Children Missing Education Policy

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1. Scope

1.1 This policy applies to all pupils of The Leys School (the "School").

2. Introduction

2.1 The Leys School (the "School") has a duty to identify children that are missing education and respond appropriately.

2.2 Children missing education are defined within the Children Missing Education (Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities) September 2016 (updated 2025) as those of compulsory

school age[1] who are not on a school roll or receiving suitable education otherwise. This includes children who are in the process of applying for a school place, those who have been offered a school place for a future date but have not yet started and children receiving unsuitable elective home education. Those who are regularly absent or have missed ten school days or more without permission may be at risk of falling into the category of 'children missing education'. However, persistent or severe absence does not mean a child meets the definition of missing in education; this will be dealt with in accordance with the School's Attendance Policy and related procedures.

2.3 Whilst the statutory guidance only applies to those of compulsory school age, the School will investigate any unexplained absences from education as part of its safeguarding duty. The safety and welfare of all our pupils is our highest priority.

2.4 This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Attendance and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies.

3. Safeguarding

3.1 There will not always be a safeguarding concern for children and young people who are missing in education as some situations involve pupils transferring schools or transitioning to home education which is supported by their parents/ guardians ('Parent(s)'), schools and local authorities.

3.2 However, the School recognises that it is important to be mindful as a child going missing in education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

3.3 Children missing in education ("CME") can be vulnerable and for this reason it is essential that all appropriate authorities work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision. Children at particular risk of missing education include:

- children who fail to start appropriate provision and never entering the system;
- children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) whose needs are not being adequately supported;
- children who are excluded from school;
- children who go missing from home or care;
- children ceasing to attend school, including due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by Parents;
- home-educated children who are not receiving suitable full-time education;

[1]In England, a child is of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the School year in which they turn 16.

- failure to complete a transition between schools;
- children of service personnel;
- children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families;
- unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and children of new migrant families;
- children at risk of a forced marriage;
- children who are at risk of, or experiencing, abuse, exploitation and neglect; and
- children supervised by the Youth Justice System.

3.4 Children who remain disengaged from, or missing in, education are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk including anti-social behaviour, going missing, and sexual and criminal exploitation.

3.5 Families moving between local authorities can sometimes lead to a child becoming 'lost' in the system and consequently missing out on education. When a child has moved, local authorities should check with one another, either regionally or nationally, and share information to ascertain where a child is living. Once this is established, the relevant local authority must ensure that the child is receiving an education.

4. Staff Awareness

4.1. Where staff have concerns about pupils relating to CME, staff will use their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead ("DSL") or one of the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads ("DDSLs") in the DSL's absence.

5. School Responsibilities

5.1. Admissions register

The School has a legal obligation to ensure the admissions register is kept up-to-date and accurate. The School requests that Parents should check the current details held for them once a year and reminds Parents to notify the School office of any changes to their details. For further information regarding the admissions register, please see Appendix 1 of this policy.

5.2. Attendance

The School monitors pupils' attendance through the Attendance Register and takes proactive steps to address poor or irregular attendance to prevent children becoming missing in education. Further information is set out in the School's Attendance Policy.

5.3. Actions for Children Missing in Education (CME)

5.3.1 Children who fail to attend their first day at the School

All new pupils are placed on the School's admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which the School has agreed that the pupil will attend the School. If a child does not attend on the first day that they are expected to attend the School, the following steps shall be taken by the School:

- a staff member, usually the pupil's Housemaster/mistress ("HsM"), will contact the Parents to seek reassurance that the pupil is safe at home and/or their whereabouts is known and to ascertain an explanation for the absence;
- the outcome of that contact should be assessed; and
- a staff member must inform the DSL without delay and if necessary, the DSL will notify the local authority at the earliest opportunity. The School will cooperate with the local authority in conducting reasonable enquiries and taking any other necessary action.

5.3.2 Children who are absent from the School (either for a significant period or repeatedly absent)

As a result of the daily registration, the School is particularly well placed to notice when a child may be missing in education. The School has a separate Missing Pupils Policy to address any pupils who are physically missing, and an Attendance Policy to set out the School's approach to attendance issues.

The School shall inform the Children Missing Education Officer at Cambridgeshire County Council (or another Local Authority, as applicable to the child's residential address) of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive school days without provision of reasonable explanation. Relevant information will be shared with the Local Authority where necessary and proportionate to identify, locate and support a child who may be missing in education. In the case of unexplained absence following authorised leave, 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 commenced. In accordance with the statutory guidance, each case should be treated on its individual merits and the type of reasonable enquiries required to locate a child and establish their circumstances will differ from case to case.

The School together with the local authority, needs to carry out joint reasonable enquiries under regulation 9(1)(h) or (i) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (the "Attendance Regulations") to try to find out where the pupil is.

The DSL shall, together with the HsM/Tutor or another member of staff (as appropriate), assess the child's vulnerability. A referral to children's social care (and the police, if appropriate) should be made if a member of staff believes that the child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm. See section 5.3.3. below for further information.

The School can remove the child from its admissions register if the child has been continually absent from the School for 20 school days, or, has not returned to the School for ten consecutive school days after a leave of absence, please see Appendix 1 of this policy for further information.

5.3.3 Actions for children missing education where there are safeguarding concerns

The School recognises that children who are absent from education particularly on repeat occasions and/or for prolonged periods can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. The School's response to persistently absent pupils supports identifying such abuse and helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

If there are any safeguarding concerns, then the DSL shall, together with the HsM/Tutor or another member of staff (as appropriate), assess the child's vulnerability.

In the following circumstances a referral to children's social care and/or the police should be made promptly (this list is not exhaustive) where:

- 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; or
- there is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household.

If there is a need for a referral to be made to children's social care and/or the police this should be done on day one. The School will work in collaboration with children's social care and the police where necessary and the DSL will participate in any strategy discussions, section 47 enquiries and any child protection conferences that may arise.

If the judgment reached on day one is that there is no reason to believe that a 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 in conjunction with the local authority. The timeliness at which these reasonable enquiries are made will depend upon any known or

concerning factors that may arise through the process. Home visits can be made by school staff in agreement with the local authority.

If the above response is unsuccessful and/or in accordance with the requirements detailed in Appendix 1 of this Policy, the School should contact the relevant CME officer, referring the child as missing in education and providing details of the completed enquiries made by the School.

6. Student Sponsorship

The School holds a student sponsorship licence and will take appropriate action and make reports to the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), a department of the Home Office, to comply with its reporting duties when a student sponsored by the School is missing in education.

7. Data Protection

The School will process personal data collected or shared in connection with this policy in accordance with applicable data protection legislation, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018. Personal data will only be processed where necessary and proportionate for the purposes of safeguarding pupils, supporting attendance, maintaining accurate school records, complying with legal obligations and sharing relevant information with the local authority and other safeguarding partners where appropriate.

8. Review

This policy is reviewed every two years by the School and more often as required, such as if legislation changes.

Appendix 1 – Admissions Registers

Admissions Register

The School recognises its duty to ensure that its admissions register is accurate and kept up to date and to notify the local authority of particular changes to assist them with fulfilling their duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 in respect of children missing education.

In accordance with the requirements of the Attendance Regulations the School will:

- maintain an admissions register of all pupils (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) admitted to the School (also known as the school roll); and
- inform the local authority within 5 days of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admissions register at non-standard transition points[2].

The admissions register must be kept electronically, and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

The School must ensure that every entry in the School's admissions register is preserved for six years beginning with the day on which the entry was made; and every back-up copy of the register is preserved for six years after the end of the school year that it relates to.

The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School, including their date of admission, information regarding Parents and details of the school they last attended and in the case of boarding pupils whether each pupil of compulsory school age is a boarder, home boarder or day pupil.

A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admissions register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the Attendance Regulations. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted.

Where the School notifies the local authority that the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admissions register, the School must provide it with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the address of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any Parent the pupil normally lives with;
- at least one telephone number of any Parent with whom the pupil lives or can be contacted in an emergency;

[2] Non-standard transition points for the School will be pupils moving mid-year or in years other than Y7, Y9 and Y12.

- the pupil's future address, 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;
- name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable;
- the ground (prescribed in regulation 9) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admissions register.

Where a pupil has not returned to the School for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from the School without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the School can remove the pupil from its admissions register when, in conjunction with the local authority, reasonable enquiries have been made to establish the whereabouts of the child and there is no other reasonable explanation as to why the pupil is not in attendance at the School (i.e. the child is unwell or unable to attend because of any unavoidable cause). The School will inform the local authority of such a deletion no later than the same day on which the deletion is made.

Enquiries into the circumstances surrounding a child who is missing in education can be effectively supported by the admissions procedure which requires a Parent to provide documentary evidence of their own and the child's identity, their immigration status and the address at which they reside. The School encourages that family contact details are regularly updated. These checks, however, should not become delaying factors in the admissions process.