

Children Who Are Absent from Education Policy

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1. Background

All children are entitled to a full time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children who are absent from education (CME) risk underachieving, being victims of abuse, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life. Effective information sharing between parents, schools, colleges, and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children are safe and receiving suitable education.

Children who are frequently absent or absence from education for prolonged periods are at significant risk of underachieving and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life because they do not benefit from the opportunities that a high-quality education provides. They are also at significant risk of being victims of harm, neglect, exploitation, particularly county lines, and radicalisation. The drivers behind the factors that can lead to children being classed as missing in education can often be complex and variable, including: children who have never been registered at a school, children who have been taken off a school roll (e.g. by their parents or because they have not returned following a leave of absence and reasonable efforts have been made to locate the child), and children excluded from school, who are not being provided with suitable education at home or in another setting. It may also indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage.

Our response to children who are absent from education supports identifying such abuse and also helps prevent the risk of them going missing in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where going missing from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Once children are classed as missing in education, it is vital that these children are supported to access suitable education. The DfE has published a comprehensive school attendance strategy for staff to use which includes:

- ["Working together to improve school attendance"](#) guidance, which sets out expectations for schools, trusts, governing bodies and local authorities to manage and improve levels of school attendance.
- Establishing a better flow of pupil level attendance data – [collecting data directly from schools' electronic registers](#) to help the system identify those in need of support earlier.
- Specific support for the most vulnerable children, including through the [Supporting Families](#) programme.

Staff should be aware of this strategy and the procedures set out in this policy for identifying and dealing with unauthorised absence and children missing from education. It is vital therefore that each academy staff, the Trust, the local authority and other agencies work closely together to help safeguard our children

This policy meets the requirements of the following documents:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#), DfE September 2025
- [Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities](#). DfE August 2024.

- Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (added by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- Education Act 1996 (section 7, 8, 14 and 19)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 4 and 38)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016

2. Definitions

A child is defined as missing in education if they haven't returned to school for 10 school days after an authorised absence (under regulation 8(1)(f)(iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) or 20 consecutive school days without authorised absence (under regulation 8(1)(h)(iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

Children particularly at risk of going missing from education include children who:

- Are at risk from harm or neglect
- Come from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families
- Come from families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families.

Children can become missing from education for a number of reasons:

- Fail to start appropriate provision and never enter the system
- Withdrawal by parents/carers
- Fail to complete a transition between schools/academies
- Children from refugee and asylum seeking families
- Children from families who are highly mobile e.g. parents in the Armed Forces, Gypsy, Romany and Traveller families and economic migrants
- Children at risk of a forced marriage
- Children subjected to female genital mutilation
- Children experiencing abuse and neglect
- Failure to return after a school/academies holiday
- No return after a period of suspension.

3. Hatton Academies Trust Academy Responsibilities

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that academy staff follow the requirements of legislation and this policy. The day to day management of children absent from education may be delegated to other staff but their role should be clearly set out in their job description.

The law requires all schools and academies to have an admissions register and an attendance register. A pupil must be placed on the admissions register on the first day on which the academy has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the academy. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the academy should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity to prevent the child from going missing from education.

Academies must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. Attendance should be monitored and any issues addressed. The local authority must be informed of any pupil who fails to attend regularly, or has been absent without the academy's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

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

Where a pupil has not returned to the Academy for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the Academy and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the Academy does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Each Academy must also arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a suspension.

4. Hatton Academies Trust Procedures

4.1 Registers and admissions

It is important that the admissions register is accurate and kept up to date. Academies should regularly encourage parents to inform them of any changes whenever they occur e.g. through newsletters and the website.

Where a parent notifies an academy that a pupil will live at another address, all academies are required to record on the admission register:

- The full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- The new address; and
- The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.
- Where a parent of a pupil notifies the academy that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in the future, the academy must record in the admission register:
 - The name of the new school; and
 - The date on which the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

The Academy is required to notify the local authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register. The academy will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This does not apply to pupils who are registered at the start of the academy's youngest year group.

4.2 Day 1 to Day 9 of non-attendance

The Attendance Officer will attempt to contact parent/carer/family/neighbours every day as to the whereabouts of the pupil. This should include the usual academy attendance management processes such as truancy call system, telephone calls and texts, email, letters to the family and home visits. They should record that they have completed these procedures.

If a child does not attend at the beginning of each term and contact has not been made by the parent/carer then the Attendance Officer will be alerted and a home visit will

occur. Should there be any concern then the Attendance Officer will alert safeguarding teams and education entitlement services.

If there are previous concerns regarding a pupil the social services will be contacted on the first day of non-arrival. This contact will be made by the DSP (or Deputy) for child protection or another senior member of staff.

Throughout the year pupils are monitored daily to ensure that each pupil is accounted for. Home visits and contact will be made as necessary. Education Entitlement Service team will be alerted on day 10 if a student is not seen or contact cannot be made.

4.3 Non-arrival of new pupils expected in a Trust Academy

Pupils who do not arrive on the first day at the academy or pupils whose parents'/carers contact the academy to inform that they do not require the place, this will be investigated as follows:

1. The Admissions Officer, informs the Principal or other senior member of staff with responsibility for attendance.
2. The Principal/SLT lead for CME liaises with the Attendance Officer regarding any issues from the feeder school.
3. Attendance Officer makes an attempt to contact the family. If unsuccessful within 3 school days the Attendance Officer will refer the matter to NNC Admissions.
4. Information from the parent/carer for pupil non-arrival is also to be referred to the NNC Admissions Department to confirm the pupil(s) has an alternative place.
5. Check with local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known.
6. Check Key to Success or school2school (s2s) systems.
7. Check with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and/or the Border Force.
8. Check with agencies known to be involved with family.
9. In the case of children of Service Personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS);
10. Arrange for a home visit(s) made by appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessment and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s) and relatives.
11. Making these enquiries may not always lead to establishing the location of the child, but will provide a steer on what action should be taken next, for example, to contact the police, children's social care and, in cases where there may be concerns for the safety of a child who has travelled abroad, the Foreign Office.

5. Data systems

The final stage in all cases is pupil information should be entered / amended on the SIMS.net. Common Transfer File (CTF) guidance makes it clear that academies are strongly encouraged to send a CTF when a pupil leaves to attend another school or academy. Hatton Academies Trust academies are required to do so in order to support avoidance of children being absent from school and other child protection issues.

6. Removal from roll

Where a parent notifies the Academy in writing that they are going to be home educating their child after a certain date, the school must delete the child's name from the admission register once that date has passed (unless a SAO is in place) and inform the local authority. However, where parents orally indicate that they intend to withdraw their child

to be home educated, the school should consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. This is particularly important where a child has SEND, is vulnerable, and/or has a social worker.

Any child who is subject to a Child Protection Plan can only be home educated with agreement from the LA. There is not automatic right for a parent to remove them from the Academy.

Pupils must not be deleted from any Trust Academy's roll until confirmed. An accurate reason for leaving should be entered. The DfE guidance linked to above explains that where a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point (i.e. not including pupils who have completed the academy's final year) for any of the fifteen reasons set out in the 2006 regulations (see Appendix A), the academy must notify the LA 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. An academy can remove a child from roll when directed by EIP or Virtual School only when they have confirmation the new county's attendance team has taken responsibility for the child being missing in education within their county.

In a small number of cases, pupils removed from the admission register would be a standard transition but their transfer to another school would be a non-standard transition and vice-versa. For example, a pupil leaving a primary school at the end of Year 2 is a non-standard transition, but their transfer to a junior school at the beginning of Year 3 is a standard transition. In such cases, only the school where the non-standard transition occurs is under an automatic duty to notify the local authority. The local authority would need to make a request for the information from the other school, if they required information on the standard transition.

The DfE encourages academies to send a Common Transfer File to the new school using the secure internet system school2school. This also has a searchable area for information on pupils.

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with:

- a. the full name of the pupil;
- b. the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- c. at least one telephone number of the parent with whom the pupil lives;
- d. the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- e. the name of pupil's destination school and the pupil's expected start date there, if applicable; and
- f. the ground in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register (see Appendix A).

Appendix A. Grounds for deleting a pupil from the academy admission register

1. Ground A - The pupil has been registered at another school

Relevant regulation 9(1)(a)

222. Where a pupil has been registered at another school, unless:

- a school attendance order naming the school is in force in relation to the pupil (see further information below)
- the pupil is a mobile child and the school is their main school (see further information below),
- the school has agreed with a person with control of the pupil's attendance at the other school that the pupil should be registered at more than one school (see further information on dual registration below), or
- the school itself has control of the pupil's attendance at the other school and has decided that the pupil should be registered at more than one school (see further information on dual registration below).

Transfer between schools

Where a pupil is transferring to another school, the original school must delete the pupil's name from the admission register as soon as they are entered on the admission register of the new school. The new school must enter the pupil's name on the admission register on the first day that it has agreed or been told the pupil will attend the school as explained under Expected First Day of Attendance.

For example, if a pupil leaves School A on 28 March and their expected first day of attendance at School B is 29 March, they would be added to the admission register of School B and deleted from that of School A on 29 March.

School A will:

- record the pupil's attendance and absence up to and including 28 March,
- delete the pupil's name from the admission register on 29 March, and
- transfer the appropriate pupil information via the S2S system.

School B will:

- enter the pupil's name on the admission register on 29 March,
- record the pupil's attendance and absence from 29 March,
- follow up any unexpected absence on or after the 29 March, and
- request the transfer of the pupil information.

There are a small number of exceptions, these are:

School attendance order

If a school attendance order is in place for the pupil, and the name of the school has been replaced by the relevant local authority with that of another school, their name must be deleted from the admission register under the reason for deletion at ground D (regulation 9(1)(d)).

If the school attendance order has not been amended and still names the school, the pupil's name must not be deleted under ground A even if they have been registered at another school as well.

Mobile child

Where a child of compulsory school age has no fixed abode and their parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place, the child can temporarily attend another school without the need for their main school to remove their name.

Main school in this context means the school that, during the last 18 months, the child has attended during periods when their parent was not travelling in the course of their trade or business, or, if there is more than one school that fits that description, the school that most recently fulfils those criteria.

Dual registration

In circumstances where it has been agreed between the school and a person with control of the pupil's attendance that the pupil will be registered at more than one school, the pupil's name will remain on the admission register. This is also the case where it has been decided by the school if it has control of the pupil's attendance at the other school. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending another school on a temporary basis, such as a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school.

2. Ground B - The pupil has not continued at the school following completion of nursery education

Relevant regulation 9(1)(b)

Where a pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education and on completing nursery does not continue into reception (or more senior class).

3. Ground C – The pupil is also registered at one or more other schools and the other schools have agreed the deletion

Relevant regulation 9(1)(c)

Where a pupil is registered at one or more other schools, and:

- the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again,
- each school where the pupil is registered has given consent to the deletion,
- there is no school attendance order naming the school in force in relation to the pupil (see further information below), and
- the pupil is not a mobile child, or if they are, the school is not their main school (see further information below).

School attendance order

If a school attendance order is in place for the pupil, and the name of the school has been replaced by the relevant local authority with that of another school, their name must be deleted from the admission register under the reason for deletion at ground D (regulation 9(1)(d)).

If the school attendance order has not been amended and still names the school, the pupil's name must not be deleted under ground C even if the other criteria are satisfied.

Mobile child

Where a child of compulsory school age has no fixed abode and their parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place, the child can temporarily attend another school without the need for their main school to remove their name.

Main school in this context means the school that, during the last 18 months, the child has attended during periods when their parent was not travelling in the course of their trade or business, or, if there is more than one school that fits that description, the school that most recently fulfils those criteria.

4. Ground D - The pupil has a school attendance order which has been changed to name another school

Relevant regulation 9(1)(d)

Where the pupil is the subject of a school attendance order that previously named the school, but another school has now been named on that order instead.

5. Ground E - The pupil had a school attendance order which has been revoked

Relevant regulation 9(1)(e)

Where the pupil was the subject of a school attendance order naming the school, but the order is revoked because the local authority that made the order is satisfied that arrangements have been made for the child to receive suitable full-time education for their age, ability and aptitude and special educational needs somewhere other than at a school.

6. Ground F - The parent of a pupil has notified the school in writing that the pupil will be leaving the school to be educated otherwise than at a school

Relevant regulation 9(1)(f)

Where the pupil's parent has informed the school in writing that the pupil will no longer attend the school after a certain day and will receive education otherwise than at a school and that day has passed, and there is no school attendance order naming the school in force in relation to the pupil.

School Attendance Order

If a school attendance order has been revoked because the local authority that made the order is satisfied that arrangements have been made for the child to receive suitable full-time education for their age, ability and aptitude somewhere other than at a school, the pupil's name must be deleted from the admission register under the reason for deletion at regulation 9(1)(e).

7. Ground G - The pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school

Relevant regulation 9(1)(g)

Where a pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school, the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again, and the pupil is not a boarder at the school.

In circumstances where parents are moving away and withdrawing their child but are unable to say how their child will continue with their education, for example, the family are relocating but have not been able to secure a place at a new school in advance, once the pupil has completed their final day at school and moved out of the area, the school must delete the pupil's name from the admission register and the pupil's information should then be transferred to the Lost Pupil Database via the S2S system.

Reasonable distance

DfE does not define reasonable distance because each case depends on the family situation and the geography of the area for example, the parent's ability to get the child to the school, a safe walking route or the accessibility of local transportation.

Temporary or occasional absence

Relevant regulation 9(5)(a)

Whether a pupil normally lives a reasonable distance from the school is not affected by a temporary or occasional absence. A judgement should be made in an individual case as to whether an absence is temporary or occasional, but a prolonged absence is not generally considered as temporary.

8. Ground H - The pupil has not returned following a leave of absence

Relevant regulation 9(1)(h)

Where a pupil has been granted a leave of absence and:

- the pupil has not attended school within the ten school days immediately after the end of the period that the leave was granted for,
- the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause, and
- the school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances, but:
 1. they have not succeeded, or
 2. they have succeeded but they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any reasonable steps that could be taken (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance.

Pupils who have been located but have not returned to school

Where a pupil has been located and their circumstances discovered but they have not returned to school, a joint decision is required between the school and the local authority before this ground is used. Both must agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe the child will return to the school, even with reasonable support and/or enforcement to try to cause their return to school. This means the final criterion will be met very rarely, usually when a pupil has been out of the country for a prolonged period and there are no signs of the pupil returning.

This ground cannot be used in any case where the pupil could reasonably be supported to return to school regardless of whether that support has been provided. It cannot be used where a pupil is absent because of a health reason. It also cannot be used in cases where attendance legal action to cause the pupil to return to school could reasonably be taken instead. In such cases, the appropriate support or enforcement should be taken rather than the pupil's name being deleted from roll.

Examples of appropriate use include:

- The pupil is still away from home and the parent has refused to give a date for their return but there is no reason to think there is anything preventing them from returning.
- No date or evidence of the pupil returning has been provided by the deadline set out in the school's contact with the parent and there is no reason to think there is anything preventing them from returning.
- The parent has given a date, or several dates, for returning and the pupil has failed to return by or on the last given date.

Examples of where regulation 9(1)(g) may be appropriate instead:

- The date for return the parent has provided is too vague or too far in the future to reasonably believe the pupil still normally lives a reasonable distance from the school.
- The school does not believe, taking account of any information from the parent, that the pupil still resides within the area and the pupil's absence does not appear to be temporary.

9. Ground I - The pupil has been continually absent from school for 20 school days

Relevant regulation 9(1)(i)

Where a pupil has been continuously absent from the school for a period of 20 school days or more and:

- at no point during that period did any of the circumstances in regulation 10(3) Table 2 or 10(4) Table 3 other than the ones for codes G, N, or O apply.
- the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause, and
- the school and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances, but:
 1. they have not succeeded, or
 2. they have succeeded but they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any reasonable steps they could take (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance.

Pupils who have been located but have not returned to school

Where a pupil has been located and their circumstances discovered but they have not returned to school, a joint decision is required between the school and the local authority before this ground is used. Both must agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe the child will return to the school, even with reasonable support and/or enforcement to try to cause their return to school. This means the final criterion will be met very rarely, usually when a pupil has been out of the country for a prolonged period and there are no signs of the pupil returning.

This ground cannot be used in any case where the pupil could reasonably be supported to return to school regardless of whether that support has been provided. It cannot be used where a pupil is absent because of a health reason. It also cannot be used in cases where attendance legal action to cause the pupil to return to school could reasonably be taken instead. In these cases, the appropriate support or enforcement should be taken rather than the pupil's name being deleted from roll.

Examples of appropriate use include:

- The pupil is away from home and the parent has refused to give a date for their return but there is no reason to think there is anything preventing them from returning.
- No date or evidence of the pupil returning has been provided by the deadline set out in the school's contact with the parent and there is no reason to think there is anything preventing them from returning.
- The parent has given a date, or several dates, for returning and the pupil has failed to return by or on the last given date.

Examples of where regulation 9(1)(g) may be appropriate instead:

- The date for return the parent has provided is too vague or too far in the future to reasonably believe the pupil normally lives a reasonable distance from the school.
- The school does not believe, taking account of any information from the parent, that the pupil still resides within the area and the pupil's absence does not appear to be temporary.

10.Ground J - The pupil is detained under a sentence of detention

Relevant regulation 9(1)(j)

Where a pupil is found guilty of a crime and detained under a sentence of detention (as defined in regulation 3) before the pupil's name can be deleted from the admission register the school must have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will not return to the school once they are released.

This must be decided on a case by case basis after considering whether the pupil will return at the end, or part way through their sentence (e.g. where part is served on licence in the community). In determining whether there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will return to the school following their detention, it is expected that schools will discuss this with the pupil's youth offending team worker.

Pupils who are remanded to custody awaiting trial or sentencing cannot be removed under this ground.

11.Ground K - The pupil has died

Relevant regulation 9(1)(k)

Where a pupil has died.

A pupil's name should only be deleted from the admission register when the school is informed of the death. This would normally come from the pupil's parent but it is possible that notification comes from another source, such as relatives or the police.

Once the school receives the information, it is particularly important to delete the pupil's name as quickly as possible to prevent inadvertent and unnecessary contact with the family about the child.

12.Ground L - The pupil will be over compulsory school age and will not continue into the sixth form

Relevant regulation 9(1)(l)

Where a pupil will be over compulsory school age by the school next meets, and:

- the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again, or
- the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements to be transferred to the school's sixth form.

Compulsory school age

A pupil ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16

13.Ground M - The pupil is a boarder at a school maintained by a local authority or academy and their boarding fees have not been paid

Relevant regulation 9(1)(m)

Where a pupil is a boarder at the school and:

- the school is maintained by a local authority or is an academy,
- charges for the pupil's board and lodgings are payable by the pupil's parent, and those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.

14.Ground N - The pupil has ceased to be a pupil at an independent school or non-maintained special school

Relevant regulation 9(1)(n)

Where a pupil has ceased to be a pupil at the school and the school is not maintained by a local authority or an academy (including a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts).

15.Ground O - The pupil has been permanently excluded from the school

Relevant regulation 9(1)

Where a pupil has been permanently excluded from the school. A pupil's name cannot be deleted from the admission register until the outcome of any consideration of reinstatement and independent review.