications will also be made where a missing child is found by Home Office staff. See Home Office Guidance: Missing Children and Vulnerable Adults Guidance.

Local Authorities and Health agencies are responsible for:

- Reporting any missing child who is in their care to the police
- Notifying the Home Office when a child is reported missing to the police or is found

The police are responsible for:

- Investigating all children reported missing by the Home Office – following receipt of a missing person's notification
- Conducting joint investigations with the Home Office where necessary
- Circulating a missing child on the Police National Computer (PNC).

The local authority will also notify the Home Office Evidence and Enquiry Unit when a child in their care goes missing or when a missing child returns or is found. The Home Office must maintain regular weekly contact with the local authority and the police until the child is found and record all contact with the police and local authority.

This Policy was reviewed, amended and agreed by the Council of Management in September 2026. It will be reviewed again in one year's time.

Signed: Brodie Bibby, Chair of the Council of Management

Sarah Pitcher, COM Member with Safeguarding responsibility

Appendix 1

Missing Pupil Alert

Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, professionals should report the case immediately to police, including dialling 999 if appropriate.

Islington's local protocol requires schools to notify the LA of any pupil who has been absent for ten consecutive school days or more without permission using the Missing Pupil Alert. In such cases, the pupil must be kept on roll until the LA authorises their deletion from the school's register.

Please ensure this form is typed (not handwritten) and all sections are completed.

1. PUPIL'S DETAILS		
Name:	Photo: <i>(In colour if available)</i>	
Known as:		
DOB:		Male ☐ Female ☐
Address:		
School:		

UPN:	NCY:	
Nationality:		
Ethnicity:		
Religion:		
Pupil's contact details (if available):		When pupil was last seen:
Mobile:		Date:
E-Mail:		Location:
Social Media:		By Whom:
GP Details:		If travel-card or bus pass details are available, please provide the reference number:
GP Name:		
Surgery Address:		
Contact Number:		
Child's NHS Number:		

Attendance Figure for This Academic Year:		Attendance Figure for Last Academic Year:	
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2. PARENT/CARER DETAILS	
PARENT/CARER 1	PARENT/CARER 2
Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
Contact Number(s):	Contact Number(s):
E-Mail:	E-Mail:
Relationship:	Relationship:
Parental Responsibility: Yes ☐ No ☐	Parental Responsibility: Yes ☐ No ☐
Lives with Child: Yes ☐ No ☐	Lives with Child: Yes ☐ No ☐

3. KNOWN SIBLINGS		
NAME	DOB	SCHOOL

4. OTHER KNOWN CONTACTS		
NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	RELATIONSHIP

5. EMERGENCY CONTACT		
NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	RELATIONSHIP

6. AGENCY INVOLVEMENT			
(E.g., Children's Social Care; Families First; Mental Health services; Youth Offending service etc.)			
NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	AGENCY	TICK IF CURRENTLY INVOLVED
			☐
			☐
			☐
			☐

7. DECLARATION

I confirm the pupil remains on the school roll in line with Islington's procedure for Missing Pupils.

Head teacher's signature

PLEASE COMPLETE THE RISK ASSESSMENT OVERLEAF AND RETURN TO
PupilServices@islington.gov.uk

Missing Pupil Risk Assessment Record

R I S K N U M B E R	Risk Factor	Please tick			
		C U R R E N T	P R E V I O U S	N E V E R	N O T K N O W N
	Has a Child Protection Plan	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Is a Child in Need (CIN)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Is a Looked After Child (LAC)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Needs essential medication/treatment (e.g. asthma inhaler, insulin etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	May not have the physical ability to interact safely with others or in an unknown environment (e.g. visually impaired, history of abuse or inappropriate adult/stranger relationships, SEN etc.)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Lacks reasonable awareness of the risks associated with running away (e.g. learning difficulty)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Known to associate with adults or children who present a risk of harm e.g. Sexual Offenders, Offenders against children	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Mental illness or psychological disorder that may increase risk of harm to themselves or others	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Drugs and/or alcohol dependency	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Suspicion of abduction	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Suspected suicide or self-harm	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Involved in violent and/or racial incident or confrontation immediately prior to disappearance	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Concerns about state of mind e.g. unusual behaviour prior to disappearance or disappeared with no prior indication, or seemed troubled etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Inclement weather conditions where exposure would seriously increase risk to health	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Family/relationship problems or recent history of family conflict/abuse	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Family employment problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Family financial problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
	School or college problems	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Ongoing victim of bullying, harassment, or exploitation e.g. racial, sexual etc.	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Previously disappeared and suffered or was exposed to harm whilst missing	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Victim or potential victim, of forced marriage, FGM or trafficking, incl. for sexual exploitation	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Any known gang affiliations	☐	☐	☐	☐
	At risk of radicalisation	☐	☐	☐	☐
	At risk of sexual exploitation (CSE)	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. SUMMARY		
Identified Risks	RISK NUMBER	DETAILS
Please provide additional details (if any) for the risks identified above.		

Other Risks Please comment on any other risks not covered above.	

9. HOME VISITS (Referrals will not be accepted without a Home Visit due to new process with HMRC)		
DATE	WHO CARRIED OUT HOME VISIT?	OUTCOME
		Choose an item.
		Choose an item.
		Choose an item.
		Choose an item.

10. CHRONOLOGY OF ACTIONS TAKEN			
DATE	CONTACT TYPE	WHO WAS CONTACTED	OUTCOME
<i>Example:</i> 23/06/2017 Please delete	Telephone Call (01234 567 890)	Mr Joe Blogs (Dad)	Attendance Officer has attempted to call Mr Blogs on 01234 567 890. The phone rings with an abroad tone. Voice message has been left requesting a phone call back. – NO RESPONSE RECEIVED

11. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

12. REFERRER DETAILS	
Completed by (full name)	
Signature	

Date	
Direct telephone number	
Email	
If the pupil returns to school, please call 020 7527 3747 immediately	

**PLEASE ENSURE THE DECLARATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT ARE
SIGNED AND**

RETURNED TO:

PupilServices@islington.gov.uk