



# Children Missing In Education

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## Contents

1. Definitions.....	3
2. Scope .....	4
3. Introduction .....	4
4. Legal Framework.....	4
5. Why children miss education .....	5
6. Children at particular risks of missing education .....	5
7. Roles and Responsibilities.....	6
8. Working with Others.....	8
9. Safeguarding .....	8
10. Admissions Register .....	9
11. Removing a pupil from the admissions register .....	10
12. Missing Child during the School day .....	11
13. Monitoring and Review.....	12
14. Link to other policies.....	12

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## Definitions

In this **'Children Missing in Education Policy'**, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the following meanings:

- i **'The Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company named at the beginning of this **Children Missing in Education Policy** and includes all sites upon which the Company is undertaking, from time to time, being carried out. The Romero Catholic Academy includes; **Corpus Christi, Good Shepherd, Sacred Heart, Blue Sky, SS Peter and Paul, St Gregory, St John Fisher, St Patrick, Cardinal Wiseman, Shared Services Team.**
- ii **'Romero Catholic Academy'** means the Company responsible for the management of the Academy and, for all purposes, means the employer of staff at the Company.
- iii **'Board'** means the board of Directors of the Romero Catholic Academy.
- iv **'Clerk'** means the Clerk to the Board or the Clerk to the Local Academy Committee of the Academy appointed from time to time, as appropriate.
- v **'Chair'** means the Chair of the Board of the Directors or the Local Academy Committee appointed from time to time.
- vi **'Catholic Senior Executive Leader'** means the person responsible for performance of all Academies and Staff within the Multi Academy Company and is accountable to the Board of Directors.
- vii **'Diocesan Schools Commission'** means the education service provided by the diocese, which may also be known, or referred to, as the Birmingham Diocesan Education Service.
- viii **'Local Academy Committee'** means the governing body of the School.
- ix **'Academy Committee Representatives'** means the governors appointed and elected to the Local Academy Committee of the School, from time to time.'
- x **'Principal'** means the substantive Principal, who is the person with overall responsibility for the day to day management of the school.
- xi **'School'** means the school or college within The Romero Catholic Academy and includes all sites upon which the school undertaking is, from time to time, being carried out.
- xii **'Shared Services Team'** means the staff who work in the central team across the Company (e.g. HR/ Finance)
- xiii **'Vice-Chair'** means the Vice-Chair of the Academy Committee elected from time to time.
- xiv **'Child Missing in Education' CME** is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by an LA, and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. 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)



## 1. Scope

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children missing education (CME) may not be safe, they risk being underachieving, being victims of abuse, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life.

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

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. As The Romero Catholic Academy, we work in partnership with Local authorities to focus their resources effectively in intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

This policy is for all staff, parents and governors (LAC and Board) across The Romero Catholic Academy.

## 2. Introduction

The overarching aim of our work in school is to give voice to children missing out on an education by developing an understanding of the pathways children take into missing education and what might prevent this, including effectiveness of policy and practice.

## 3. Legal Framework

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

- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' [click here](#)
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' [click here](#)
- DfE 'Children missing education' 2016 [click here](#)
- 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 School Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2012)
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2014
- The Romero Catholic Academy Attendance Policy [click here](#)

***Please note we have signposted to the generic link to each document to ensure that the latest version of the guidance is available.***



#### 4. Why children miss education

Keeping Children Safe In Education states:

*“All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school’s or college’s unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.”*

The most common reasons for children missing school 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 school
- Families moving into a new area

#### 5. Children at particular risks of missing education

**5.1** As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, the LA will make a judgement on a case-by-case basis. The following list indicates pupils who are most at risk of missing education:

**5.1.1 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 should be made immediately to children’s social care (and the police if appropriate). The LA officers responsible for CME will check a referral has been made, and will contact children’s social care 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.

**5.1.2 Children of gypsy, roma and traveller (GRT) families** – when a GRT pupil 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/named CME officer for advice on the best strategies to ensure minimal disruption to the GRT pupil’s education.

**5.1.3 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 children.

**5.1.4 Missing children/runaways** – should the school suspect a child has gone missing/run away, an appropriate staff member will consult the DfE for advice on missing children.

**5.1.5 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.

**5.1.6 Children who cease to attend school** – where the reason for a child who has stopped attending a school is not known, the LA will investigate the situation.

**5.1.7 Children of migrant families** – there is an 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.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

### 6.1 The school

- 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.
- In the event that a pupil fails to attend the school on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence, and will consider notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity.
- 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 obtain **two or more** emergency contact numbers for parent(s)/carer(s)/other contacts.
- The school will record on the MIS system details of any change of address notified by parents/carers.
- The school will monitor pupils' attendance through our daily register.
- The school will follow the TRCA Attendance Policy procedures for following up on absent children and especially for children who are persistent absentees to ascertain the reason for their absence.
- Pupils who remain on the school roll are not necessarily missing education but will be monitored and attendance will be addressed when it is poor.
- The school will agree with the LA 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 pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admission register, if agreed with the LA, if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.
- The school will notify 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).
- The school will inform the LA of children who are leaving the school, if the transfer did not take place via the Primary/Secondary admissions team within Coventry LA or within the normal transition rounds.
- The school will record the leaving date, the name and address of the new school and the proposed entry date on their records for all school leavers.
- The school will arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion.
- The school will provide information to the LA regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the LA.

#### Procedure for schools

- Children Missing from Education Referrals (CME referral form) can be completed by a school after a **maximum 10 days' absence** through a secure email address: [CME@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:CME@coventry.gov.uk), telephone no: **02476 975434**.
- Anyone with a concern that a child is missing from education can make a referral to the Attendance and Inclusion Team.
- Schools submit a **CME referral form**, but should consult the LAC before removing a pupil from the school register.



- For urgent concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, which requires immediate action, schools should call the Coventry City Council MASH Team on 024 7683 3060 or email on [mash@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:mash@coventry.gov.uk).
- Access to Education Team Email: [cme@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:cme@coventry.gov.uk)
  - Tel: 024 7697 5434
  - PO Box 15
  - Council House
  - Coventry
  - CV1 5RR

## 6.2 The LA

- Under the Education Act 1996, the LA 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.
- The LA will provide full-time education for permanently excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion.
- When it is brought to the LA's attention that a child may not be receiving a suitable education, the LA will serve notices on parents/carers to assure the LA that their child is receiving such an education.
- The LA will issue School Attendance Orders to parents/carers who fail to assure the LA that their child is receiving a suitable education, and the LA believes that the child should attend school.
- The LA will prosecute parents/carers that do not comply with a School Attendance Order.
- The LA will prosecute or fine parents/carers of school-registered children who fail to ensure their child attends school regularly.
- The LA will ensure that children identified as not receiving suitable education are returned to full-time education either at the school or elsewhere.
- The LA will ensure that the school demonstrates prompt action and effective early intervention procedures to ensure children are safe and receiving suitable education.
- The LA will apply to court for an Education Supervision Order for a CME.
- The LA will ensure that children who return to full-time education are appropriately supported, taking into account the reasons why they missed education in the first place.
- Pupils with special educational needs statements, or EHC plans, are able to be home educated. If the statement/EHC plan sets out the provision that the pupil should receive at home, or names a school where the provision will be received, but the parent/carer chooses to home educate the child, the LA will arrange the provision and ensure that it is suitable to the child's special educational needs. The LA will review this statement annually.
- The LA is responsible for liaising and sharing information with other agencies to support children who miss education.
- The LA is responsible for referring to the LA children's social care 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.

## 6.3 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.

## 7. Working with Others

- Families moving from one LA to another can sometimes lead to a child being lost in the system and consequently missing education. When a child moves, LAs will work with other LAs, regionally or nationally, to ensure this does not happen.
- The LA will raise awareness of its procedures with local schools, partners and agencies working with children and families.
- To assist them in tracing CME, the LA has contacts with the **Department for Work and Pensions**, the **UK Border Agency** and **HMRC**.
- Schools within The Romero Catholic Academy use a secure internet system, **school2school**, to allow schools to transfer pupil information when a child moves education setting.

## 8. Safeguarding

The schools have a safeguarding duty towards their pupils and as such must investigate unexplained absences. The Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prevent, or limit, the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare and protect the safety of children. KCSIE 2018

8.1. 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.

8.2. In line with the Children Act 2004, the school will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the Learning Mentor/Family Support Worker/ Lead CAF Officer or CAF Officer conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.

8.3. The **Family Support Worker** will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to the children’s social care via Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or police.

Our Safeguarding policy states:

*‘To raise concerns about children, members of staff should contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) by telephone to discuss the referral. They should then complete the online Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF) and submit this to the MASH. The school will follow up referrals if we do not receive feedback from social care.’*

8.4. Where the whereabouts and safety of a child is unknown, the school, in conjunction with the LA, may carry out the following actions, in addition to the usual attendance procedures for following up absentees which include phone calls, letters, home visits:

- Make contact with the parent/carer/other contacts, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Make contact with sibling(s) school(s)
- Make contact with known friends/parents within school
- Check local databases
- Check data transfer systems such as school2school or Key to Success
- Follow local information sharing arrangements, and making enquiries via other local databases and agencies where possible
- Check with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force
- Check with agencies known to be involved with the family
- Check with the LA and school from which the pupil moved originally

- Check with the LA where the pupil lives, if this is different to where the school is located
- Check with the Ministry of Defence Children’s Education Advisory Service in the case of children of Service Personnel
- Conduct home visits via an appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessments, and making enquiries with neighbours or relatives, if appropriate

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

## 9. Admissions Register

**9.1** 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. Where reasonably possible, the schools should hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil or student. This goes beyond the legal minimum and is good practice to give the school additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

**9.2.** 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.

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

**9.4.** 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

**9.5** Parents/carers are able to elect to educate their children at home, ‘**Elective Home Education**’ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education> 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 the School, the pupil will be deleted from our admission register and inform the LA. **A parent / carer MUST write to the school.** The school must not help the parent (as this could be viewed as coercion) it must be clear the reasons that the parent/ carer is taking up Elective Home Education.

**Contact details:** Coventry City Council Elective Home Education information [click here](#)



## 10. Removing a pupil from the admissions register

**10.1.** The school will inform the LA 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 school system, e.g. home-schooled.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- 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.
  - The LA and school is unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- 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, or, the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for sixth form.

**10.2.** The school will notify the LA that a pupil is to be removed from the admissions register as soon as any of the above criteria are met, and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is actually removed.

**10.3.** If a pupil's name is to be removed from the admissions register, the school will provide the LA with the following information:

- The full name of the pupil
- The full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the pupil lives
- At least one telephone number of the parent/carer with whom the pupil lives



- The full name and address of the parent/carer who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable
- The name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date, if applicable
- The grounds for removal from the admissions register under Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), as outlined in section 9 of this policy.

## 11. Missing Child during the School day

Our school has the highest regard for the safety of the children in our care. Staff will always be extremely aware of the potential for the children to go missing during sessions.

Even when all precautions are properly observed, emergencies can still arise. Therefore, members of staff will undertake periodic head counts, especially at the transition points between sessions [in addition to the registration procedures] If for any reason a member of staff cannot account for a child's whereabouts during a session at the school, the following procedures will be activated:

1. Registers must be completed within 30 minutes of the afternoon session commencing. The member of staff in question will inform the Principal/Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and the rest of the year group team that the child is missing, and a thorough search of the entire premises will commence. The staff team will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.
2. The Principal/SLT will nominate two vigilant members of staff to search the area surrounding the entire premises (both inside and outside). All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in and around the school.
3. If after **15 minutes** of thorough searching the child is still missing, a member of the SLT will inform the police, the child's parent/carer, the CSEL and the Chair of the Local Academy Committee.
4. While waiting for the police and parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, other members of staff will maintain as normal a routine as is possible for the rest of the children at the school.
5. The Principal or nominated person (in their absence) will be responsible for meeting the police and the missing child's parent/carer. The Principal or nominated person will co-ordinate any instructions by the police and do all they can to comfort and reassure the parents/carers.
6. Once the incident is resolved, the Principal and the staff team will review relevant policies and procedures and implement necessary changes (paying particular note to the relevant provisions of the school's site security).
7. All incidents of children going missing from the school will be recorded on CPOMs, and in cases where either the police or social services have been informed, OFSTED will also be informed as soon as is practicable.

### Contact number of the Police:

- Little Park Street: 0345 113 5000

## 12. Monitoring and Review

- The Board of Directors delegate the implementation of this policy to the Academy Committee. This policy will be reviewed by CC3 Quality Provision, Performance and Standards.
- The Romero Safeguarding Reference group will also review this policy

## 13. Link to other policies

- School Child Protection Policy
- TRCA Attendance Policy

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