

## **Absenteeism and Children Missing Education Policy**

### **Rationale**

All children are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs and disability they may have. Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and are not receiving education otherwise that at a school. The definition also includes children who are receiving an education but where the education is not suitable, this could include children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who are not receiving an education appropriate to their needs.

Children missing education are at significant risk of long-term underachievement and of being victims of harm, exploitation and radicalisation and of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Absenteeism refers to children who are registered to attend a particular school but for whom attendance is an issue, i.e. they suddenly stop attending and are missing (absent), or are frequently absent. If a child is frequently absent from school this can be indicative of safeguarding issues such as abuse or neglect, mental health issues, substance abuse, FGM or forced marriage. Effective information sharing between schools, parents and local authorities is critical to ensuring that children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving a suitable education.

The local authority (LA) has a legal duty to identify when there are children absent from their education (absenteeism) and when children missing from education, and to ensure that they are helped back into education. The school recognises its duty in this area and will do all it can to support the LA.

### **Why children miss education**

There are several reasons why children miss education:

- not being registered at a school at age 5
- failing to make a successful transition into a school
- exclusion
- mid- year transfer of school
- families moving into a new area

### **Children at particular risk of missing education**

- children at risk of harm or neglect
- children of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) families
- children of service personnel
- missing children/runaways
- children and young people supervised by the youth justice system
- children of migrant families
- children who cease to attend school

## Roles and Responsibilities

The school will:

- enter children's details on the admissions register on the first day that it has been agreed that the child will attend the school, the school will keep an accurate and up-to-date admissions register noting any changes of address or contact details
- if a child does not attend the school on the agreed date and no reason is given for the absence the school will attempt to contact the parents by phone, contact the child's previous school, look at local databases or carry out a home visit
- if it is not possible to contact the parents the school will contact the LA when all enquiries as to the child's whereabouts are complete and within two working days
- if a child is absent from school and no reason for absence has been given the school will ring parents between 8.45 -9.15 am so that the reason for absence can be established and to confirm that the child is at home
- if a child registered at the school does not attend for 10 days and no reasonable explanation is given for the absence the school will contact the LA and will work with external agencies to establish the whereabouts of the child and his/her family
- the school will not remove the child from the admissions register until they have confirmation that the child is registered at another school or his/her whereabouts have been established, this decision will be made jointly with the LA
- if a child registered at the school has been removed by his/her parents, has been certified by a doctor to be unable to attend school in the foreseeable future, has been excluded, has died, is registered at more than one school or is being home educated the school will inform the LA at the earliest possible opportunity and before removing the child from the admissions register
- when a parent notifies the school that a child is leaving the school at other than the usual transition points the school will notify the LA
- the school will provide the LA with information relating to pupils leaving the school during standard transition times if requested
- the school will monitor the attendance of all pupils through the daily attendance register and parents will be asked to ensure that their children attend school regularly
- pupils with poor attendance will be provided with 1:1 support and the school will try to ensure that there are no issues within school which are a barrier to attendance
- any pupil who receives a fixed term exclusion will be provided with work to do at home, after the sixth school day of exclusion the school will provide the child with full time education
- the school will inform the LA within five days of a child being admitted to the school at other than standard transition points, they will provide all the information included in the admissions register

The school follows the local authority's On-Roll Procedure (overseen by the Admissions Section within WSCC). The school notifies the LA of all starters using the online Starters Form, which can be found at:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/school-places/notification-of-adding-to-the-school-register/?formcheck=checked>

## The DSL will

- deal with any instances of persistent non-attendance using the school's Safeguarding or other policies where appropriate

## The staff will

- encourage all pupils to attend school regularly
- will ensure that the needs of all pupils are met so that they feel happy and safe in school
- implement early help procedures for pupils who is frequently absent
- understand the school's Attendance Policy and Children Missing from Education Policy and their responsibilities in this area
- discuss any concerns about a pupil's safety or well-being with the DSL or contact the local authority's safeguarding team for advice.

## Guidance for Staff Seeking Advice

Both non-attendance referrals and children missing from education referrals are to be made to WSCC local authority, as this is where the school is based, and are not to be made to the LA in which the child resides, if different.

However, these different scenarios are handled by different teams with WSCC.

For concerns about children who may be missing education, i.e. not receiving any educational provision after they leave Atelier 21 but are still of compulsory age the relevant team is the Children Missing Education Team, contactable on **033022 28397**.

For concerns about non-attendance by a child registered at the school, the relevant team is The Pupil Entitlement Investigation Office, contactable on **033022 28200** or by email to [pei.areac@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:pei.areac@westsussex.gov.uk)

## Parents will

- ensure that children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable, full time education
- provide the school with all the information needed to complete the admissions register and update the information where necessary
- provide the school with at least three up-to-date contact telephone numbers
- ensure that children attend school regularly
- notify the school, before 8.30 am, when their child is absent through illness or any other reason
- request any holidays in term time in writing
- understand that the school may not approve holidays in term time which are longer than 10 working days
- notify the school in writing if a child is leaving the school, provide a reason for the move, the name of the destination school and start date
- notify the school in writing if they elect to educate their child at home
- if a parent does not notify the school in writing that their child is leaving the school the school will notify the local authority (LA) at the earliest possible opportunity

## When a pupil is removed from the school roll

The school follows the WSCC Removal From Roll procedure in accordance with Pupil Registration Regulations, and provide the LA with the following information:

- the child's full name
- the name and address of the child's main parent/ carer or both parents as required

- at least one contact phone number
- the child's future address
- the name and address of the destination school and the expected start date
- parental contact numbers
- the grounds, under regulation 8, for removal from the admissions register

The above information is to be submitted to WSCC using the online Leavers Form which can be found at:

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/school-places/notification-of-removing-from-the-school-roll/?formcheck=checked>

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