

# CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION POLICY

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## **Introduction**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have to reach their potential. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Schools should put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, child sexual or gang exploitation, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

At Benenden, we recognise it is potentially a safeguarding issue when a pupil is moved away without the school knowing the forwarding address and the details of the new school. When a child is missing from a school or is moved away, schools have the initial responsibility to make reasonable enquiries and to establish the whereabouts of a child or the key information of the new address. It is everyone's responsibility to safeguard children.

As Benenden is a full-boarding community it is unlikely for a pupil to go missing in education. However, we must still consider this to be possible and have procedures in place to ensure all children on our Admission Register receive an education.

## **Definition of Children Missing Education**

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity e.g. school, alternative provision, elective home education, and has been out of education provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as two months).

A child is classed as a Child Missing Education if they are:

- of compulsory school age and
- not on a school roll and
- not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school, for example, at home, privately or in alternative provision.

## **Procedures at Benenden**

If a pupil fails to return from a holiday or from a period at home with illness, the Hm or Deputy will:

- Try to contact the parents via phone or email.
- Try to contact the pupil via phone or email.
- Ask the pupil's friends if they are aware of her whereabouts.
- Consider whether plane or other transport arrangements might have been disrupted, delayed, or cancelled.
- Use any other iSAMS contacts we have.

If we cannot find the whereabouts of a pupil after the above avenues have been exhausted, their absence will be reported by the Hm or DHm to the Duty Hm and then on to the SMT Duty member, copying in the DSL or DDSL. The Hm or DHm will highlight if the pupil is Tier 4.

If the pupil's whereabouts are still unknown after 24 hours, the DSL or Deputy will ring the local authority in Kent (and the police if instructed to do so), and inform the pupil's home local authority of her absence from school. Tier 4 procedures will be followed, if necessary.

Where a pupil is missing education on repeat occasions and absences have not been authorised, the DSL or a Deputy DSL will arrange to speak to the parents to ascertain why the absences have taken place. In line with the Regulatory Requirements, the DSL will notify the local authority when a pupil fails to attend school regularly or is absent without leave for more than 10 continuous school days. The School will use the Kent Digital Front Door to make a referral. A pupil will also be referred to her home local authority. <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/pru-inclusion-and-attendance-service-pias/children-missing-education>

The school's right under the regulations to delete a pupil for non-return within 10 school days after authorised leave of 10 school days or more, or after 20 school days unauthorised absence (in both cases, in the absence of illness or other unavoidable cause), will not be actioned until the school and local authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries as to the pupil's whereabouts and failed.

**On and Off Rolling** – see also [Admission Register](#)

When a pupil leaves Benenden and is still under the age of 18, the DSL writes to her next school to ensure that she has taken up the place offered to her. The pupil is off-rolled from Benenden by the First Deputy a process verified and monitored by Kent County Council, who will contact the School if they have a concern about a pupil missing education.

The DSL receives confirmation from the new school that the pupil has arrived and is receiving education there. If the future school confirms that the pupil is not on their attendance register, the DSL informs the pupil's Safeguarding Partner or equivalent.

The DSL will consider whether there is a safeguarding concern where a child leaves the School with no known destination.