



Kneller Hall Junior School

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

This policy applies to the whole school, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (where applicable), extra-curricular activities and all activities provided by or on behalf of the school.

Document Control:

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Signed:

Sasha Davies
Head
September 2026

Children Missing from Education Policy

Kneller Hall Junior School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils achieve their very best.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in the DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) as protecting children from maltreatment; preventing impairment of children's health or development; ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Every pupil should feel safe and protected from any form of abuse which, in this policy, means any kind of neglect, non-accidental physical injury, sexual exploitation or emotional ill-treatment. All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of the school's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

Related documents:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- PSHEE Policy
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- Relationship and Sex Education and Health Education Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Definition:

A child missing from education (CME) is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by a local authority (LA), and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere.

This definition also includes children who are receiving an education, but one that is not suitable; this could include children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of the school's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures. In line with KCSIE 2026, staff should also be alert that a child going missing from education can be linked to modern slavery, and to serious violence including the carrying or use of weapons, as well as the wider range of exploitation and abuse risks set out above.

Why Children Miss Education

The most common reasons for children missing school include 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 at Particular Risks of Missing Education

As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, a judgement should be made on a case-by-case basis. The following list indicates 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.
- Children of gypsy, Romany and traveler (GRT) families – when a GRT pupil leaves the school without naming their next destination school, the school will contact the LA.
- Children of service personnel – the school will contact the Ministry of Defence Children's Education
- Advisory Service for advice to ensure continuity of education for these children.
- Missing children/runaways – should the school suspect a child has gone missing/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 school prior to custody, the school will keep the place open for their return.
- Children who cease to attend school – where the reason for a child who has stopped attending a school is not known, the LA will investigate the situation.
- Children of migrant families – there is an 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.
- In line with KCSIE 2026, the school also recognises that young carers, pupils who are pregnant or are young parents themselves, pupils experiencing faith-based as well as honour-based abuse, and pupils otherwise experiencing significantly disrupted education, may be at increased risk of missing education and will be considered accordingly.

Roles and Responsibilities

The School

- The school enters 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 undertakes reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence and will consider notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity. (For the purpose of this policy, "reasonable enquiries" are defined as limited investigative powers that the school may action to determine a child's whereabouts and whether they may be in danger).
- The school keeps an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents to inform them of any changes.
- The school monitors pupils' attendance through its daily AM & PM register.

- The school agrees with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of pupils who are regularly absent from school, or who have missed ten school days or more without permission. Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove 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.
- The school will notify the LA if any pupil is to be deleted from the admission register in the circumstance outlined in Regulation 8 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- 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.
- The school will provide information to the LA regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the LA.

Specific Procedures

- Where a pupil's absence has not been requested in advance by parents, Reception staff will chase the reason for the absence on the relevant morning. The absence report is forwarded to the Head, who can check for any patterns of absence and follow up with the pupils and parents if necessary. This is reviewed by the leadership team on a termly basis.
- Where a child misses school for 5 consecutive days without reason or satisfactory explanation, the DSL will make a referral to social services, being alert to the possible reasons for this absence, and will refer all such concerns to the relevant local agencies. This may help prevent them going missing in future.
- The DSL will ensure that all concerns will be reported to the relevant local agencies; in all cases of doubt the relevant local agencies will be contacted for guidance. Such reports will also be made when a child is about to be deleted from the admission register for whatever reason.
- The school holds more than one emergency contact number for every pupil, giving additional contact options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.
- The school will co-operate with external agencies and where appropriate appoint a designated member of staff to liaise with external agencies and the parents, carers or guardians of the child concerned as well as taking responsibility for ensuring that any specific education plan agreed for that child is implemented.
- Referrals are normally managed by the DSL who will contact the relevant local agencies when a child is identified as being in need of additional support. However, anyone may make a referral, informing the DSL as soon as possible. Wherever possible, and dependent upon the guidance received from local children's services, the parents, carers or guardians of the child concerned will be involved in the referral and the resolution of any concerns.
- In line with DfE guidance (July 2026), where a pupil who goes missing from education has an allocated social worker and/or youth offending team worker, the school will inform them promptly so that support can be coordinated across all professionals involved.
- Where there is a concern about a child (as opposed to a child being in immediate danger), there should be a conversation with the DSL to agree a course of action with due regard to the referral thresholds of the local authority Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- The local authority services are advised to make a decision on the course of action to be taken and to communicate this to the referrer, within one working day of the referral being made. If the information is not forthcoming, then the matter should be followed up immediately by the relevant DSL.
- If, after referral, the situation does not appear to be improving, the DSL or the person who made the referral should press for reconsideration, to ensure that their concerns are addressed effectively, so that the child's situation improves.

- Where early help or other support is appropriate, the case should be kept under constant review and the relevant DSL should support the staff in liaising with other agencies, and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. If the child's situation does not appear to be improving, then consideration should be given to referring the case to children's social care.
- All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, will be recorded in writing and on CPOMS. The DSL will advise on the recording requirements. The record will be kept by the DSL.
- Where a pupil joins or leaves the school at non-standard transition times, the school will report this to the local authority.

The Local Authority

- Under the Education Act 1996 (section 436A), the LA has a duty to establish the identities of children of compulsory school age in the area who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable 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 will 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

- Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children, who are of compulsory school age, are receiving suitable full-time education.
- Parents 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 will notify the school regarding any absences or changes to the pupils' education arrangements.

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, partners and agencies working with children and families.

Safeguarding

- In line with the Children Act 2004, the school will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.
- The DSL will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to the children's social care or police.

Admissions Register

- The school will ensure that the admissions register is kept up-to-date at all times, and will encourage parents to notify the school of any changes as they occur, such as via email or newsletters.
- Pupils will be recorded 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, as the date that the pupil will attend the school.
- Where a parent notifies the school that a pupil will live at another address, the school will record the following information on the admissions register:
 - The full name of the parent/carers 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 school that the pupil is registered at another school, or will be attending a different school in future, the school 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 school, the pupil will be deleted from our register and we will inform the LA.

Removing a Pupil from the Admissions Register

Kneller Hall Junior School will inform the LA of any pupil who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents/carers and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home-schooled.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent/carer has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school 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 school 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 school and the proprietor of any other schools concerned have consented to the deletion.
- Have been granted authorised leave but have failed to attend school within 10 school days after the period of authorised absence ended, and:
- There is reason to believe the pupil is able to attend school.
- The LA and school are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.

Have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days, and:

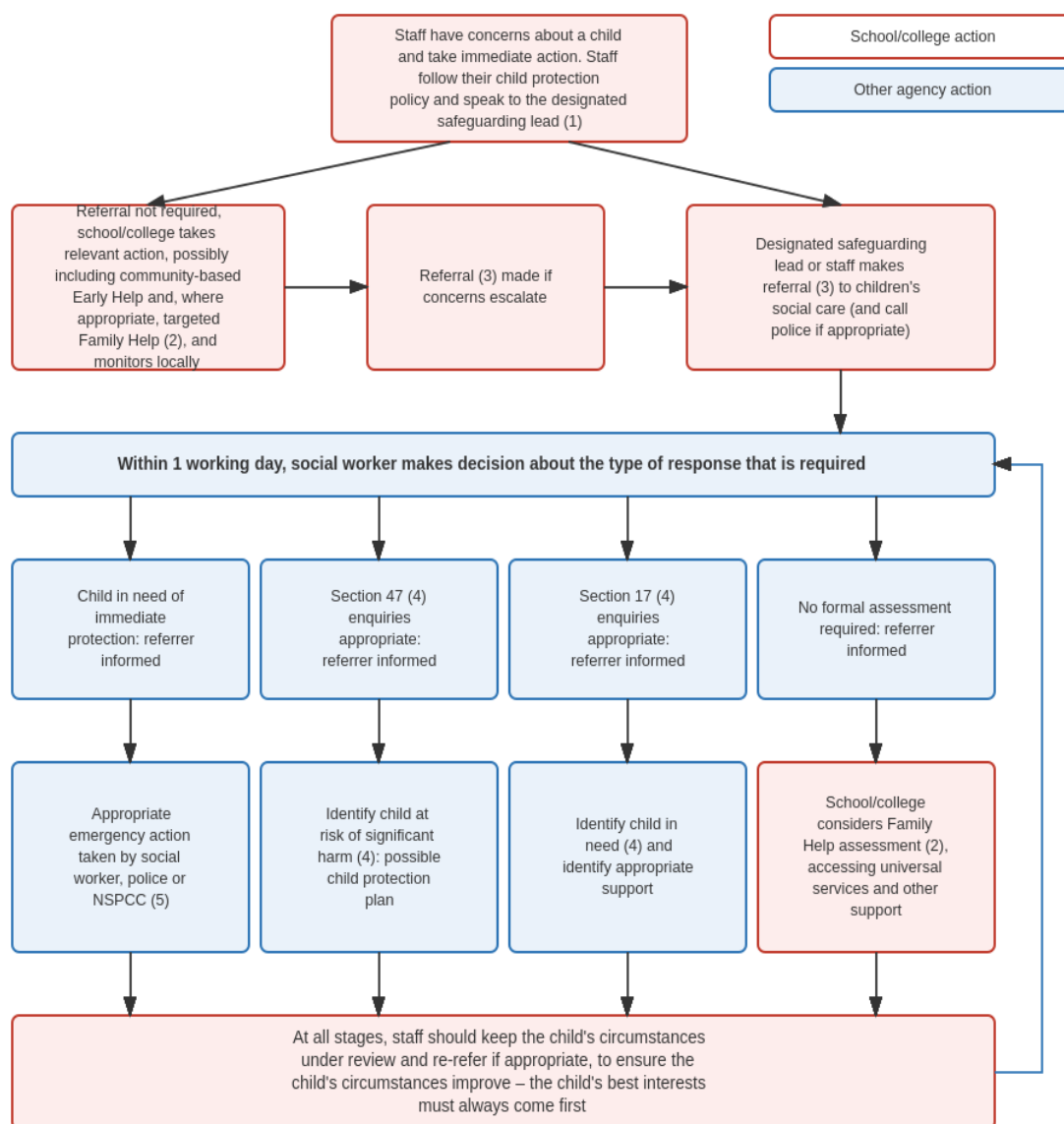
- The absence was not authorised.
- There is reason to believe the pupil is able to attend school.
- The LA and school are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- Will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets, and the relevant person has indicated the pupil will not attend the school, or the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for sixth form.
- The school 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 school will provide the LA with the following information:

- The full name of the pupil
- The full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the pupil lives
- At least one telephone number of the parent/carer with whom the pupil lives
- The full name and address of the parent/carer with whom the pupil is going to live 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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, as outlined in section 8 of this policy.

Appendix

Actions where there are concerns about a child



(1) In cases which also involve an allegation of abuse against a staff member, see Part Four of this guidance.

(2) Family Help means targeted support for a family where a need has been identified, sitting alongside universal services and community-based Early Help. Where a child would benefit from coordinated support, an Early Help/Family Help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) provides detailed guidance.

(3) Referrals should follow the local authority's referral process, including any published local protocol on who leads assessments. Chapter one of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

(4) Under the Children Act 1989, local authorities are required to provide services for children in need for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. This can include section 17 assessments of children in need, section 20 accommodation, section 31 care and supervision orders, and section 47 assessments of children at risk of significant harm. Full details are in Chapter One of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

(5) This could include applying for an Emergency Protection Order (EPO).