LEICESTER GRAMMAR JUNIOR SCHOOL

POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR A CHILD ABSENT/MISSING FROM EDUCATION (CME)

This is one of the procedures concerned with safeguarding. It should be read in conjunction with other policies: Pupil Supervision, Attendance, Safeguarding including KCSiE, Policies and Procedures for Educational Visits, Pastoral, and Media. It should also be read with regard to the Prevent Duty.

This is a whole school policy and as such applies to the EYFS.

This policy has regard to government guidance EYFS Statutory Framework Working Together to Improve School Attendance and Children Missing from Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools

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. We are aware that 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.

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 (EHE) 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

Children absent/missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation – particularly county lines- and children

who miss education are at significant risk of underachieving. Where there is a concern that a child's safety or well-being is at risk, it is essential the school take action without delay following the child protection policy and involving the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). The school 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.

PROCEDURE

If a pupil is thought to be missing from education the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) must be informed. School staff will always try to locate the child and attempt to establish the whereabouts using the emergency contact numbers and the procedures outlined in the LGJS Attendance Policy. At least two emergency contacts will be held on record for each pupil wherever possible.

Leicester Grammar Junior School (the School) will inform the local authority Inclusion Service when removing a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the grounds listed in the regulations. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points, for example, when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

School will also alert the Local Authority Inclusion Service when a child joins the school at a non-standard transition time within five days of joining.

If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. School will monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. Poor attendance will be referred to the local authority and advice and support may be sought via Family Help (previously Early Help).

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Where one of the grounds for deleting a pupil's name from the admission register is met, as set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the pupil's name must immediately be deleted. A school cannot retrospectively delete a pupil's name from the admission register. The decision to delete a pupil's name is for the individual school in line with the regulations. Schools 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 the regulations under which the pupils name has been removed from the admissions register

School will endeavour to establish the whereabouts of a CME. A reasonable response would be to complete and record one or more of the following actions:

- make contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours using known contact details (at least two emergency contact numbers will be held for each child where possible);
- 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 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 school policy concerning risk assessment;
- making contact with relatives and neighbours, if appropriate, using known contact details;

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive list of actions, and school should treat each case on its individual merits and will use their judgement, ensuring they have taken into account all of the facts of the case. It should be recognised that the type of reasonable enquiries required to try to locate a child will differ from case to case and additional enquiries to those suggested in this section may be necessary.

The DSL on behalf of the school will record completed procedures on CPOMS and the safeguarding log. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral as outlined in the Safeguarding Policy will be made to children's social care (and the Police if appropriate).

Where the child's name has been removed from the school roll, but s/he has not been located, the Head Teacher should arrange for the pupil's records to be retained until the child is located.

ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION (EHE)

Also see Appendix A for additional guidance from Leicestershire County Council.

We would expect the parents' decision to home educate to be made with their child's best education at the heart of the decision

There should be a meeting with parents to offer support and guidance and to understand the reasons for educating at home. Ideally this meeting should take place before the final decision has been made to ensure the parents have considered the best interests of the child. This is particularly important where a child has special educational needs or a disability and/or has a social worker and/or is otherwise vulnerable.

The decision to home school should be communicated to the headteacher in writing. The pupil will remain on roll until parents have informed the school in writing of their decision to home educate their child.

Following written notification of a decision to home educate the school will inform the Local Authority Inclusion Service within five working days using the Inclusion Service Referral form. School must also complete the record absence data form.

Further information is available in the DfE guidance for parents about elective home education

EXCLUDED PUPILS

Schools will arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion.

LOCAL CONTACTS

Leicester City Tel: 0116 454 5510

Complete a referral form using this link

Leicestershire Tel: 0116 305 2071, inclusionpupilsupport@leics.gov.uk

Use this link for further information and to make a referral

Rutland
Helga Spry-Shute Tel: 01572 758335 hspryshute@rutland.gov.uk

Northamptonshire

Complete a referral form using this link

Appendix A:

Process clarification for parents who elect to home educate their children from Leicestershire County Council

Due to several recent enquires, the Inclusion Service wishes to clarify the procedures regarding parents exercising their right to home educate their children.

Responsibilities of Schools

Schools must not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding an exclusion or because the child has a poor attendance record. In the case of exclusion, they must follow the statutory process and guidance.

If the pupil has a poor attendance record, the school and Local Authority must address the issues behind the absences and consider using other options available to them. A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the school's admission register if a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies.

Department for Education (DfE) recommendations

The DFE recommends that a meeting takes place with key professionals and parent(s) before the parent(s) makes a final decision to home educate.

In Leicestershire it is expected that schools arrange this meeting with parents' consent. The decision by a parent to home educate is a serious one and it imposes obligations on the parent to arrange and pay for the education of their child. Schools are in the best position to support parents to arrive at an informed decision before taking this step.

Current government guidance to parents states that if their child is on the roll of a school, they are not obliged to inform the school that he or she is being withdrawn for home education or gain consent for this. However, the guidance states that it is sensible to do so, in order to avoid subsequent misunderstandings as to how they intend to fulfil their parental responsibility for their child's education.

A school is obliged to inform the Local Authority of children removed from its admission register and will give home education as the reason, if notified of this by the parent. Parents of children withdrawn from school for home education are not legally obliged to inform the local authority themselves - but again it is sensible to do so, either directly or using any local registration scheme which exists, to facilitate access to advice and support.

Schools are reminded that where a parent has elected to home educate their child and confirmed this in writing to the school, they are not required to keep the child on their roll to enable the Local Authority to carry out their checks and confirm they can be removed from roll. This means the child can be removed from roll once written confirmation has been received from the parents that they wish to home educate.

NB Please note there are circumstances where Local Authority agreement to remove from roll WILL be required – see below.

Process for Notifying the Local Authority

The school must confirm to the Inclusion Service of the intent to delete the child's name from their admissions register upon receipt of written notification from the parents that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school using the Inclusion Service Referral form **within five school days**, found here . On the referral form the school should indicate whether they have engaged the parent in a conversation about the parents' responsibilities when electively home educating. The school should also record any concerns that they have about the parents' intention to electively home educate. The Information and Support Coordinator will then prioritise that referral for processing and a visit from the Education OAicer (where parents' consent to this) to ensure that the education being provided is

assessed swiftly. If the parent has notified the school in writing of their intention to home educate the school do not have to receive acknowledgement of that referral before removing from roll.

As well as completing the Inclusion Service Referral form, Schools must also complete the record absence data form, found here. Please select the option Mid-year move and on/oA roll.

Children attending Specialist Schools

If a child attends a special school, and this was arranged by the local authority, the permission of the local authority **must** be obtained before the child's name can be removed from the admission register. If the local authority refuses to give consent, the parent can ask the Secretary of State to settle the issue. The Inclusion Service must liaise with the SENA Review Team to look at the child's case in reaching their decision. This should not be a lengthy or complex process and LA consent to remove the child from roll must not be withheld unreasonably. If the child is to be withdrawn to be educated at home then the local authority, in deciding whether to give consent, should consider whether the home education to be provided would meet the special educational needs of the child, and if it would, should give consent. However, that consideration should consider the additional difficulties of providing education at home to a child whose special educational needs are significant enough to warrant a place at a special school.

Special schools must notify the Local Authority of any parent wishing to educate at home and wait for agreement from the Local Authority before removing the pupil from roll.

Children with an EHCP

There is no equivalent requirement for permission to be sought from the Local Authority where the child has an EHCP and attends a mainstream school. The parent should however be encouraged by the school to engage with SENA before doing so. The school should also inform SENA if a parent is proposing to withdraw the child to Electively Home educate with a view to an emergency annual review being considered/held.

Children with a Social Worker/Child Protection Information

Child Protection information on any children who are removed from roll must be stored securely by the child's last school. Where the child is placed on the roll of a new school, the information must be copied and sent securely under separate cover by the child's last school to any new school/college whilst the child is still under statutory school age (i.e. the information does not need to be sent to a university for example).

Where a child being removed from roll is known to Children's Social Care or other agencies who are supporting the family, The Inclusion Service shall inform the relevant professionals that the child has been removed from the roll of a school and is being electively home educated. Schools should inform Inclusion Services by e-mailing inclusionpupilsupport@leics.gov.uk and password protect the document(s) or alternatively, by using secure email (e.g. Egress).

Other agencies should inform the Inclusion Service of any children they are aware of, who are of compulsory school age who are not attending school (children missing education). They can be contacted by secure email inclusionpupilsupport@leics.gov.uk .