

CHILD MISSING IN EDUCATION POLICY

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1.0 Policy statement

Children missing education is a safeguarding risk. As a school, we have a relentless focus on attendance (see policy) both for educational and safeguarding reasons. All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Children missing education (CME) risk underachieving, being victims of abuse, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET).

We are mindful that some children may be more vulnerable and likely to be missing from education (see Safeguarding policy) and we ensure that our absence monitoring procedures focus on these children first. We understand that children are rendered more vulnerable to risk when they are out of education and, as such, only fixed term exclude when it is entirely necessary and permanently exclude when there is no alternative. For vulnerable children, we will do all we can to provide an alternative to fixed-term exclusion. The States of Guernsey Education Department, through School Attendance Service, has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and to work with schools to help them back into education. This policy highlights what our school will do to support our children and to and how we will work with other agencies to fulfil this duty.

2.0 Scope and purpose

To ensure that all staff understand that we are all responsible for safeguarding children and that ensuring no child is missing is a part of that duty.

To ensure all staff understand the procedures we have in place for a child missing from education.

This policy is developed in accordance with the principles established by:

- DfE (2023) 'Working together to safeguard children'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'School attendance'
- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 2004

3.0 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, a 'child missing education (CME)' is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school or is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere.

A 'missing child' is one who is not accounted for even though they should be in our care.

4.0 Roles and responsibilities for CME

4.1 *The school*

- The school will enter students on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the school, or the day that the school has been notified, that the student will attend the school.
- The school will keep an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents to inform them of any changes.
- The school will monitor students' attendance through:
 - 2 reported registrations AM / PM **across all the phases of the school**
 - daily electronic lesson by lesson register **senior phases only**
- If a child stops attending, and we have had no contact, we will undertake a home visit on the 3rd day of absence at the latest.
- In the event that a student fails to attend the school on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake initial reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence and will notify the School Attendance Service no later than 10 days after the child is identified as not in education.
- In the event that a student does not start school when we expect them to, we will inform School Attendance Service.
- If we believe there are safeguarding issues, we will alert agencies working with the family.

- We accept our responsibility to make ‘reasonable enquiries’ to establish the whereabouts of a child prior to referral to the School Attendance Service. By definition, ‘reasonable enquiries’ could include:
 - checks with all members of staff who the child / young person may have had contact with
 - checks with the student’s friends, siblings and known relatives at the school and other schools on the island
 - telephone calls to any numbers held in school records
 - a visit to the last known address
 - if safe, enquiries with neighbours and known family

If all initial reasonable enquiries have been exhausted, the school will make a referral to the School Attendance Service supplying the following information:

- name of the child
- DOB
- last known address and outcome of home visit
- names of parents or carers
- names of any known siblings
- details of the child’s attendance

A more exhaustive list of enquiries is listed below and may be considered if a child may have been taken abroad and initial reasonable enquiries do not establish anything:

- where a student has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the student from the admission register providing the School Attendance Service has given permission to do so. In the meantime, irrespective of any local intelligence as to where the family may or may not be, the school will continue to make reasonable enquiries and attempt to contact the family until the School Attendance Service confirms that they have exhausted their enquiries and approval has been given to remove the student from roll
- the school will work within local arrangements with regards to the re-admission of children who may wish to return after removal

- the school will notify School Attendance Service if any student is to be deleted from the admission register
- students who remain on the school roll, but who are not necessarily missing education, will be monitored and attendance will be addressed when it is poor
- the school will arrange full-time education for excluded students from the sixth school day of a fixed-period exclusion

4.2 Staff members

All staff will be alert to the potential need to implement early help for a student who is frequently missing / goes missing from our care or from home.

All staff will be aware of the schools unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

Where staff have concerns (e.g. a noticeable pattern of absence), they will refer to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

4.3 School Attendance Service / States of Guernsey

Under the Education Act 1996, School Attendance Service has a duty to establish the identities of children in the area who are not registered students at a school and are not receiving education provision otherwise.

They will challenge parents who fail to assure them that their child is receiving a suitable education.

The School Attendance Service/States of Guernsey will prosecute or fine parents / carers of school-registered children who fail to ensure their child attends school regularly.

The School Attendance Service is responsible for referring to Children's Social Services where there is concern for a child's welfare, as well as the police if there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed.

Once reported to the School Attendance Service, they will:

- visit the last known address if it is still unclear if the family have moved
- send out a standard letter to Housing Authority and /or Health and Social Care
- carry out a Children's Social Care, Welfare Benefits and Police check requesting any information they may have as to the child and family's whereabouts
- contact partner agencies in person if serious concerns regarding the child's welfare and safety exist e.g. the child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan

If after four weeks following the child's last attendance in school, the School Attendance Service has not been able to establish the whereabouts of the child. The School will be advised to remove the child from the school roll; schools must follow the School Attendance Service procedure for removal from roll on completion of the relevant documentation.

4.3 Parents

Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education.

Parents are responsible for notifying the school in writing if they wish to home-educate their child in order for the child to be removed from the admission register. The child will then stay on roll, until such time that the School Attendance Service has visited the family, and checked the provision. It is only after the School Attendance Service has notified the school that the provision is in place, that the child can be taken off roll.

Parents will notify the school regarding any absences or changes to their child's education arrangements.

Parents are responsible for providing the school with more than one emergency contact number, where possible.

5.0 Induction and training

All staff will receive annual safeguarding and child protection training, including an update on the various safeguarding concern possibilities that CME could represent, any changes to the early help process and staff members' role in this process.

6.0 Safeguarding and further reasonable enquiries when a child is missing

For the purpose of this policy, 'reasonable enquiries' are defined as limited, investigative powers that the school may action to determine a child's whereabouts and whether they may be in danger. These enquiries may continue after reporting to the necessary authorities.

In line with the Children Act 2004, the school will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) conducting discussions with neighbours, landlord or relatives to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.

The DSL will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to MASH or directly to the Public Protection Unit (Police).

If the whereabouts and safety of a child is unknown, the school, in conjunction with the School Attendance Service, may carry out the following actions:

- make contact with the parent / carer, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- check local databases
- follow local information sharing arrangements and make enquiries via other local databases and agencies, where possible check with Port Authorities, Immigration and / or the Border Force
- check with agencies known to be involved with the family
- check with the School Attendance Service and school from which the student moved originally check with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service in the case of children of Service Personnel

NB. This list is not exhaustive - the school will use their judgement towards what reasonable enquiries are appropriate once all the facts of the case have been taken into account.

7.0 Admission register

The school will ensure that the admission register is kept up-to-date at all time and will encourage parents / carers to notify the school of any changes as they occur, such as via email or newsletters and through data collection sheets.

Students will be recorded on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the school, or the day that the school has been notified, as the date that the student will attend the school.

Where a parent / carer notifies the school that a student will live at another address, the school will record the following information on the admissions register:

- the full name of the parent / carer with whom the student will live
- the new address
- the date from when it is expected the student will live at this address

Where a parent notifies the school that the student is registered at another school, or will be attending a different school in future, the school will record the following information on the admission register:

- the name of the new school
- the date when the student first attended, or is due to attend, that school

Parents are able to elect to educate their child at home and will subsequently withdraw them from the school. This can happen at anytime, unless there are legal barriers. If a parent notifies the school, the student will be deleted from our admission register and we will inform the School Attendance Service.

8.0 Removing a student from the admission register

The school will inform the School Attendance Service of any student who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home-educated (informed by letter)
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school
- have been certified by a doctor as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the school does not reasonably believe they will be returning at the end of that period
- have been permanently excluded
- have died
- have been registered at another school where it is not indicated this should be the case
- are registered at more than one school, but have failed to attend the school and the proprietor of any other schools concerned have consented to the deletion
- have been granted authorised leave, but have failed to attend school within 10 school days after the period of authorised absence ended

The grounds for removal from the admission register are regularly monitored and reviewed.

9.0 Elective Home Education (EHE)

Parents have the right to electively home-educate their children; however, the school follow set procedures to ensure parents are fully aware of the duty that this places on them. As a school, we believe there are times when it is inappropriate to authorise EHE even if we are unable to resist