



**Kirkby la Thorpe
Church of England Primary Academy**

Building a Hopeful Future through Kindness, Learning and Trust

Policy Title	Children Missing in Education Policy and Practice (Taken from Lincolnshire County Council's model guidance)
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Children Missing in Education Policy and Practice

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Vision

Building a Hopeful Future through Kindness, Learning and Trust

At Kirkby la Thorpe, we strive to ensure that each person is empowered to flourish and contribute positively to society. We seek to equip our pupils with the knowledge, skills and qualities necessary to navigate the complexities of our world, rooting this in Christian love.

We are inspired by the life of St Thomas in all that we do so that we can:

Be Positive and Active Citizens: We strive for our pupils to communicate clearly, embracing tolerance and respect for the diverse beliefs and aspirations of others.

Be Curious and Independent Members of Society: We encourage curiosity and a thirst for knowledge, instilling a longing for justice and an empathy for those in need.

Have Confidence and Perseverance: Through trusting each other, we empower everyone to embrace challenges with confidence and perseverance, striving to achieve their full potential in all aspects of life so that they can be the best that they can be.

Have the Courage to Respectfully Challenge: We foster an environment where respectful dialogue and critical thinking are encouraged, empowering pupils to voice their opinions with courage and integrity so they can build a better future.

Know their heritage: We cultivate an appreciation for both local and national heritage, helping pupils understand their roots and identity within the broader context of history so that they have a sense of where they are from.

Values

We are on this journey together and our Christian values of **Kindness, Learning** and **Trust** support us as we travel.

St Thomas was one of Jesus' disciples. He encouraged others to follow Jesus on his journey (John 11.16), showing **confidence** and **trust**. He also has the **courage** to challenge his friends when they tell him that Jesus has resurrected from the dead; he does not take their words on face value, but asks questions with **curiosity** (John 20.24-29). Thomas was an important member of the early church, taking Jesus' good news for a **hopeful future** to people around the world. According to traditional accounts he travelled to India, **building** Christian communities across the region. This is a journey that would have required great **perseverance**. This matters to us because we consider the ancient global **heritage** of the Christian faith to be an important part of our own identity as a church school. St Thomas inspires us to **learn** from past and current events to build a more hopeful future.

Vision and values Alignment

Kirkby La Thorpe's Vision and Values emphasise the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive educational environment, where every child is valued and given the opportunity to thrive. This commitment aligns closely with the Children Missing in Education (CME) Policy, which ensures that all children receive their legal entitlement to a full-time education. The school's dedication to safeguarding and nurturing each student's potential mirrors the policy's focus on re-engaging children who are at risk of missing education, thereby preventing underachievement and ensuring that no child is left behind. By upholding these values, Kirkby La Thorpe actively contributes to identifying and supporting children who might otherwise slip through the cracks, ensuring they remain engaged in their educational journey.

1.0

Statement of Intent

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children missing from education (CME) risk underachieving, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life, and it can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including abuse and neglect.

The LA has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and help them back into education. This policy highlights what our school will do to help the LA with its duty.

For the purpose of this policy, a "**child missing from education**" is defined as a child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is not registered at a school, not placed in alternative provision by an LA, and not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition also encompasses children who are receiving an education, but not one that is suitable, including children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, SEND.

This policy does not address pupils who are considered to be absent from education, which is where a registered pupil is not attending regularly, including where they are persistently or severely absent

from school. Procedures for addressing instances where pupils are not attending regularly are instead set out in the school's Attendance and Absence Policy.

The purpose of the Children Missing Education (CME) Policy is to ensure that children and young people missing education are re-engaged in appropriate education provision in the shortest possible time, with lasting success and that no child is left without the educational provision which they are entitled to.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local Authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Missing education is damaging to the well-being of a child and may result in the child being at more risk of harm. This guidance should be used in conjunction with appropriate safeguarding best practice. When the circumstances of the child missing education is considered to add risk of harm to the child then actions should be taken without delay. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, including child exploitation.

2.0 Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended in 2018)
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2018)
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2014)
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DfE (2023) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Attendance and Absence Policy
- Admissions Policy

The Children Act 2004 placed a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information.

The statutory guidance Children Missing Education ¹ sets out key principles to enable local authorities in England to implement their legal duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify as far as it is possible to do so, children missing education (CME) The duty applies to all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school role and are not receiving a suitable education.

A child missing education is not necessarily 'missing' i.e. a runaway. There are different procedures for reporting a child who goes missing². Unless further information comes to light whilst investigating a child missing education, the child is deemed to be in the care of their family and is considered only as a child who is not in an educational provision. Further investigations may result in identifying the child as vulnerable if there are additional concerns for the family and the location of the family is unknown. In some situations, the process may link with the missing person protocol.

3.0 Purpose of the CME Policy

The purpose of the CME Policy is to establish a set of principles which all schools, services and partner organisations can sign up to in order to ensure children and

young people living in Lincolnshire are safely on roll of a school, placed on alternative educational programmes or electively home educated at the request of parents.

The CME Policy has been designed to help the council meet its statutory duties in relation to the provision and the safeguarding and welfare of children. It does not replace any of the current child protection or safeguarding procedures that should be taken if a child is at risk of harm.

4.0 Aim of the policy

This policy is intended to inform local authority officers, schools, governing bodies and other agencies of the procedure and practice to be followed in order to track, monitor and maintain contact with children missing from education and those who are at risk of missing out on education.

The policy will:

- Inform schools, services and partner agencies about their role in assisting the local authority in identifying children missing education
- Raise awareness of the notification process
- Explain how children will be tracked and monitored until they are re-engaged in education

5.0 Definitions

For the purpose of this document a child missing education is defined as:

Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. at home or in alternative provision) and who has been out of any education provision for a substantial period of time.

A child does not meet the criteria for CME if they are still at the MIS registered address but not attending or are on an extended holiday and have provided a return date.

¹ Children Missing Education <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

² LSCP joint protocol for missing children and young people
https://lincolnshirescb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/pr_joint_miss.html

The process of looking for children who are absent from school (and their whereabouts is unknown), starts as soon as the school has sufficient evidence to confirm this.

Children and young people with poor or reduced school attendance are often vulnerable. Not only are they missing significant periods of learning they may become children missing from education.

It is the responsibility of the school/education provision to ensure a child attends school once they are on the school roll. A child is not considered to be a child missing education whilst the school have knowledge that the child remains in the area and their school remains the nearest available. Where non-attendance is raised by the school, they are encouraged to manage this either in house or through external agencies.

Schools must let the local authority know about pupils who have been absent for significant periods of time and that the school are unauthorising this absence. Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is on roll of a school but has 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absences is known as a Pupil Not Attending Regularly (PNAR). This information is reported through the PNAR notification survey.

Children who are not on a full timetable may also be at risk of not receiving a suitable or sufficient education and could potentially become a child at risk of missing education. Therefore, all children of compulsory school age who are on a reduced timetable must be reported to the local authority through the Reduced Timetable (RT) notification survey. This information must be reported on a four-weekly basis.

Both the PNAR and RTT surveys can be found here:

<https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/schoolattendance/pupil-attendance/3>

Where a child is at risk of missing education, the local authority may contact the school and seek confirmation that the case is being appropriately managed.

6.0 **Why children go missing from education**

Children and young people can go missing from school or agreed education provision, for a variety of reasons. Their personal circumstances or those of their families may contribute to withdrawal. Children can also go missing when there is no systematic process in place to identify them and ensure they re-engage with appropriate provision.

The most common reasons why children miss education include:

- child not registered for school at age 5
- unsuccessful transition from infant to junior and primary to secondary
- ceasing to attend, due to exclusion (formal or illegal off rolling)
- child not attending following in-year transfer of school
- parent unable to find a school place after moving into the Local Authority
- parents failing to provide adequate learning whilst home educating

Below are some of the most common factors that contribute to a child or family becoming disengaged resulting in potentially being off roll of a school or not receiving education otherwise. In addition to this, if a child is missing from education, particularly repeatedly, this can also act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, such as the following:

- child being a victim of bullying
- family moving house frequently or being homeless or having periods in a refuge
- family being transient
- child experiencing family breakdown
- disaffection with the school resulting in parents withdrawing their child or being 'asked to leave'
- child involvement in youth offending
- child being a victim of exploitation
 - Abuse and neglect, including child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE), potentially involving county lines
 - So-called 'honour-based' abuse, including FGM and forced marriage
 - Mental health issues
 - Risk of substance abuse
 - Risk of travelling to conflict zones

Certain vulnerable groups are more likely to be affected by the factors listed above, these are:

Pupils at risk of harm or neglect – where this is suspected, local child protection procedures will be followed; however, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made immediately to children's social care services (CSCS), and the police if appropriate. The LA officers responsible for CME will check whether a referral has been made, and will contact CSCS if this is not the case. Should there be a reason to suspect a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the LA will contact the police.

Children of service personnel – the school will contact the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service for advice to ensure continuity of education for these pupils.

Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System – in this case, LA youth offending teams are responsible for supervising children (aged 8 to 18). Where a young person is registered at the school prior to custody, the school will keep the place open for their return

- children who are being exploited
- children living in refuges

- children of families experiencing trauma i.e. suffering bereavement, domestic violence, homelessness etc.
- **young runaways**- should the school suspect a child has gone missing or run away, an appropriate staff member will consult the DfE for advice on missing children
- **Children who cease to attend school** – where the reason for a pupil who has stopped attending a school is not known, the LA will investigate the situation.
- children with special educational needs
- refugee and asylum seeking children
- **Children of migrant families** – the school will remain vigilant to the increased risk of a child missing education if they are part of a new migrant family who may not yet have settled into a fixed address, or may have arrived into an LA area without the authority becoming aware.
- **Travellers**- when a pupil from a GRT family leaves the school without naming their next destination school, the school will contact the LA. If necessary, the school will consult the LA Traveller Education Support Services for advice on the best strategies to ensure minimal disruption to the pupil's education.
- children who are looked after
- school aged parents
- children with mental health issues
- young carers
- children who are permanently excluded from school
- young people being forced into marriage
- children involved in substance misuse

7. The role of Schools and Academies

The appropriate school staff are responsible for:

- Entering pupils on the admissions register.
- In the event that a pupil fails to attend the school on the agreed or notified date, undertaking reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence, and considering notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity.
- Keeping an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents to inform them of any changes.

- Monitoring pupils' attendance through a daily register.
- Agreeing with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of pupils who are regularly absent from school, or who have missed 10 days of education or more without permission.
- Removing pupils from the admission register where they have not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or are absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, and the school and LA have failed to establish the pupil's whereabouts after making reasonable enquiries.
- Notifying the LA if any pupil is to be deleted from the admission register in the circumstance outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016).
- Arranging full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed-period exclusion.
- Providing information to the LA regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the LA.

The governing board is responsible for:

- Where reasonably possible, ensuring the school holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.

All staff are responsible for:

- Being alert to the potential need to implement early help for a pupil who is frequently missing or goes missing from care or home.
- Being aware of the school's procedures for managing unauthorised absence and children missing from education.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated to the DSL or deputy DSL.

The LA is responsible for:

- Establishing the identities of children in the area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving education provision otherwise, in line with the LA's duty under the Education Act 1996.
- Providing full-time education for permanently excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a suspension.
- Serving notices on parents to assure the LA that their child is receiving a suitable education, when concerns regarding this are brought to the LA's attention.

- Issuing School Attendance Orders to parents who fail to assure the LA that their child is receiving a suitable education, and the LA believes that the child should attend school.
- Prosecuting parents that do not comply with a School Attendance Order.
- Prosecuting or fining parents of school-registered children who fail to ensure their children attend school regularly.
- Ensuring that children identified as not receiving suitable education are returned to full-time education either at the school or elsewhere.
- Ensuring that the school demonstrates prompt action and effective early intervention procedures to ensure children are safe and receiving suitable education.
- Applying to court for an Education Supervision Order for a CME.
- Ensuring that children who return to full-time education are appropriately supported, taking into account the reasons why they missed education in the first place.
- Arranging suitable provision for pupils with SEN statements or EHC plans where their parent chooses for them to be home educated, and reviewing this annually.
- Liaising and sharing information with other agencies to support children who miss education.
- Sharing the fact that a pupil has a social worker with the school.
- Referring to the LA's CSCS 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.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their children, if of compulsory school age, are receiving suitable full-time education.
- Notifying the school in writing where they will be home-schooling their child, in order for the child to be removed from the admissions register.
- Where requested, meeting with the school, LA, and other key professionals to consider whether home education would be in the best interests of their child, particularly where they have SEND, are vulnerable, or have a social worker – ideally, this would be done before a final decision has been made.
- Notifying the school regarding any absences or changes to the pupil's education arrangements.

Lincolnshire Procedure to follow:

It is expected that schools and academies will have carried out all reasonable enquiries within their capacity to ascertain the whereabouts of the young person prior to informing the local authority that the child is missing education.

Once a school have ascertained that the child is no longer at the known address, they should report the child as missing education via the Children Missing Education notification survey.

As part of the survey the schools will complete a risk assessment which will identify any concerns the school have around the safety and wellbeing of the child missing education.

When a child is removed from the school roll based on regulation 8(1)e (outside reasonable distance), the school will be asked to complete a 'leavers' file (CML) so that the child can be tracked until they have arrived at their destination school rather than the child automatically being put in to the 'unknown' school category and deemed as CME.

The completion of the CME notification should be done after 5 days of investigation by the school or sooner if the school has evidence of a child missing education. Following this, the school should continue to make reasonable enquiries unless they have sufficient evidence that the child has left the area.

The school may remove the child from roll after 20 days or before if they have sufficient evidence that the child has left the area and is being educated elsewhere.

The school must inform the local authority that they have removed the child from roll using their Child Missing Leavers process (CML).

The school may remove the child from roll after 20 days if they have reported the child as missing education and have not received further confirmation that the child is in the area and should be attending their school.

Appendix 1 **Children Missing Education Flow Chart** shows the different pathways of the most common situations that result in a child missing education and how the school should respond.

8.0 The Role of the Inclusion and Attendance Team

The Inclusion and Attendance team are responsible for responding to notifications of children missing education and children who are at risk of missing education. The team work closely with other relevant service areas i.e. School Admissions, Pupil Reintegration Team (PRT), Ethnic Minority and Traveller Education team (EMTET), SEND and Early Help as examples. The team will ensure the process for identifying, investigating and finding children missing education is carried out.

The Inclusion and Attendance team are responsible for tracking children that are missing education. This is carried out by the CME Tracker. The tracker is responsible for recording the CME status onto the Integrated Children's Services database (Mosaic)

When a child is referred to the local authority, the CME Tracker will initially check to see if a child is on roll of another school.

Where appropriate and possible, the CME Tracker will investigate the whereabouts of the family by contacting agencies such as Housing, Health, Ministry of Defence and Children's Advisory Service and use systems such as Key to Success and School2School.

Once the CME Tracker has carried out all possible checks and the child/family is still not located, the Safeguarding and Education Welfare Officer (SEWO) within the Inclusion and Attendance team may visit the home and make enquiries within the local area to attempt to establish where the family may have moved to. The SEWO will use the risk assessment completed by the school to prioritise their searches.

9. Children that are found but not in Education

Most children are found through the investigations above. When a child is found, and they are not in education, the SEWO will support the parents to get the child back into education. This is usually achieved by asking parents to submit a School Admission form. If however, the parent/carer does not fulfil their legal duty to ensure their child receives an education, the local authority may commence a School Attendance Order.

It is possible that the child has not been to school for a significant period of time and therefore they may be placed in a school using the Fair Access Protocol. Children who have been out of school for a lengthy period of time will potentially need more support than a usual in-year admission. Schools should consider completing appropriate assessments to establish needs and ensure that the reintegration into education is successful.

10. Children that are not found

If it is suggested that the family have moved out of the county and the CME Tracker knows which authority they have moved to the Tracker will contact the relevant authority to notify them. If the family leaves the country without informing the school of their location and the school have notified the local authority of this child as a CME as they have concerns the SEWO will check with the school and other agencies as to the nature of the concerns. They may check with Immigration and Border Force depending on the level of concern.

FAMILIES FAILING TO RETURN FROM A HOLIDAY OR PERIOD OF PLANNED LEAVE:

Where a family take planned or unplanned leave to another country all standard procedures for non-school attendance should continue, including regular contact between parent and school, the correct coding of the register for the period of absence according to what has been agreed, and the continued monitoring and tracking of attendance, whilst the child remains school roll.

- Where a parent(s) gives a date of return (within reasonable timeframe) schools must retain the child on roll during this time and work to this return date.
- If a family do not return on the date communicated to the school and fail to remain in regular contact with the school to update them regarding their return, the school must contact the parent by phone and in writing to formally advise and remind them of their intention to return date. Parents should be informed that they may risk losing their child's school place if they fail to remain in contact and provide a return date, within a reasonable time.

Children who are not found at the end of all investigations are reported to HMRC who may be able to provide us with a forwarding address or confirm that the family is still residing at the current address. Further investigations will be carried out on children who remain missing. This will be more regularly

with newer cases moving to twice a year for older cases. These investigations will continue until the child is no longer statutory school age.

Contact Details

CME Team

Email: cme@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01522 552771

CME referral for Lincolnshire schools

<https://snaps.lincolnshire.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=156715892508>

EHE Team

Email: ehe@lincolnshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01522 553241

EHE referral for Lincolnshire schools

<https://snaps.lincolnshire.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=159903791844>

Appendix 1 – Children Missing Education Flow Chart

A child/young person is on roll of a school but not attending	A child/young person moving out of county	Family indicate they are moving to another country	School Admissions
<p>School attempts to contact parents. Good practice is to contact from day 1 of absence but no later than day 3.</p> <p>The school must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make on-going attempts, beginning on the first day of any unexplained absence, to contact the pupil's parents/carers either by telephone or text messaging • Make further attempts to contact the parents, either by letter or by home visiting • Contact any other schools where the pupil or their siblings are known to have been pupils • Check with the pupil's peer group to ascertain if they are aware of any change in the pupil's place of residency • Contact any relevant agency, for example, the family welfare officer in the relevant armed forces in the case of a service child <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>Check that the contact details for the parent(s) are/is correct. This includes the family's new address, name of new school (if known), leaving date, email addresses of family and new school (if known). Request the family to fully complete a Leavers Form.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>The new school should make contact. If not, make contact with the school given to confirm that the child is on roll. If confirmation received that child is attending, take child off roll and complete CML file.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>If no new school is given or child is not attending new school and that school does not have a start date, after 5 days from leaving date, report the child as</p>	<p>Check that the contact details for the parent(s) are/is correct. This includes the family's new address, name of new school (if known), leaving date, email addresses of family and new school (if known). Request the family to fully complete a Leavers Form.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>If the information is provided, remove child from roll and complete the CML file within 5 days of leaving date.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>If a school place has been allocated (reception, transfer from infant to junior or year 6 to 7) and there has been no acceptance/agreed start date, by parent/carer, school should make attempts to engage (telephone, texts, e-mails letters and home visit).</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>If a child has been allocated a place and they do not arrive on the expected day i.e. start of term, the school must follow non-attendance procedures (see column one and follow same procedure). Do not assume that the child is at another school.</p>