

**Education and Skills
Children Missing Education Policy**

July 2024

Contents

- 1. Purpose/Duty of the Local authority**
- 2. Scope**
- 3. Context**
- 4. Roles and responsibilities**
- 5. Elective Home Education**
- 6. Appendices**

Executive Summary

All professionals working with children can help by being vigilant to children's safety. All children, regardless of their circumstances are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children and young people who are not being educated quickly become at risk of failing academically and socially. If their whereabouts are unknown, they may be particularly at risk of physical, emotional and psychological harm. The law states that every child should be in receipt of education, we are better placed to ensure a child's safety if we know where and how they are receiving education.

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 requires the local authority to establish the identities of children within the area who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children of compulsory school age within this category are regarded as Children Missing Education (CME) and should be returned to full time education.

Wiltshire Council is committed to ensuring that children and young people are in receipt of a suitable form of education and facilitated back into education where this is not evident.

Children Absent from Education (CAFE) refers to any child of compulsory school age who lives in Wiltshire and is NOT registered at any approved education activity, alternative education provision or Elective Home Education provision for at least 15 school days. This also includes where a child is not attending school despite having a school place or being enrolled in some form of reduced educational provision, approved education activity or alternative provision AND the school has completed their processes for managing non-attendance.

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to those children and young people who are missing i.e. their family or their individual whereabouts are unknown.

1. Purpose/Duty of the Local Authority

1.1

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Part 1, Section 4, Wiltshire Council like all authorities, has a statutory duty to identify children who are not receiving education. Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002, Wiltshire Council also has a statutory duty to provide promptly, a school place for every child requiring one. As part of this duty, it is necessary to ensure that any child or young person of statutory school age is allocated a school place as soon as possible when an application has been received.

1.2

As a local authority, we have duty under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in our area who are of compulsory school age but who are not registered pupils at a school or in receipt of some other form of suitable education. We must therefore identify all children within our area and ensure that they are either registered pupils at a maintained, non – maintained or independent school, academy or receiving education other than at school. This may be through arrangements made by the local authority as specified in the duty imposed on local authorities by Section 19 Education Act 1996 or by parents by choosing Elective Home Education.

The obligation under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify children and young people who are not receiving a suitable education includes a duty to intervene. Local authorities also have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people through their educational obligations.

The policy informs local authority officers, schools and other agencies about the policy and procedures to be followed in order to prevent and also identify children who are/or might be missing from education. It should be read in conjunction with DFE statutory guidance and Wiltshire Council Targeted Education Service advice on school attendance and Reduced Educational Provision, The Wiltshire Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (WSVPP) Safeguarding Procedures apply at all times.

This policy outlines the procedures necessary to establish, wherever possible, the identities of children in Wiltshire that are not receiving a suitable education, and/or are identified as missing.

Current evidence suggests that consistent and regular attendance in education is a protective factor for all children and young people and that it is a key responsibility of

the local authority and its schools. One way for the local authority and its schools to safeguard the welfare of children is to ensure that they are all on a school roll or registered as Electively Home Educated and that children are not removed from roll inappropriately (off-rolling) and become 'missing'.

Reference should also be made to the following national guidance:

[Keeping children safe in education 2023](#)

[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

[Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2016](#)

2. Scope

2.1

This policy details good practice and procedures for everyone in Wiltshire Children's and Young Peoples Workforce, regardless of their discipline or agency. Key partner agencies include Community Health, Schools, Police, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Voluntary and Community Organisations.

Implementation and Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually.

3. Context

3.1

'Missing' children are amongst the most vulnerable in the country. Children either fail to start in appropriate provision or simply become lost from school rolls or fail to re-register at a new school when they move area. It is vital that practitioners in all services work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible.

3.2

Children who remain disengaged from education are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk, which could include engagement in anti-social or criminal behaviour, social disengagement, sexually risky behaviour, substance misuse (including alcohol), county lines, modern slavery and/or sexual exploitation.

3.3

This policy and procedures should ensure that the local authority;

- Meets statutory duties relating to the provision of education and safeguarding the welfare of children missing in education.
- Ensures robust multi-agency systems are in place in Wiltshire to identify and track children missing from education or at risk of becoming so
- Ensures that monitoring and reporting of systems are in place in order to identify a lead agency and a key worker for all children missing from education.

3.4

Children drop out of the education system and are at risk of 'going missing' because they;

- Fail to start appropriate provision and so never enter the system (e.g. pre-school to reception/Year 1 or new to area and no application is made to school
- cease to attend
- are permanently excluded or have multiple suspensions
- may be subject to illegal and unofficial exclusion, off rolling or withdrawal from roll
- are removed from roll with no named destination
- do not have suitable full-time education available to them
- fail to complete transition between school placement providers (particularly for school Year 6/7 transfer or being unable to find a suitable school place after moving into Wiltshire)
- go missing (individually or with their family); or disappear from the area of Wiltshire and cannot be traced.

3.5

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

“Any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity” (e.g. school, alternative provision, elective home education).

3.6

Some children who experience certain life events are more at risk of going missing from education. This is not an exhaustive list but may include:

- Young people who are involved in offending behaviour
- Children living in a refuge
- Young people who go missing from home
- Children of homeless families, living in temporary accommodation, house of multiple occupancy or bed and breakfast
- Children with long term medical, mental health and emotional problems

- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Children of refugees and asylum-seeking families
- Children in new immigrant families, who are not yet established in the UK and may not have a fixed abode
- Children in care
- Children from travelling backgrounds or traveller families
- Young Carers (Children who provide care for other children/adults)
- Children from transient families (families who move often from one geographical area to another)
- Children whose parents/guardians experience mental health issues
- Teenage parents
- Children who are permanently excluded from school (especially those excluded illegally)
- Children who engage in substance misuse including alcohol
- Young people in forced marriage or under threat of forced marriage
- Those at risk or suffering from Child Sexual Exploitation
- Those at risk of criminal exploitation including County Lines and modern slavery

Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns must be observed at all times.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all children's services practitioners working with a child missing education to thoroughly consider the completion of an holistic assessment such as Early Support Assessment or My Support Plan – to clearly identify the issues and needs of the child and inform what broader outcomes need to be achieved to ensure the best possibility of the child returning to education. The completion and registration of such an assessment will build a picture of the most frequent issues/needs for this cohort and allow for more informed service provision.

4.1

Completion of an assessment such as an Early Support Assessment or My Support Plan will help to clearly identify the needs of the child, and to inform the delivery of broader outcomes to be achieved to ensure the best possibility of the child returning to education. The completion and registration of an Early Support Assessment and/or My Support Plan helps to build a picture of need and informs service provisions for this group.

The Wiltshire Council Education Welfare Service has the responsibility on behalf of the local authority to ensure:

- Follow up of all referrals of children and young people reporting as missing from education.

- Liaison with all partner agencies to track children and young people who may be missing education.
- Collation of information on all reported cases of CME in Wiltshire maintained schools, academies and alternative provision providers.
- Provision of data for DfE national CME and EHE census return taking place 3 times per year

4.2

Upon receipt of notification the EWS (Education Welfare Service) will attempt contact with the family by undertaking a visit to the home, continuing telephone calls and writing to the parent/carer. This will be in conjunction with carrying out checks on internal council systems and with other agencies such as Social Care, Police, Housing, Health and other partner agencies.

4.3

Wiltshire Council Targeted Education Service has an overview of Education Other Than in School (EOTIS) and Alternative Provision and its staff attend In Year Fair Access Panels in Wiltshire. Other parts of the council (e.g. SEND/Support and Safeguarding/Virtual School staff) offer child centred support to young people identified by schools as being at risk of not having access to suitable full-time education or permanent exclusion and respond in allocating a range of alternative educational provisions within the county through established referral routes, panel arrangements and agreed protocols. There are strong links with colleagues supporting pupils from identified vulnerable groups (e.g. Special Educational Needs, Children in Care, Support and Safeguarding Social Work Teams, Young Peoples' Service, Youth Offending Team) This team also ensure that the correct procedure is followed and that information in relation to pupils excluded is communicated effectively.

4.5 Children Looked After – Virtual School

The Virtual School carefully monitors the attendance of Wiltshire's Children Looked After to ensure that any absence from school is reduced and accounted for. Welfare Call is commissioned to track attendance daily and report all absence of each individual Child Looked After.

4.6 School Admissions

The School Admissions Team have a statutory responsibility to provide a school place for all children living in Wiltshire.

Full details of the School Admissions process can be found on the Wiltshire Council website or by clicking on the following link: [Apply for a school place - Wiltshire Council](#)

4.7 Children Missing Education Procedures

Children missing education procedures should be followed where a child or young person has not taken up an allocated school place as expected and/or has 10 days or more continuous absence from school without an explanation and/or has left school suddenly and the destination is unknown.

Schools should refer to the Children Missing Education Checklist where the school has been unable to contact the parent/carers.

Any concern of a Child Missing Education should be reported to the local authority through the Education Welfare Service. Notifications should be sent to pupilmove@wiltshire.gov.uk.

Informing the Local authority of Deletions from the School Register.

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 9 of [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.

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

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- 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;
- the name of pupil's other or future school and the pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable; and
- the ground prescribed in regulation 9 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Schools should inform the Education Welfare Service **and** the Child's SEND Lead Worker where a child has an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) when;

- They become aware that a deletion may be made
- A pupil is withdrawn by the parent/carers from the school without warning
- They receive a verbal notification of a parent's intent to home educate

A child may not be removed from the roll of a special school without the knowledge of the local authority.

4.8 CAFE Strategic Panel

A strategic panel led by the Education and Skills Directorate has oversight of children absent from education. The CAFE strategic panel reviews and monitors the council's activities relating to children missing from education and children absent from education and reports on strategic direction, impact and outcomes to the council's Performance Outcomes Board. The CAFE strategic panel is supported by subgroups with operational focus on specific groups of children and young people. The subgroups track or monitor children who are or are at risk of becoming absent from education by taking the necessary action to intervene to ensure the presenting issues are addressed.

The Education Welfare Service retains oversight for all children who are known to be Electively Home Educated and those who are formally classed as 'Children Missing Education' (absent 10 days or more whose whereabouts unknown).

5. Elective Home Education (EHE)

5.1

If a parent wishes to Electively Home Educate (EHE) his/her child, the school must deregister the child at the point written notification is received from the parent expressing their intention to do so. Deletion from the admissions register should take place as soon as notifications are received.

Schools are then required to inform the local authority by completion of a Safeguarding Form (Appendix 2) attached to the parent's letter, the school's letter of acknowledgment and a registration certificate. Upon receipt of the required documents the Education Welfare Service will make contact with the parents/carers who are then required to provide evidence that the child is in receipt of a 'suitable education'. If the parent/carer fails to provide evidence the Education Welfare Service will pursue the matter and may commence School Attendance Order proceedings. Education Welfare Officers have a duty to ensure that children are in receipt of a suitable education. In Wiltshire the local authority seeks to assure itself of the suitability of education provision for EHE children on an annual basis unless there are specific safeguarding or welfare concerns; in which case more immediate intervention via the Integrated Front Door (IFD) will be sought.

Note: We only know about who we know about; who we have been informed about or the situations we have detected. It is an expectation that all schools advise the local authority formally of any child whose parents/carers are electing to Home Educate. Where schools have moved children and young people onto alternative timetables and provision, they should use the Reduced Educational Provision guidance and notification processes and/or report through the Alternative Provision return – whichever is relevant.

SCHOOL MISSING PUPIL REFERRAL – CME1

Name of School:		Tel No:	
-----------------	--	---------	--

Please note that this form should only be used where child is thought to be CME and you have evidence that the child is not residing at their known address. This form should not be used for non-attendance issues at school.

Date pupil last attended:

Date of most recent letter sent to parent/carer regarding the pupil’s absence:

1. Pupil Details

Date pupil placed on school’s admission register:

First Name(s):		Date of Birth:
		Year Group:
Surname(s) including any other names the pupil may be known by:		Gender: M / F
		UPN:
Ethnicity and languages:		Migrant, refugee or asylum seeker Y / N
		Gypsy Roma/Traveller Y / N
Service family Y / N	Provide details of regiment parent(s) attached to:	
SEN Support Y / N	Child Protection Plan: Y / N	LAC: Y / N
	Child in Need Plan: Y / N	

Statement of SEN / EHCP Not on SEND code (Please delete those not relevant)	Support Assessment Y / N Have you notified the relevant social worker or key person? Y / N	Have you notified the relevant worker and virtual school? Y / N
Who does the child live with?		Any other person with parental responsibility who does not live at the same address as the child:
Details of any other known adults who live at the same address as the child:		Details of siblings, ages and school where known:

2. Parent/Carer's Details

Relationship:	Title:	First Name(s):	Surname:
Language:	Parental Responsibility Y / N		Is an interpreter required? Y / N
Address:			Home phone:
Postcode:			Work phone:
			Mobile:
			Email:

Relationship:	Title:	First Name(s):	Surname:
Language:	Parental Responsibility Y / N		Is an interpreter required? Y / N
Address:			Home phone:
Postcode:			Work phone:
			Mobile phone:
			Email:

3. Please give details of enquiries made (please ensure all these enquiries are made before referring as CME)

Telephone calls

Contact name	Date	Outcome

Home visits

Date	Outcome	Spoken to neighbours?

Have you spoken to family and/or friends?

Name	relationship	Date	Outcome

4. Please provide all additional emergency contact names, numbers and emails held.

--

5. Do you have any reason to be concerned that child or extended family members may be at risk of any of the following? Please tick and indicate if Child (C), Family (F) or Both (B)

	Yes	No	Historic	C / F / B
Sexual, physical, emotional abuse and/or neglect?				
Any history of domestic abuse?				
Any LA Children's or Adult's social care services involved? E.g. Section 47 enquiry due to start?				
Any persons present or visiting the family who poses an on-going risk to children, or suspected of previously harming a child?				
At risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) known or suspected?				
At risk of radicalisation?				
Any reasons to believe the child or extended family members are at risk from FGM, forced marriage, modern day slavery, human trafficking?				
Any involvement in criminal activities?				
Any involvement in anti-social behaviour?				
Any drug/alcohol/substance misuse?				
Any change in child's/family's financial circumstances?				
Has the child not returned from agreed leave of absence?				

Does child need any essential medical or health care?				
Any bereavement or loss, family or friends?				
Any previous CME episode?				

If you have ticked 'Yes' to any of the above, please provide further details, including for example, what actions have been taken or safeguarding concerns that have been referred to Children's Services, Integrated Front Door, Police or concerns referred to other professionals.

PLEASE ATTACH THE LATEST ATTENDANCE REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE

Signature and Designation of Referrer:	
Print Name:	
Date of Referral:	

Please email securely to pupilmove@wiltshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2 Safeguarding Form - Elective Home Education

Pupil details as held on school record

School					
Surname/Legal Surname			Forename		
Middle name			Chosen name		
Date of Birth			Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> M	Year
Address					
Post Code			Admission Date		
				Leaving Date	
Reason for Leaving	<input type="checkbox"/> Awaiting placement		<input type="checkbox"/> Bullying		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved out of county
	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifestyle		<input type="checkbox"/> Not known		<input type="checkbox"/> Other
	Please give details: <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin-top: 5px;"/>				
Is there a safeguarding concern? (If Yes please complete box below)	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES		Are parents aware of your concerns?		<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES
Details of any safeguarding or child protection concerns, including dates of any referrals to Children's Social Care					

--

Parents/Carers contact details as held on school record

Priority	Name/Relationship	Home Address/Phone/Mobile/	Work Address Phone/Email
1		Tel Mobile	Tel Email
2		Tel Mobile	Tel Email

Other Agencies involved

Please indicate with a tick if the following agencies are involved with the student

Education	Education	Social Care	Youth Offending
Child and Adolescent Mental Health services	SEN	Health	Other

Details of involved Agencies (name and contact telephone numbers)

Does the student have an EHCP?	YES	NO	SEN or EHCNA Start Date	
---------------------------------------	------------	-----------	--------------------------------	--

In LA Care?	YES	NO	Care Authority
--------------------	------------	-----------	-----------------------

Has the child been subject to an Early Support Assessment?		YES	NO	ESA Lead Professional	
If you are the lead professional who will assume this role when the child starts EHE?					
Contact details of the new lead professional					
Ethnicity		Home Language		Religion	
<p>Data Protection Act 1998: The school is registered under the Data Protection Act for holding personal data. The school has a duty to protect this information and to keep it up to date. The school is required to share some of the data with the Local authority and with the DfE</p>					
Headteacher's signature				Date	

Please return this form with the [parental letter of instruction and school acknowledgement letter](#) and accompanying [registration certificate](#) to:

pupilmove@wiltshire.gov.uk