



ST. BART'S
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION GUIDANCE

March 2026

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Flourishing Together Releasing Potential Inspiring Futures

St. Bart's Mission

We ensure that every academy is a flourishing community, dedicated to releasing potential and inspiring ambitious futures through exceptional education.

St. Bart's Vision and Values

Releasing potential together through **PEACE**:



PASSION

We pursue excellence with energy and purpose, releasing the potential within every child and adult.



ENCOURAGEMENT

We nurture confidence and resilience, supporting each individual so that they can thrive.



AMBITION

We set high expectations, striving for fairness and opportunity so that potential is not limited by circumstance.



COLLABORATION

We work together in partnership, recognising that flourishing comes when we share strengths and support one another.



ENJOYMENT

We celebrate learning and community life, creating joy-filled environments where potential can flourish.



Our Trust Christian ethos is captured by the **PEACE** values and all schools work in close partnership (*whether C of E or community*) to ensure that all children, adults and the communities they serve flourish just as Jesus encouraged us to do in John 10:10 - ***"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."***

St. Bart's vision includes a strong commitment to preparing our children for a world impacted by climate change, through learning and practical experience. We encourage pupils and staff to consider the impact of their actions locally and globally, while embedding climate change education across our curriculum, and sustainability into our ethos and Trust-wide practice.

Children Missing from Education Guidance

Statement of intent

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children missing from education (CME) risk underachieving, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life, and it can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including abuse and neglect.

Every Local Authority (LA) has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and help them back into education. This guidance highlights what our Academies will do to help the LA with its duty.

For the purpose of this guidance, a “child missing from education” is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by the LA, and not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition also encompasses children who are receiving an education, but not one that is suitable, including children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, SEND.

This guidance does not address pupils who are considered to be absent from education, which is where a registered pupil is not attending regularly, including where they are persistently or severely absent from an Academy. Procedures for addressing instances where pupils are not attending regularly are instead set out in the Academy’s **Attendance and Absence Policy**.

1. Legal framework

This guidance has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended in 2018)
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2018)
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2014)
- DfE (updated 2024) ‘Working Together to Improve School attendance’
- DfE (2025) ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025’
- DfE (updated 2026) Working Together to Safeguard Children
- DfE (2025) Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools
- DfE (updated March 2022) ‘School Admissions Code’

2. Reasons for children missing education

There are a number of reasons as to why children miss education, including the following:

- Failing to be registered at a school at the age of five
- Failing to make a successful transition
- Exclusion
- Mid-year transfer of school
- Families moving into a new area
- Children who are permanently excluded or 'managed out' of school.
- Bullying: Intense social anxiety or fear resulting from bullying.
- Lack of Support: Inadequate support for learning difficulties or behavioural issues.

Aside from these reasons, if a child is missing from education, particularly repeatedly, this can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, such as the following:

- Abuse and neglect, including child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE), potentially involving county lines
- Missing children and runaways - Children, particularly those in care, may go missing. Should the academy suspect a child has gone missing or run away, an appropriate staff member will consult the DfE for advice on missing children.
- Family mobility, frequent moves, homelessness, or being from Gypsy, Roma, or Traveller (GRT) communities can lead to education gaps.
- New migrant families, language barriers, lack of awareness of school registration procedures, or settling in a new area.
- Lack of school places, issues during school transition periods (e.g., primary to secondary) or failing to find a suitable place
- So-called 'honour-based' abuse, including risk of FGM or risk of forced marriage
- Risk of substance abuse
- Risk of travelling to conflict zones

2.1. Health and Wellbeing

- **Mental health issues** - anxiety, depression, and severe anxiety around attending school ("school refusal").
- **SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities):** A high number of children with unidentified or unsupported special educational needs are persistently absent.
- **Physical Illness:** Long-term or recurring illnesses that prevent regular attendance.

Staff will be aware that early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding relating to CME and to help prevent the risks of a pupil going missing in the future. All staff will be made aware of unauthorised absence procedures and this guidance to ensure they know how to respond to possible cases of CME.

3. Children at particular risk of missing education

As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, the Academy and LA will make judgements on a case-by-case basis. The following list indicates groups of pupils who are most at risk of missing education:

- Pupils at risk of harm or neglect – where this is suspected, local child protection procedures will be followed; however, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made immediately to Children’s Social Care Services (CSCS), and the police if appropriate. The LA officers responsible for CME will check whether a referral has been made, and will contact CSCS if this is not the case. Should there be a reason to suspect a crime has been committed or the child’s safety is at risk, the LA will contact the police.
- Pupils from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families – when a pupil from a GRT family leaves the Academy without naming their next destination school, the Academy will contact the LA. If necessary, the Academy will consult the LA Traveller Education Support Services or named CME officer for advice on the best strategies to ensure minimal disruption to the pupil’s education.
- Children of service personnel – the Academy will contact the Ministry of Defence Children’s Education Advisory Service for advice to ensure continuity of education for these pupils.
- Missing children and runaways – should the Academy suspect a child has gone missing or run away, an appropriate staff member will consult the DfE for advice on missing children.
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System – in this case, LA youth offending teams are responsible for supervising children (aged 8 to 18). Where a young person is registered at the Academy prior to custody, the Academy will keep the place open for their return.
- Children who cease to attend the Academy – where the reason for a pupil who has stopped attending the Academy is not known, the LA will investigate the situation.
- Children of migrant families – the Academy will remain vigilant to the increased risk of a child missing education if they are part of a new migrant family who may not yet have settled into a fixed address, or may have arrived into an LA area without the authority becoming aware.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The **appropriate Academy staff** are responsible for:

- Entering pupils on the admissions register.
- In the event that a pupil fails to attend the Academy on the agreed or notified date, undertaking reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence, and considering notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity.
- Keeping an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents to inform them of any changes. The Academy will aim to hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.
- Monitoring pupils’ attendance through a daily register.

- Agreeing with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of pupils who are regularly absent from the Academy, or who have missed 10 days of education or more without permission.
- Removing pupils from the admission register where a pupil has not returned to the Academy for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from the Academy without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days and the Academy and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the Academy does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.
- Notifying the LA if any pupil is to be deleted from the admission register in the circumstance outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016).
- Schools must, as of December 2025 guidance, notify local authorities immediately with evidence when deleting a child from the register if the school is unsure of their new destination.
- Arranging full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed-period exclusion.
- Providing information to the LA regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the LA.

All staff are responsible for:

- Being alert to the potential need to implement early help for a pupil who is frequently missing or goes missing from care or home.
- Being aware of the Academy's procedures for managing unauthorised absence and children missing from education.
- Where staff have concerns about pupils relating to CME, using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated to the DSL or deputy DSL.

The **LA** is responsible for:

- Establishing the identities of children in the area who are not registered pupils at a school or academy are not receiving education provision otherwise, in line with the LA's duty under the Education Act 1996.
- Providing full-time education for permanently excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a suspension.
- Serving notices on parents to assure the LA that their child is receiving a suitable education, when concerns regarding this are brought to the LA's attention.
- Issuing School Attendance Orders to parents who fail to assure the LA that their child is receiving a suitable education, and the LA believes that the child should attend school.
- Prosecuting parents that do not comply with a School Attendance Order.
- Prosecuting or fining parents of school-registered children who fail to ensure their children attend school regularly.

- Ensuring that children identified as not receiving suitable education are returned to full-time education either at a school / academy or elsewhere.
- Ensuring that the academy demonstrates prompt action and effective early intervention procedures to ensure children are safe and receiving suitable education.
- Applying to court for an Education Supervision Order for a CME.
- Ensuring that children who return to full-time education are appropriately supported, taking into account the reasons why they missed education in the first place.
- Arranging suitable provision for pupils with SEN statements or EHC plans where their parent chooses for them to be home educated, and reviewing this annually.
- Liaising and sharing information with other agencies to support children who miss education.
- Sharing the fact that a pupil has a social worker with the academy.
- Referring to the LA Children's Social Care Services 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 are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their children, if of compulsory school age, are receiving suitable full-time education.
- Notifying the Academy in writing where they will be home schooling their child, in order for the child to be removed from the admissions register.
- Where requested, meeting with the Academy, LA, and other key professionals to consider whether home education would be in the best interests of their child, particularly where they have SEND, are vulnerable, or have a social worker - ideally, this would be done before a final decision has been made.
- Notifying the Academy regarding any absences or changes to the pupil's education arrangements.

5. Induction and training

The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education will be explained to staff during their induction.

All staff will receive annual safeguarding and child protection training, including an update on the various safeguarding concern possibilities that CME could represent, any changes to the early help process and staff members' role in this process.

6. Working with others

Families moving from one LA to another can sometimes lead to a child being lost in the system and consequently missing education. When a child moves, LAs will work with other LAs, regionally or nationally, to ensure this does not happen.

The LA will raise awareness of its procedures with local schools and academies, partners and agencies working with children and families. The Academy will ensure that staff are familiar with these procedures and when they need to be followed.

The Academy uses the school-to-school system (S2S), to transfer pupil information when a child moves to another education setting.

If a pupil with a social worker is absent from the Academy for an unexplained reason or they are missing from education, the Academy will inform the pupil's social worker.

7. Safeguarding

All staff should be aware that children being absent from the Academy, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities.

This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. It is important that staff are aware of their academy's unauthorised absence procedures and children missing education procedures.

Where there are concerns that a pupil missing from education is linked to a safeguarding issue, action will be taken in line with the **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy**.

In line with the Children Act 2004, the Academy will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the DSL conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.

For the purpose of this guidance, "reasonable enquiries" are defined as limited, investigative powers that the Academy may action to determine a child's whereabouts and whether they may be in danger.

The DSL will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to CSCS or the police.

Where the whereabouts and safety of a child is unknown, the Academy, in conjunction with the LA, may carry out the following actions:

- Make contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Contact other listed contacts on a pupil's file
- Check local databases
- Check data transfer systems
- Follow local information sharing arrangements, and make enquiries via other local databases and agencies where possible
- Check with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force
- Check with agencies known to be involved with the family
- Check with the LA and school from which the pupil moved originally

- Check with the LA where the pupil lives, if this is different to where the school is located
- Check with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service in the case of children of service personnel
- Conduct home visits via an appropriate team.

Please note: This list is not exhaustive – the Academy and LA will use their judgement towards what reasonable enquiries are appropriate, once all the facts of the case have been taken into account.

8. Supporting Pupils with SEND Needs

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who are missing from education are a major safeguarding concern, often due to lack of support, mental health issues, or difficulties in navigating the system, according to the

Children's Commissioner for England. If a child is immediately missing, report it to local police (no 24-hour waiting period). For ongoing educational neglect or children missing from school, contact your local authority's Children Missing Education (CME)

Many SEND children are "missing" because their needs are not met, leading to unofficial exclusions, or parents removing them from school due to lack of support.

Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who are missing from education are a major safeguarding concern, often due to lack of support, mental health issues, or difficulties in navigating the system, according to the Children's Commissioner for England. If a child is immediately missing, report it to local police (no 24-hour waiting period). For ongoing educational neglect or children missing from school, contact your local authority's Children Missing Education (CME) team.

9. Admissions register

The Academy will ensure that the admissions register is kept up-to-date at all times, and will encourage parents, via communications such as emails and newsletters, to notify the Academy of any changes as they occur.

Pupils will be recorded on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the Academy, or the day that the Academy has been notified, as the date that the pupil will attend the Academy. Once a pupil has been recorded on the admissions register, the Academy will notify the LA within five days, and will supply the LA with all of the details contained on the admissions register for the new pupil.

Where a parent notifies the Academy that their child will live at another address, the Academy will record the following information on the admissions register:

- The full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live
- The new address
- The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address

Where a parent notifies the Academy that the pupil is registered at another school, or will be attending a different school in future, the Academy will record the following information on the admissions register:

- The name of the new school
- The date when the pupil first attended, or is due to attend, that school

Parents are able to elect to educate their children at home, and will subsequently withdraw them from school. This can happen at any time, unless the pupil is subject to a School Attendance Order. If a parent notifies the Academy that their child will be educated at home, the pupil will be deleted from the Academy's admission register and the Academy will inform the LA.

10. Removing a pupil from the admissions register

The Academy will inform the LA of any pupil who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of the Academy by their parent and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home-schooled.
- Have ceased to attend the Academy and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the Academy. Have been certified by a medical professional as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither they nor their parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the Academy after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order, and the Academy does not reasonably believe they will be returning at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.
- Have died.
- Have been registered at another school where it is not indicated this should be the case.
- Are registered at more than one school, but have failed to attend the Academy and the proprietor of any other schools concerned have consented to the deletion.
- Have been granted authorised leave but have failed to attend the Academy within 10 school days after the period of authorised absence ended, and:
 - There is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school.
 - The LA and the Academy are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- Have been continuously absent from the Academy for a period of at least 20 school days, and:
 - The absence was not authorised.
 - There is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school.
 - The LA and the Academy are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.

- Will cease to be of compulsory school age before the Academy next resumes (e.g. following the Summer break), and the relevant person has indicated the pupil will not attend the academy, or the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for sixth form.
- The pupil was admitted to receive nursery education and since completion has not transferred to Reception, or a higher class, at the Academy.

The Academy will notify the LA that a pupil is to be removed from the admissions register as soon as any of the above criteria are met, and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is actually removed.

If a pupil's name is to be removed from the admissions register, the Academy will provide the LA with the following information:

- The full name of the pupil
- The full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives
- At least one telephone number of the parent with whom the pupil lives
- The full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable
- The name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date, if applicable
- The grounds for removal from the admissions register under Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), as outlined in this guidance.

Where the name of a pupil with a social worker is to be removed from the admissions register, the Academy will inform the pupil's social worker.

11. Monitoring and review

This guidance is reviewed **every two years** by the Trust.



ST. BART'S

MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST

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