



ST. MARY'S
ACADEMY TRUST

St Mary's Academy Trust

Children Missing Education Policy

Date agreed by Performance and Standards Committee12th December 2017

Date to be reviewedDecember 2018.....

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1. Statement of intent

- All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances.
- The Local Authority (LA) has a legal duty to identify when there are Children Missing in Education and help them back into education. This policy highlights what St Marys Academy Trust will do to help the LA with its duty.

This policy complies with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- DfE 'Children missing education' 2016
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2016
- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2015
- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Act 2004
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended in 2016)
- The Academy Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2012)
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2014

2. Definition

For the purpose of this policy, Children Missing Education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalization, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. This definition also includes children who are receiving an education, but one that is not suitable; this could include children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

3. Why children miss education

The most common reasons for children missing education include the following:

- Failing to be registered at a school at the age of five
- Failing to make a successful transition
- Exclusion
- Mid-year transfer of education provision
- Families moving into a new area

4. Children at particular risks of missing education

These 'missing' children can be vulnerable; it is essential that all services work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible. It is important to establish the reasons for the child being missing at the earliest possible stage.

Possible reasons that should be considered include:

- Failure to start appropriate provision and never enter the system;
- Stopped attending, due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parent/carers;
- Failure to complete a transition between schools;
- Children from refugee and asylum seeking families;
- Children from families who are highly mobile;
- Children at risk of a forced marriage;
- Children experiencing abuse and neglect.

When families move between Local Authority areas it can sometimes lead to a child becoming 'lost' in the system and consequently missing education. Where a child has moved, Local Authorities should check with other Local Authorities – either regionally or nationally – and share information in order to ascertain where a child has moved. Once the location of the child is established, the relevant Local Authority must ensure that the child is receiving an education either by attending a school or the provision of electronic or distance learning packages where these are available.

Research has shown that many children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families can become disengaged from education, particularly during the secondary school phase. It is therefore important that schools inform the Local Authority when a GRT pupil leaves the school without identifying a new destination school, particularly in the transition from primary to secondary so that they can attempt to facilitate continuity of the child's education.

5. Roles and responsibilities

St Mary's Trust Schools

Schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.

The school will enter pupils 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 pupil will attend the school.

The school will keep an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents/carers to inform them of any changes.

The school will monitor pupils' attendance through the daily register.

The school will agree with the Local Authority what intervals are best to inform them of pupils who are regularly absent from school, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.

Where a child on a school roll is missing, the child's name may not be removed from the school roll until s/he has been continuously absent for at least 4 weeks and both the school and the education service have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil and her/his family. After 4 weeks the child's Common Transfer file should be uploaded to the Department for Education secure site for the transfer of pupil information when a pupil moves between schools. The CME Officer in the Local Authority must also be informed.

In these circumstances the child's name is kept on a centrally held register, and should be clearly identified as missing from education.

Where the child's name has been removed from the school roll, but s/he has not been located, the Head Teacher should arrange for the pupil's records to be retained until the child is located. They may be held centrally according to local arrangements.

Where a Head Teacher has been notified by a parent that a pupil is receiving education other than at school, and has removed the child's name from the school roll, notification must be given to the education service within 10 school days; the pupil's records should then be transferred to the education service to be stored in accordance with local arrangements.

If a school receives a new pupil without receiving information about the pupil from his or her previous school, the school should contact the Pupil Tracking Officer.

If the Pupil Tracking Officer becomes aware the child has moved to another school s/he should ensure that all relevant agencies are informed and arrangements made to forward records from the previous school.

The Local Authority

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

Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the Local Authority.

All schools are required to notify the Local Authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. Schools will need to provide the Local Authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.

Schools must notify the Local Authority when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the regulations, 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.

In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the expectation is that the school and the Local Authority will have in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries. The type of procedures may include the appropriate person checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders who are involved. They should also record that they have completed these procedures. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care (and the Police if appropriate).

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their children, who are of compulsory school age, are receiving suitable full-time education.

Parents/carers are responsible for 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.

Parents/carers will notify the school regarding any absences or changes to the pupils education arrangements.

6. Working with others

Families moving from one Local Authority to another can sometimes lead to a child being lost in the system and consequently missing education. When a child moves, Local Authorities will work with other Local Authorities, regionally or nationally, to ensure this does not happen.

The Local Authority will raise awareness of its procedures with local schools, partners and agencies working with children and families.

To assist them in tracing Child Missing in Education, the Local Authority has contacts with the Department for Work and Pensions, the UK Border Agency and HMRC.

St Mary's Academy Trust use an encrypted email system, (SIMS), to allow the academy to transfer pupil information when a child moves education setting.

7. Safeguarding

Head teachers should inform the Education Welfare Service and the child's social worker immediately a child subject to a Child Protection Plan is missing.

In the following circumstances a referral to Children's Services and/or the Police should always be made promptly:

- 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;
- The child is looked after;

- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household;
- There is a history of the family moving frequently;
- There are serious issues of attendance.

Where a child on a school roll is missing, the child's name may not be removed from the school roll until s/he has been continuously absent for at least 4 weeks and both the school and the education service have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil and her/his family. After 4 weeks the child's Common Transfer file should be uploaded to the Department for Education secure site for the transfer of pupil information when a pupil moves between schools. The Child Missing in Education Officer in the Local Authority must also be informed. In these circumstances the child's name is kept on a centrally held register, and should be clearly identified as missing from education.

Where the child's name has been removed from the school roll, but s/he has not been located, the Head Teacher should arrange for the pupil's records to be retained until the child is located. They may be held centrally according to local arrangements.

Where a Head Teacher has been notified by a parent that a pupil is receiving education other than at school, and has removed the child's name from the school roll, notification must be given to the education service within 10 school days; the pupil's records should then be transferred to the education service to be stored in accordance with local arrangements.

If a school receives a new pupil without receiving information about the pupil from his or her previous school, the school should contact the Education Welfare Service.

If the Education Welfare Service becomes aware the child has moved to another school s/he should ensure that all relevant agencies are informed and arrangements made to forward records from the previous school.

8. Admissions register

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

Pupils will be recorded 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, as the date that the pupil will attend the school.

Once a pupil has been recorded on the admissions register, the school will notify the Local Authority within five days, and will supply the Local Authority with all of the details contained on the admissions register for the new pupil.

Where a parent/carer notifies the school that a pupil 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 pupil will live
- The new address

- The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address

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

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

Parents/carers are able to elect to educate their children at home, and will subsequently withdraw them from school. This can happen at any time, unless the pupil is subject to a School Attendance Order. If a parent/carer notifies St Mary's Academy Trust, the pupil will be deleted from our admission register and the Local Authority informed.

9. Removing a pupil from the admissions register

St Mary's Academy Trust schools will inform the Local Authority of any pupil who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents/carers and are being educated outside the academy system, e.g. home-schooled
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent/carer has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after 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, and:
 - There is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school.
 - The LA and school are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- Have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days, and:
 - The absence was not authorised.
 - There is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school.
- Will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets, and the relevant person has indicated the pupil will not attend the school.

Policy review

This policy is to be reviewed every two years, or sooner if there are statutory guidance updates.