

**St Swithun's Prep School including EYFS
CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION POLICY**

Policy History	
Reviewed and updated	September 2025
Date of next review	September 2026

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- [Safeguarding policy](#)
- [Admissions policy](#)
- [Attendance policy](#)
- [Missing child policy](#)

and has been written in relation to the statutory government guidance on:

- [Children Missing in Education](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children](#)

Introduction

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing education (CME) 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.***

CME includes children who:

- are in the process of applying for a school place
- have been offered a school place for a future date but have not yet started
- are receiving elective home education (EHE) that has been assessed as unsuitable
- have been recorded as CME for an extended period, for example where their whereabouts is unclear or unknown

CME are not children who:

- are receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school (for example, pupils who are electively home educated or attending alternative provision) which is suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have
- are EHE but the local authority has not had an opportunity to assess whether the education being provided is suitable
- are registered at a school, even if they are persistently or severely absent from that school

The importance of identifying and supporting children missing education

Regardless of their circumstances, the law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their:

- age
- ability
- aptitude

- any special educational needs they may have

This may include suitable education through regular attendance at school, alternative provision or otherwise (for example, EHE).

CME are at significant risk of underachieving, having poorer health outcomes, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) later in life.

Where there is a concern that a child's safety or well-being is at risk, it is essential to take action without delay. If staff have safeguarding concerns about a child, they should take immediate action, contacting the DSL and following the child protection policy. Where designated safeguarding leads or any staff in schools or local authorities have concerns about a child's welfare, they should immediately consider whether a referral needs to be made to local authority children's social care and, if appropriate, whether to call the police, particularly if there is a concern that the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Our responsibilities

We take a proactive approach to monitoring attendance; this is done daily via our attendance register and in accordance with the [attendance policy](#).

We will:

- undertake our own initial proactive work to locate a child at risk of becoming a CME, before working jointly with the local authority to conduct further reasonable enquiries to identify their whereabouts and to continue to play a role in conducting joint reasonable enquiries submitting a CME referral to the local authority.
- work collaboratively with the local authority to return CME into education – this might also involve working with a child's home local authority.
- offer appropriate support to successfully integrate children into our school, including having efficient decision-making processes for admissions in place to prevent delays
- carefully follow guidance on removing or adding pupils' names from or to the admission register, which in some specific cases will involve joint actions to be undertaken between the school and local authority before this decision can be made

Admission register

Maintaining accurate admissions registers

- When a pupil applies for a place at the school an entry is made in the admissions register.
- The admissions register is held in electronic format on the school's main database (ISAMS) and backed up on a regular basis.
- The person responsible for the administration of the admissions register is the prep school registrar.

The admissions register allows for inclusion or deletion from the register and is completed in line with [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#).

Copies of the admissions register are held at the school for a minimum of 3 years

Standard entry point

When a pupil applies to join the school at any entry point, the following are recorded in the admissions register:

- Full Name;
- Gender;
- Full name and address of all parents with an indication of the parent with whom the pupil normally resides and two emergency contact numbers (one must be a parent and one can be a family friend or other family member).

Living at another address

Where a parent notifies us that a pupil will normally live at another address, whether in addition to or instead of their current address, we will record the following in the admission register:

- The address
- Full name of each parent the pupil will newly normally live with;
- Date from which it is expected that the pupil will normally start living there (where it is reasonably practical to obtain that information).

Attending a different school

Where the school becomes aware, in circumstances set out in regulation 8(5), that the pupil will be attending a different school (in addition to or instead of the current school), schools must record this in the admission register:

- the name of the other school;
- the first date on which the pupil attended or is due to attend the school;

Non-standard entry point

When the school registers a new pupil **at a non standard transition point** (i.e. after the start of the first year of education provided by the school, mid-term into any year group or other usual age group entry points), the registrar **will** provide information to Hampshire County Council within **five days**, including the pupil's address and previous school (where they can reasonably obtain this information) using the Starter Leaver Record from Independent Schools spreadsheet which is filed in [OneDrive – St Swithun's School \General-Prep Staff\Pastoral\Safeguarding\DSL\Children Missing Education folder.](#)

The Prep School Registrar will then send this information in a password protected format to cme@hants.gov.uk

Attendance and sickness returns

We will make a return to the local authority (an 'attendance return') with the full name and address of any pupil of compulsory school age who is not a boarder and has failed to attend regularly (excluding codes D, K, V or B) or has missed ten consecutive school days or more with their absence being recorded in the attendance register in ways statistically recorded as unauthorised absence.

We will also consider making a return to the local authority (a 'sickness return') where a pupil of compulsory school age has been recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (illness) and the school have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will be, or will have been unable to attend school because of illness for at least 15 school days during the school year, whether consecutive or not.

Classifying a pupil as a 'leaver'

The head normally receives notification from a parent when a pupil intends to leave St Swithun's at a non-standard transition point i.e. when the pupil does not complete the final Y6 year of their education. using the Starter Leaver Record from Independent Schools spreadsheet which is filed in [OneDrive – St Swithun's School \General-Prep Staff\Pastoral\Safeguarding\DSL\Children Missing Education folder.](#) The Prep School Registrar will then send this information in a password protected format to cme@hants.gov.uk

In accordance with [School Attendance\(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024.](#)

The school will send the St Swithun's School, in-year notification excel spreadsheet: leaver, to inform Hampshire County Council (HCC):

- when they are about to delete a pupil's name from the admission register under any of the fifteen grounds detailed in Appendix 1;
- 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);
- of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.

Removing names from the admission register

Where one of the grounds for deleting a pupil's name from the admission register is met (see appendix 1), the pupil's name must immediately be deleted. We cannot retrospectively delete a pupil's name from the admission register and must ensure all requirements under the relevant ground are met before the pupil's name is deleted.

For grounds H and I (this is where a pupil has not returned within 10 school days following a leave of absence or has been continually absent for 20 school days unauthorised), joint reasonable enquires between the school and local authority to locate the pupil and find out their circumstances are required before a pupil's name can be deleted. When a pupil is located and their circumstances established, before their name is deleted, both parties must agree there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again.

For ground G, if a pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school, and the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again, the pupil's name must be deleted from the admission register even when a new school place has not yet been secured.

When making a deletion return to the local authority, schools must provide the local authority with the following information from the admission register:

- the full name of the pupil
- current address
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- at least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- if applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil will start living there
- if applicable, the name of the pupil's new school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend
- the reason set out in regulation 9 under which the pupils name has been deleted

Further information can be found at [working together to improve school attendance](#).

See appendix 2 for further information on children who may be at greater risk of becoming CME.

Off rolling

Off rolling is a form of gaming as defined by Ofsted, where a school prevents a pupil from attending school normally or removes a pupil's name from the school roll without a formal permanent exclusion, or by encouraging a parent to remove their child from the school to EHE. This is done in the interests of the school rather than the best interests of the pupil. The practice of off rolling is unacceptable, regardless of whether the removal from the register occurs with the agreement of parents or carers.

The correct removal of names from the register supports lawful exclusions, effective monitoring of pupil movements, and reduces the risk of off rolling which puts children at further risk of missing education.

Reasonable enquires

If a child who is on a school roll is absent from school and this absence is unexplained, we will immediately make enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts – see attendance policy.

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).

If enquiries lead the school to reasonably believe that the child will no longer be attending the school and the parent has not provided the school with written notice that the child will be attending another school or that education provision otherwise than at a school will be provided, they should make a referral to the child's home local authority CME team as soon as possible. We will continue to undertake reasonable enquiries to identify the whereabouts of the child during this time, and regular communication between the school and the local authority carrying out these enquiries will continue until it is mutually agreed that enquiries have concluded or that there are no further actions the school can take.

These enquiries must be thorough and collaborative where possible, ensuring that decisions regarding necessary, relevant and appropriate actions are made based on the specifics of each case and the evidence available.

With the child's welfare as the paramount concern, it is imperative that actions are taken without delay.

These actions may include, but are not limited to:

- making contact with the parent using known contact details
- checking with agencies known to be involved with the family
- checking with siblings' schools whether they have contact with the parents (if applicable)
- where the child had previously moved or changed school, check with the local authority and school from which the child moved originally, if known
- checking with the local authority or school to which a child may have moved
- checking with the local authority for the area where the child lives, if different from where the school is
- speaking to landlords if appropriate (private, social or temporary housing providers)
- referring to databases within the local authority where possible (for example, admissions or children's social care)
- establishing and following local information sharing arrangements (where needed) to access and check databases of external agencies (housing providers, health services, police, refuge, youth justice services, and council tax)
- checking Get Information About a Pupil (GIAP)
- checking with national databases (such as Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Border Force, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), Ministry of Defence (MoD), Health)
- home visits made by the appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessment
- making contact with relatives and neighbours, if appropriate, using known contact details

This list is not an exhaustive or prescriptive list of actions. The type of reasonable enquiries required to try to locate a child and establish their circumstances will differ from case to case and additional enquiries to those suggested in this section may be necessary.

Making reasonable enquiries may not always lead to establishing the location or circumstances of a child, but will provide a steer on what action should be taken next, for example contacting the police, children's social care and, in cases where there may be concerns for the safety of a child who has travelled abroad, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Reviewed and updated Autumn 2025	Liz Norris	Head
	Sara Mathieson	Prep school registrar
	Kate Grosscurth	Prep school DSL
Ratified by Education Committee on behalf of Council, Autumn 2025		Chair of Education Committee

Appendix 1: Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register

<p>9 1(a) the pupil has been registered at another school, unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) a school attendance order naming the school is in force in relation to the pupil;(ii) the pupil is a mobile child and the school is their main school; or(iii) the proprietor has agreed with a person with control of the pupil's attendance at the other school, or is such a person and has decided, that the pupil should be registered at more than one school.
<p>9 1(b) the pupil was admitted to the school for nursery education and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) they have completed such education and would, if they continued attending the school, be transferred to a reception, or more senior, class at the school; but(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again.
<p>9 1(c) the pupil is also registered as a pupil at one or more other schools and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again;(ii) the proprietor of each other school where the pupil is registered has consented to the deletion;(iii) there is no school attendance order naming the school in force in relation to the pupil; and(iv) the pupil is not a mobile child or, if they are, the school is not their main school.
<p>9 1(d) a school attendance order relating to the pupil and formerly naming the school has been amended by the relevant local authority to substitute the name of the school with that of another school.</p>
<p>9 1(e) a school attendance order relating to the pupil and naming the school has been revoked by the relevant local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the pupil to receive suitable education otherwise than at school.</p>
<p>9 1(f) a parent of the pupil has told the proprietor in writing that the pupil will no longer attend the school after a certain day and will receive education otherwise than at school and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) that day has passed; and(ii) there is no school attendance order naming the school in force in relation to the pupil.
<p>9 1(g) the pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again; and(ii) the pupil is not a boarder.
<p>9 1(h) the pupil has been given leave of absence and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) the pupil has not attended the school within the ten school days immediately after the end of the period of leave;(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and(iii) the proprietor and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances but:<ul style="list-style-type: none">(aa) they have not succeeded; or(bb) they have succeeded and they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any reasonable steps they could take (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance.
<p>9 1(i) the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for at least twenty school days and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) none of the circumstances mentioned in Table 2 in regulation 10(3) or in any row of Table 3 in regulation 10(4) other than the final three rows applied to the pupil at any point during that period;(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause; and(iii) the proprietor and the local authority have jointly made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances but<ul style="list-style-type: none">(aa) they have not succeeded; or

(bb) they have succeeded and they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any reasonable steps they could take (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance.
9 1(j) the pupil is detained under a sentence of detention and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school after they cease to be detained under that sentence.
9 1(k) the pupil has died.
9 1(l) the pupil will be over compulsory school age by the next time the school meets and (i) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again; or (ii) the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements to be transferred to the school's sixth form.
9 1(m) the pupil is a boarder at the school and (i) the school is a school maintained by a local authority or is an Academy; (ii) charges for the pupil's board and lodging are payable by a parent of the pupil; and (iii) those charges remain unpaid by the parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.
9 1(n) the pupil has ceased to be a pupil at the school and the school is not (i) a school maintained by a local authority; or (ii) an Academy.
9 1(o) the pupil has been permanently excluded from the school.

Appendix 2 Cohorts of children who may be at greater risk of becoming CME

- **Pupils at risk of harm/neglect** – Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected schools should follow local child protection procedures. 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). Local authority officers responsible for CME should check that a referral has been made and, if not, they should alert children’s social care. The Department’s statutory guidance *Keeping children safe in education* provides further advice for schools and colleges on safeguarding children.
- **Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families** – Research has shown that many children from these 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. Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly and their children can be at increased risk of missing education. Local authority Traveller Education Support Services (TESS), where these exist, or the named CME officer within the local authority, can advise schools on the best strategies for ensuring the minimum disruption to GRT pupils’ education, for example dual registration with other schools or the provision of electronic or distance learning packages where these are available.
- **Children of Service Personnel** – Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in the UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MoD Children’s Education Advisory Service (CEAS) by email RC-DCS-HQ-CEAS@mod.gov.uk for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.
- **Children who go missing from home or care** - Children who go missing or run away from home or care are vulnerable to serious dangers and harm outside the home, including sexual and criminal exploitation and abduction, as well as missing education. Multi-agency working is essential for assessing cases of children missing from home or care, and for analysing data for patterns that indicate concerns and risks. Authorities should consider whether CME may also be unreported missing children. Local authorities and the police should take proactive steps to support these children, particularly in communities where underreporting is more likely due to mistrust of statutory services. Local authorities should refer to the statutory guidance on [children who run away or go missing from home or care](#) for more information and support on prevention and protection of this vulnerable cohort of children.
- **Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System** - Children who have offended or are at risk of doing so are also at risk of disengaging from education. [Youth offending teams](#) (YOTs) are responsible for supervising those young people (aged 10 to 18) and should work with the local authority CME officer and schools to ensure that children are receiving, or return to, appropriate full-time education. [Working together to improve school attendance](#) sets out how schools and local authorities should work together with YOTs with regard to the relevant regulations.
- **Children who cease to attend a school** – there are many reasons why a child stops attending a school. It could be because the parent chooses to home educate their child. However, where the reason for a child who has stopped attending a school is not known, the local authority should investigate the case and satisfy itself that the child is receiving suitable education.
- **Children of new migrant families** – children of new migrant families may not have yet settled into a fixed address or may have arrived into a local authority area without the authority becoming aware, therefore increasing the risk of the child missing education.

- **Children with SEND whose needs are not being adequately supported** - Where parents are not satisfied that the needs of a pupil with SEND are being met adequately in school, this may lead to lower attendance and ultimately parents taking their child out of school. Schools should work closely with the pupil and their parents to put appropriate support in place and to keep this under regular review. If a child with an EHC plan has significant levels of unmet need, the school should also liaise with the local authority about whether an early review of the plan is needed.
- **Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) and children of new migrant families** – UASC Are likely to have faced significant difficulties and will need to be cared for while in the UK. Local authorities have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in need, ensuring that there are enough schools available for their areas and offering additional support for looked after migrant children and UASC. There can be additional challenges and complex barriers for local authorities to overcome to carry out their CME duty, which can include unsettled, often temporary housing situations, unreported arrivals or sudden moves between authorities’ areas. Looked after migrant children, including UASC who need to be offered support, will be accommodated by the local authority.
- **Children who are excluded from school** - It is important for schools to help minimise the disruption that a suspension or permanent exclusion can cause to a pupil’s education. All maintained schools, academy schools (including free schools), alternative provision academies (including alternative provision free schools), and pupil referral units must inform a local authority when a pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded regardless of length, without delay.
Local authorities have a statutory duty to arrange suitable full-time education starting from the sixth day (or earlier) of a permanent exclusion. Informal or unofficial suspensions and permanent exclusions are unlawful, regardless of whether they occur with the agreement of parents or carers. This is also defined by Ofsted as a form of off rolling. Department guidance on [school suspensions and permanent exclusions](#) details the legal responsibilities for those who suspend (fixed period exclusion) and permanently exclude pupils.
- **Children attending unregistered independent schools**
There are a number of settings operating unlawfully outside the regulatory regime as unregistered independent educational institutions. Those conducting these settings are committing a criminal offence and may be putting children at risk of harm, denying them a suitable education and limiting their life chances. Children attending unregistered educational institutions should be treated in a similar way to CME. Where the school becomes aware of this possibility we will [make a referral to Ofsted](#).