

## Attendance and Children Missing Education Policy

### Key school contacts

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### Introduction

Heritage School aspires to promote, monitor and support high attendance from all pupils, which alongside good behaviour, is a key part of its ethos and culture. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience. Therefore it seeks to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes high standards of attendance, safety and protection.

The school recognises attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process requiring revision, updating of processes and strategies. Therefore senior leaders regularly review attendance data. This is done to prioritise, and where necessary take proactive steps to work with and support pupils, their families, and where appropriate local authorities, to improve attendance and punctuality across the school.

Heritage School cooperates with the Children Missing Education (CME) Team at Cambridgeshire County Council to help ensure that we fulfil the statutory responsibilities to identify children that are missing education and respond appropriately.

Children missing education are defined within the [Children Missing Education \(Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities\) September 2016](#) as those of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll or receiving suitable education otherwise. Those who are regularly absent or have missed ten school days or more on repeat occasions without permission may be at risk of falling into the category of 'children missing education'.

Children absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. This policy may be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Policy; any safeguarding concerns must be addressed in keeping with it.

The separate Missing Child and Pupil Supervision Policy addresses the procedures for a child who goes missing at any point during the school day.

### Admission Register

The school recognises its duty to ensure that its admission register is accurate and kept up to date and to notify the Local Authority (LA) of particular changes to assist them with fulfilling their duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 in respect of CME.

In accordance with the legal requirements outlined in Children Missing Education (2016), our electronic admission register contains the following details for each pupil on our school roll:

- name in full;
- birth sex;
- name and address of every person known to the school to be a parent of the pupil (and an indication of which parent the pupil normally lives with and which parents hold parental responsibility as defined by Section 3 Children Act 1989)
- where a parent notifies the school that a pupil will live at another address, in addition or instead, the new address, the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will normally live in future and the date from which it is expected the pupil will normally live there, where it is reasonably practicable for the school to ascertain this information;
- at least one telephone number at which the parent with whom they normally live can be contacted in an emergency;
- the telephone number of more than one emergency contact, where reasonably possible, to meet the safeguarding standard stated in [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 \(Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges\)](#) - e.g. in the case of a one parent family, a second emergency contact may be a grandparent;
- day, month and year of birth;
- day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the school;
- name and address of the school last attended, if any; and the name of the destination school (or additional school, in the case of dual registration) notified by a parent and the first date of attendance, where it is reasonably practicable for the school to ascertain this information.

In addition, where a parent notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in the future, the school records on the admission register:

- the name of the new school; and
- the date when the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

The school encourages parents through regular reminders to inform us of any changes to the above details whenever they occur. This is important for keeping the admission register accurate and up to date; to assist the school and LA when making enquiries to locate children missing education.

The name of a pupil must be included in the register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or has been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

The school will notify the LA within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The local channel for this is to email [cme@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:cme@cambridgeshire.gov.uk) with the following details:

- the name in full;
- birth sex;
- day, month and year of birth;
- day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the school.

The school will also notify the LA of September Lower Prep admissions (a standard transition point) as Cambridgeshire County Council has requested this.

### **Deletions from the Admission Register**

Since 2016, schools are legally required to inform their LA when a pupil is about to be deleted from the admissions register under any of the fifteen grounds listed under Regulation 8 of [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#).

In addition to the above duty to notify the LA, the revised CME Guidance also highlights the need for all schools to:

- record details of the pupil's residence, the name of the person with whom they will reside, the date from which they will reside there, and the name of the destination school (where they can reasonably obtain this information);
- inform their LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.

The local channel for reporting the above to Cambridgeshire County Council is this online form:

- [Deletion from Register - Destination Confirmed Form](#)

Where a parent elects to home educate the school has a legal duty to notify the LA using this online form:

- [Cambridgeshire Elective Home Education - Learn Together \(cambsllearntogether.co.uk\)](http://cambsllearntogether.co.uk)

### **Attendance**

The school recognises attendance is essential to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the community.

The attendance register each school day works as follows:

- The attendance register must be taken twice per day, at the start of each morning session and at the start of each afternoon session.
- It is expected Infants and Juniors are in registration by 8.40am and Seniors by 8.35am, whilst the the timings for the end of the school day for all year groups can be found on the school website: [The School Day | Heritage \(heritageschool.org.uk\)](http://heritageschool.org.uk)
- Morning registers are to be completed by 8.50am daily, after which any unexplained absences are followed up with the parents by the Office.
- Where pupils are late, teachers deal with lateness consistently and promptly, and consider appropriate sanctions in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. The school will contact the parents of pupils who are regularly late, so as to ensure their child's punctuality improves.
- In a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend, parents are responsible for notifying the School Office by 8.50am via telephone, email or the absence form on the School Portal on our website, and explain the reason for absence. Where a pupil is off for more than 5 days in a row, parents can expect the Head of School (or tutor in the Senior School) to get in contact with the parents.

### **Requesting absences**

Pupils have 17 weeks off school to spend time together with family, including weekends and school holidays. Therefore term time is for education, so pupils are expected to attend every day the school is open.

In exceptional circumstances permission for an absence in advance may be sought from the school. This should be done in writing to the Deputy Head, who will then consider each case individually and decide if the absence is authorised or unauthorised, and the length of time the pupil can be away from school. An authorised absence is granted entirely at the Deputy Head's discretion. Parents or guardians do not have this authority. Any absence without the permission of the school will be unauthorised.

### **Promoting attendance**

The school will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, and risks associated with non-attendance to staff, pupils and their parents. Expected attendance is the same for Infants, Juniors and Senior pupils. Absence from school is a contributing factor in low pupil achievement. The school will acknowledge good and improved attendance of individuals and cohorts. As mentioned above, requests for authorised absence are carefully reviewed with a view to minimise absence from school. Pupil attendance is tracked and unexplained absences are investigated.

Attendance data is monitored and analysed:

- Half-termly, termly, and full year data is analysed to look at individuals, cohorts, and groups of pupils across the school to help achieve the school's responsibility under the Public Sector Equality Duty. This attendance data is benchmarked against local, regional and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- To identify trends in order to deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families.
- To provide regular attendance reports to teachers and tutors to facilitate discussion with pupils

- To support the work of the trustees.
- School-wide attendance efforts are monitored and reviewed regularly, in order to evaluate approaches and inform future strategies.

Attendance data is shared on reports to parents. Whilst individual circumstances may be considered as special cases, 95% attendance and above is considered a standard that all children should achieve. When attendance drops below 90%, parents can expect to be contacted by the school.

Parents will receive communication from the school notifying them that their child's attendance is being monitored and has become cause for concern. If there is a medical reason for persistent absence parents/guardians should seek a medical letter from a medical professional explaining this.

If there is no improvement within 2-4 weeks, parents will be invited to meet with the Head of School / Deputy Head to discuss matters.

Where families experience persistent difficulty with attendance and would benefit from support from the school, parents should contact the Deputy Head.

If there is still no improvement, it will be deemed that the child is 'missing education' and a referral may be made to the local authority. Heritage School is required to work collaboratively with local authorities when absence becomes persistent. Heritage School is legally required to share the name and address of pupils from their registers with the local authority if there are 10 or more unauthorised absences in a year.

### **Children Missing Education**

Whilst the statutory guidance applies to those of compulsory school age, the school will investigate any unexplained absences from education as part of its safeguarding duty.

The changes made in 2016 emphasised the requirements for schools and LAs to work collaboratively when making reasonable enquiries to locate pupils who fail to return ten days after an agreed authorised leave or twenty days without authorisation.

As a result of the daily registration, schools are particularly well placed to notice when a child may be missing in education. The Headteacher should inform the Attendance Investigation Officer at Cambridgeshire County Council of any child who has not attended for ten consecutive school days without provision of reasonable explanation. Prior to doing so, the school should have made reasonable enquiries to ascertain the whereabouts of the child.

Where a pupil has not returned to the school for ten 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 admission register when, in conjunction with the LA, 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 LA of such a deletion no later than the same day on which the deletion is made.

If a child does not attend on the first day that they are expected to attend the school, including those pupils who fail to transfer to statutory education from nursery school, or from the first day that a child is absent with no explanation or authorisation the following steps should be taken:

- the School Office will contact the parents/carers to seek reassurance that the child is safe at home and/or their whereabouts is known; and
- the outcome of that contact should be assessed.

If it is not possible to contact the parents/carers and/or to seek the confirmation of the child's whereabouts, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or their Deputy should, together with relevant members of staff, e.g. Heads of School, assess the child's vulnerability.

If a pupil is deemed vulnerable then the referral should be made immediately (see the next section for more detail on this).

The school will notify the LA of children who do not attend the first day that they are expected to, or of pupils who are persistently or frequently absent.

The channel for referrals to the Attendance Investigation Officer is this online form:

- [Request for Children Missing from Education Investigation](#)

### **Children Missing Education where there are Safeguarding Concerns**

If there are any safeguarding concerns, then a consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, should take place immediately to consider the child's vulnerability in keeping with the Safeguarding Policy.

All staff should be aware that children being absent from school or college, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so-called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future.

If there is a need for a referral to be made to Children's Social Care and/or the police this should be done immediately in keeping with the Safeguarding Policy.

If the judgement reached 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 the section above, the school should contact the Attendance Investigation Officer, referring the child as missing from education and providing details of the completed enquiries made by the school.

The Attendance Investigation Officer will check databases within the LA using the agreed protocols (e.g. housing, health, and police); check with agencies known to be involved with the family; with any LA the child may have moved from originally. The child's circumstances and vulnerability will be reviewed as necessary and reassessed regularly and jointly with the Attendance Investigation Officer in consultation with the appropriate authorities.

Authorised by	Jason Fletcher
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