



Sherwood Park School

Inspiring Autonomy and Excellence

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION POLICY

Date to Governors:	March 2022
Review Date:	March 2023

Policy Name	Child Missing Education Policy
Date of Issue	V. 2 - 15th March 2022
DFE Guidance (statutory or recommended)	Statutory - Statutory Annual Review
Description Content	Covers updates

Reviewing Body	Reviewing body - Full Governing Body Responsibility for review - Headteacher
Assigned Reviewing Period	Annually
Date of Next Review	March 2023

Introduction

Sherwood Park School is a Foundation Special School in the London Borough of Sutton for pupils aged 3-19. It has two sites: the Sherwood Park Campus supports young people of all ages with Severe (SLD) and Profound & Multiple learning disabilities (PMLD), as well as some autistic pupils; the Sherwood Hill Campus is a provision for pupils of all ages with autism and SLD.

Sherwood Park School is concerned about any child missing education (CME), not only in the way that it impacts on the individual's potential achievement but also in relation to their safety and welfare.

Sherwood Park School recognises that there are additional factors that impact upon the ability of some of its pupils to attend on a regular basis and is mindful of ensuring that other issues do not mask the risk of a child missing education (such as significant health issues).

Legal Context

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

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed a further duty on all local authorities (LAs) in England and Wales to make arrangements to identify CME in their area. The duty applies to all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and are not receiving a suitable education.

Please refer to KCSIE September 2021

Working together to Safeguard Children, document July 2018

Purpose of the CME Policy

The purpose of the CME Policy is to establish a set of principles which contributes to a wider LA position in which all schools, services and partner organisations work together to ensure children and young people living in London Borough of Sutton (LBS) are safely on roll of a school, placed on alternative educational programmes or electively home educated at the request of parents.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's other safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.

Aims

- To assist the School, LA and partner agencies in identifying CME;
- Raise awareness of the notification process;
- Explain how children will be tracked and monitored until they are re-engaged in education;

- Explain the mechanism available to access appropriate education provision;
- Provide clarity to stakeholders on how children can be tracked across boundaries when a child moves to another local authority area.

Definition of CME

The definition of Children Missing Education refers to all children of compulsory school who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more).

For the purpose of this policy, Children Missing Education will be considered as the following:

- Children persistently absent from school
- Those children that have been permanently excluded or are on a supported transfer
- Those children who have particular social and behavioural difficulties and have a personalised plan which means that they do not attend school full time
- Have medical or mental health needs
- Have complex needs and no suitable school place is available
- Those children that are new to the area and require a school place.
Specifically:
 - Those that are new to the country
 - Those that have not taken up a school place within 20 school days of it being offered
 - Those new to area and not secured a school place within 20 school days
 - Children Looked After placed in or out of Borough with no suitable educational placement
 - Those who are pregnant or are young mothers of compulsory school age.
 - Those who are returning from custody and a school place has not been found for them
 - Those who are from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background and alternative provision has been made.

Practice within Sherwood Park School

Attendance is monitored weekly to identify any pupils not in school. On a daily basis the parents of any absent pupils are contacted to find out the reason why. After every holiday, including half term, the parents of any absent children are immediately contacted to ensure the children have not gone on unauthorised extended leave. Any requests for extended leave in school time are given due consideration. In all cases parents are asked to provide a rationale and a return date. A decision to grant additional leave will only be made by the Headteacher. In making a decision, due consideration is given to:

- The difficulties of a student being able to cope with respite provision in the event parents/carers have to travel overseas
- The complexities of making travel arrangements in busy periods that facilitate the requirements of young people with complex needs
- The potential learning experiences for young people with significant barriers to opportunities that others might have.

The school will be mindful of risks to children including FGM (See: *Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*).

If a parent informs the school after leave has been taken, the School will consider informing the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). The School and the EWO will work in partnership to track down the pupil. If any pupil does not return after 20 days, they will be reported as missing education and a discussion will be had with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Children With Disabilities Team (CWDT) as to whether or not they should be taken off roll.

Any pupil leaving the school without a named school being identified will also be reported to the EWO. If after 20 days there is still no named school, the children will be reported to the LA as missing education.

Potential CME will be discussed by the three-weekly meeting of the Safeguarding Team and any appropriate actions taken.

Children and young people with poor school attendance are often the most vulnerable and are more likely to become children missing from education.

The Local Authority recognises that the duty to identify children not receiving education does not apply in relation to children who are registered at school who are not attending regularly. The authority's CME strategy does, however, include the reinforcement of duties that already exist for schools and therefore supports the monitoring of children at risk of missing education in the future.

The monitoring of children at risk of missing education is carried out in partnership with schools where attendance of individual pupils gives cause for concern with the aim of reducing the risk in the future.

Why children go missing from education

Children and young people with poor school attendance are often the most vulnerable and are more likely to become children missing from education. Children and young people can go missing from school or agreed education provision, for a wide variety of reasons. Their personal circumstances or those of their families may contribute to the withdrawal process. Children can 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:

- Failing to register at school at age 5;
- Failing to make successful transition from infant to junior and primary to secondary;
- Ease to attend due to exclusion (formal/illegal withdrawal);
- Mid-year transfer of school;
- Unable to find a school place after moving into local authority;
- Victims of bullying;
- Frequent moves of house including periods of homelessness or periods in a refuge;
- Transience/family mobility;
- Family breakdown;
- Frequent absence leading to low attendance (especially Yr10 and Yr11);

- Disaffection resulting in parents withdrawing the pupil or 'being asked to leave';
- Involvement in youth offending.

Sherwood Park School recognises there are additionally specific groups of students whose issue with attendance can result in CME cases. These include:

- Students with significant medical issues that can result in longer periods in hospital or in recovery
- Pupils who struggle with social understanding / imagination e.g. autistic pupils who do not see the bigger picture in terms of the benefits of going to school and who may subsequently refuse to attend.
- Students who are contesting their placement at Sherwood through the Tribunal process.

In all these instances, the School will work closely with partner agencies to ensure the Safeguarding of all students and appropriate support for families where necessary.

Sherwood Park School focuses on making school a fun and enjoyable place to learn and achieve, focusing on pupil's strengths and interests which encourage pupils to want to attend school.

Certain vulnerable groups are more likely to be affected by the factors; these are:

- Young people who have committed offences;
- Children living in women's refuges;
- Children of troubled families i.e. suffering bereavement, trauma, domestic violence, homelessness etc;
- Children with special educational needs;
- Refugee and asylum seeking children;
- Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families
- Looked after children;
- Teenage parenthood;
- 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.
- Come from the families of service personnel
- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Come from new migrant families

The Role of the LA and Multi-Agency Teams

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information. Sherwood Park School will work closely with stakeholders to ensure the safety of all children and students.

Key stakeholders include:

LA: Children With Disabilities Team, SEND Team
Health commissioners.

Police;
 Other schools and Academies including Support Centres;
 Youth Offending Service;
 Voluntary Organisations;
 Housing Associations;
 CAMHS
 Homeless Services;
 Job Centres;
 CME tracking officers in other authorities;

Reducing the Risk of Children Missing Education

All LA officers, schools, academies and the general public have a moral and corporate responsibility in relation to CME. Parents who do not ensure their children are accessing a 'suitable' education can be deemed as breaking the law. Anyone who becomes aware of a child or young person who does not appear to be accessing education should refer this child to Sutton LA.

The LA, in partnership with the other agencies listed above, aims to ensure that all colleagues in all agencies who become aware of a child who is living in the Borough but not in identified education provision, will notify the authority.

Roles and Responsibilities

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 remind parents to inform you of any changes to their information. As soon as a parent tells us about a change of address, we will record the following in your admission register:
 1. The full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live
 2. The new address
 3. The date from when it's expected the pupil will live at this address
 4. The School will endeavour to keep more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.
- The School will monitor pupils' attendance through a daily register.
- 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 discuss with SEN and CWDT the appropriateness of removing the pupil from the admission register, if the School and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries possibly including.
 1. Contacting parents, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
 2. Checking local databases within the LA, or the DfE's Key to Success or school2school systems
 3. Following local information sharing arrangements, making enquiries to:
 - Other local databases and agencies

- Agencies known to be involved with the family
- 4. Checking with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force
- 5. Checking with the LA and school from which your pupil moved from originally, or any past LAs or schools that have educated your pupil
- 6. Checking with the LA where your pupil lives, if it's different from the one where your school is
- 7. In the case of children of service personnel, checking with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service
- 8. Conducting a home visit, following your own policies and risk assessment procedures. If appropriate, making enquiries with neighbours and relatives

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.

- Amend the register as soon as changes to the School roll are made.
- If a pupil starts or leaves school at a non-standard transition point (for example, joining mid-year or leaving before the school's final year) we will:
 - Notify the LA within 5 days
 - Provide the LA with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil
- 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.

The Local Authority

- 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 may 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.

Parents/carers

- Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their children 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 pupil's education arrangements.

Safeguarding of CME

A significant number of children referred as missing education are either found in education following initial investigations or found but not in education and subsequently supported to return. There are a number of children who are not found in education as the family cannot be located following the normal investigations. A child who is not found in education following CME investigations does not infer that the child is at risk. However, it is appropriate to escalate the concerns to consider potential risks to the child.

Associated Documentation

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

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Code of Conduct for Staff
- Physical Intervention Policy