



# **BRIDGEWATER PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **MISSING CHILD POLICY**

### **INCLUDING CHILD MISSING FROM EDUCATION (CME)**

Updated: October 2020

Reviewed: October 2020 (L&T Committee)

Next Review: October 2021

## PART ONE: CHILD MISSING IN EDUCATION (CME)

### Relevant legislation

School governing bodies, academy trusts, and other school proprietors must have regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Schools should put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions.

- Section 436A of the Education Act 1996
- Education Act 1996 (section 7, 8, 14 and 19)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 4 and 38)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016

### Guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020
- Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities, 2016
- School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, August 2020
- Missing Children and Adults – A Cross Government Strategy, 2011

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and the Attendance Policy.

## INTRODUCTION

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing from education 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. They may also be registered at a school and then fail to attend. This policy focuses on what our school will do should a child stop attending once on roll.

The welfare of our pupils is our paramount responsibility. Every adult who works at the school has been trained to appreciate that he or she has a key responsibility for helping to keep all of the children safe at all times. This includes the importance of effective information sharing to ensure our children are safe and receive a suitable education. When staff have concerns that a child is missing from school, this policy should be followed.

## **RATIONALE**

A child missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Effective intervention is key in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

### **Definition and risks**

A child missing from education is a child aged 5 to 16 not on a school roll and not being educated elsewhere. Children missing from education is both an issue for missing learning, but it can also be a vital sign of safeguarding issues.

Going missing from education:

- Is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect
- Leaves children more vulnerable to other safeguarding issues (like becoming a victim of harm, sexual or criminal exploitation, or radicalisation)
- Can indicate mental health problems
- Can indicate risk of substance abuse, travel to conflict zones, female genital mutilation or forced marriage

With more children out of school due to coronavirus, self-isolation and quarantining, it could be easier for children to be unidentified as missing, so awareness and early intervention is key.

### **Procedures at school**

Where reasonably practicable, for every pupil, schools should hold an emergency contact number for more than one person. At Bridgewater, we check and update emergency numbers annually. These emergency contact numbers are updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. This goes beyond the legal requirement, but is good practice. Doing so provides the school with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, we will use our professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

### **Non-Attendance Procedures**

In line with the protocols set by Northamptonshire County Council, the following will happen when a child does not attend school:

## Day 1 - Phone call

A staff member trained to do so, telephones the child's home to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent or carer that the child is safe at home. The following will then take place, as advised by Northamptonshire County Council. In conjunction with the phone call, at Bridgewater a parent mail message is also sent.

Response from parent	Next step from school
There is no answer at the home or on mobile numbers	Call back. Risk assess after 2 hours
The parent/carer answered the call, the child is safe with them	Ask for reason for absence and record on your school's attendance management system
The person answering is not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or safe	The school's designated lead for child protection should be consulted on a risk assessment and the degree of vulnerability of the child
The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is concerned	School to advise the parent to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contact the local police station to inform them that the child is missing</li><li>• Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searching for the child</li><li>• Contact the family GP and Accident and Emergency Centres near where the child lives and goes to school, in case he/she has sustained an injury and been taken in for medical treatment</li><li>• Report back to school if the child is found or remains missing</li></ul>

## Day 2 - Follow up phone call

A subsequent telephone call must be made either from the school landline or a school mobile phone.

## Day 3 – Write/email parents

Parents emailed asking for contact to be made with the school immediately. The parents/carers have 3 working days to make contact and if we are aware that English may not be the parent's first language, we make every attempt to copy the letter into a language that may be more accessible.

## Day 5/6 - Home visit

Arrange a visit to the home address ensuring that risk assessments are in place - no one member of staff will attend alone.

Once this is completed (or within 10 days, whichever is earlier) if the child has not been seen and the parents or carers have not made contact, the school reports the child as missing from education to the Education, Inclusion and Partnership Team (EIPT) via the following link:

CME and Missing Child 2020-21

<https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/schools-and-education/information-for-school-staff/pupil-support-and-inclusion/attendance-and-behaviour/Pages/children.aspx>

Any safeguarding concerns for the child at this point, (**or at any point previously** if there are fears for the safety of the child), will be noted and shared at the time of referral and additional advice taken from the Police, MASH or child's social worker (if they have one.)

## **Following Up**

The case will be referred to a CME Tracking Officer, who will complete further investigations and feedback to school. The CME Tracking Officer will let the school know (usually within 10 working days) if the child can be removed from your school roll.

## **Removing a pupil from the school roll**

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, under any of the grounds stated in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This must be done as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests such information to be provided.

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school will provide the local authority 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 any 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 pupil's other or future school and the pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable and the ground prescribed in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

## **Home Educated Children**

On receipt of written notification to home educate, schools must inform the pupil's local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. Schools should not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record.

Schools and local authorities should not seek to prevent parents from educating their children outside the school system. There is no requirement for parents to obtain the school or local authority's agreement to educate their child at home. However, parents/carers have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education but this does not have to be at a school.

## **PART TWO: MISSING CHILD**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Bridgewater Primary School, Out of School Club and Nursery have the highest regard for the safety of the children within their care. Staff will always be aware of the potential for children to go missing during the school day and extra-curricular sessions. 'Staff' includes employees, visiting activity providers and volunteers.

#### **1 MISSING CHILD PROCEDURE IN SCHOOL HOURS:**

In the event that a child goes missing the following procedures will be followed and a record of timings will be kept:

- Commence a thorough search of the immediate area where the child was last seen. Staff will be careful not to create an atmosphere of panic and to ensure that the other children remain safe and adequately supervised.
- Inform the school office and a member of SLT.
- Search the site and grounds. All staff will be extra vigilant to any potentially suspicious behaviour or persons in or around the school premises, including any unknown persons, whose identity will be checked.
- The OSC Manager may request immediate additional support for this search from members of the school staff to ensure that it is speedily undertaken and comprehensive.
- The car park will be immediately searched to reduce the risk of any potential accident from moving vehicles.
- Inform the parent/carer.
- If there has been no response from the parent/carer inform the Head Teacher, SENDCo / Deputy Head or other member of the SLT.
- If after a swift and thorough search the child is still missing and there has been no result from the parent, the police will be contacted.
- Whilst waiting for the police and the parent/carer to arrive, searches for the child will continue. During this period, other members of staff will maintain as normal a routine as possible for the rest of the children.
- The Manager will immediately contact the Head teacher or her Deputy and will liaise with the police and the child's parent or carer.
- Once the incident is resolved the Head teacher and OSC Manager will review relevant policies and procedures and implement any necessary changes.

- All incidents of children going missing from the School Nursery or Out of School Club will be recorded in the relevant Incident Record Book and **serious** incidents will be reported to Ofsted as soon as is practicable.
- A serious incident includes any in which an EYFS pupil leaves the school premises unaccompanied by an adult member of staff, an appropriate family member or responsible adult nominated by the parent/caterer or when a child has entered sealed off areas such as the car park or swale where there could be levels of increased risk to their safety.

## 2 CHILD FAILS TO ARRIVE AT SCHOOL OR NURSERY

Parents / carers are responsible for ensuring their child/children arrive at school in time for registration. Parents must inform the school if their child will not be attending school. Leave of absence request forms are available for planned absences a full day or more should be completed and returned to the school office at least two weeks prior to the absence where possible. Parents should complete an absence form for absences of less than 1 day, for medical appointments etc. Parents are requested to contact the school by phone or email by 9.00am to advise if their child is absent due to illness, providing details.

If a child is not present when class registers are taken parents will be normally be contacted by text.

If parents allow their children to walk to school, they need to have explained to them what to do if they are concerned on their journey. Children must know that they walk straight to school and enter the school grounds immediately, not, for example, play at the entrance before they come into the school.

If a child does not arrive at school and the parents inform the school that they believe that they should have arrived, the procedures and search in Section 2 will be instigated.

## 3 CHILD FAILS TO ARRIVE AT THE OUT OF SCHOOL CLUB (OSC)

### Morning sessions:

Parents / carers are responsible for ensuring all children are brought and signed in to the OSC. Children in years 4, 5 and 6 may present themselves at the morning Club provided parents have given written permission for their child to walk to school and have confirmed that they take full responsibility for their child arriving at the Club (see Appendix 1). **If a child is not present when class registers are taken parents will be contacted by text unless a reason has been provided.** Adults or young people 16 or over to sign in children.

The whereabouts of all children on the register will be accounted for.

### Afternoon sessions:

Children booked into the OSC will be collected directly from their classes at the end of the school day by a member of OSC staff and accounted for on the signing sheet.. The OSC staff will liaise directly with class teachers to clarify whether missing children have attended school that day or are attending a club prior to the OSC.

The whereabouts of all children on the register will be accounted for.

Children initially attending other clubs and organised activities after school will be taken to the OSC at the end of the activity by an adult and signed in. Staff will liaise directly with adults running the clubs to clarify the whereabouts of any missing children.

**Procedures:**

In the event that a child has not appeared in the club to be registered the OSC manager will:

- Check the message book, OSC emails and telephone messages for possible cancellation
- Check with the school office to confirm whether the child has been in school that day or whether they have been collected early
- Check with the class teacher
- Parents/carers will be contacted and the procedures in Section 2 instigated.

**4 CHILD GOES MISSING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

The school office informs class teachers of all planned absences and the office records details of all children that are collected during the school day. Children are not permitted to leave the school site unaccompanied during the school day. Registers are taken at the start of the afternoon session and the school office is advised of any absences. Where a child's absence cannot be accounted for the office will follow the procedures in section 2.

**5 CHILD GOES MISSING DURING AN OUT OF SCHOOL CLUB OR NURSERY SESSION**

Staff undertake periodic head counts throughout the sessions. If, for any reason, a member of staff cannot account for a child's whereabouts during a session they must inform the OSC Manager / Nursery Leader and other staff that the child is missing and the OSC Manager / Nursery Leader will follow the procedures as defined in section 2.

**6 UNCOLLECTED CHILD AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY**

At the end of the every school day, class teachers are responsible for ensuring that children are collected by a safe named parent, carer or designated adult (16 years or over). Children in the Reception, year 1, 2 and 3 classes are collected from the class door and parents are asked to advise the school office, in advance, if there any changes to who will be collecting their child. Staff do not allow a child to leave with an unnamed adult unless they have had authority from the parent, this may be by telephone

Children in year 4 are allowed to walk to the school gate provided parents have given written permission and confirmed that their child will be collected from the school gate by a responsible adult.

Children in years 5 and 6 may walk home unaccompanied, provided that parents have given written permission confirming that they take full responsibility for their child once they leave

the school. Teachers check registers for clubs to ensure that children who have not been collected are accounted for.

**Procedure to be followed if a child has not been collected:**

- Parents will be contacted. If parents are not contactable messages will whenever possible be left on an answer machine.
- While waiting to be collected, the child will be supervised by a member of staff who will offer them as much support and reassurance as is necessary.
- If no contact is made with the parent, carer or designated adult, the child will be taken to the Out of School Club (if appropriate).
- The school will continue to attempt to contact the parent and if at the close of the school site, no contact has been received the police will be contacted for advice.
- In the event of the Police being called, the school will attempt to leave a further telephone message with the parent/carers or designated adult's answer phone, where available. If the child is taken from the school to a place of safety, a note in an envelope, for the parent/carers or designated adult will be left on the school gate. The note will reassure them of their child's safety and ask them to call the club's mobile phone number or Police phone number.
- Under no circumstances will a child be taken to the home of a member of staff, or away from the school premises unless absolutely necessary. Two members of staff will remain with the child.
- The child will remain in the care of the school until they are collected by the parent, carer or designated adult, or until alternative arrangements are initiated by the Police.
- In Nursery, in addition to asking parents to let the nursery staff know if there is a change in collection, the staff ask for a password for collections from the parents. Members of staff will never release a child to an unknown adult unless they have the password.

Incidents of consistent late collection will be reported to the school's Designated Safeguarding Leads as a Safeguarding concern and discussed with parents/carers at the earliest opportunity. Further support will be offered and if any safeguarding concerns are identified appropriate action will be taken.

**7 UNCOLLECTED CHILD FROM THE OUT OF SCHOOL CLUB**

At the end of the every After School session, the Club will ensure that all children are collected by a safe named parent, carer or designated adult (16 years or over). The Club operates a password system for the collection of child, where parents have asked for their child to be collected by another responsible adult not already named on the booking form.

Children in year 6 may walk home unaccompanied provided that parents have given written permission confirming that they take full responsibility for their child once they leave the club (see Appendix 2). Parents **must** contact the Club or school on the day to confirm the time that

they wish their child to leave and the child's destination, this will be documented in the OSC diary. This policy is extended to year 5 children during the summer term only.

If for some reason a child is not collected at the end of a session, the following procedures will be activated.

- If a parent, carer or designated adult has not collected at the time of the OSC closing (5.45pm) the Manager will call the parent, carer or designated adult, and use any other emergency contact details available in order to try to ascertain the cause for the delay, and how long it is likely to last. Messages will always be left on any answer phone requesting a prompt reply.
- As a PFI school, the main school building is locked promptly at 6pm. If a parent / carer or designated adult is 10 minutes late the caretaking team will be informed and asked to extend opening of the school. If this is not possible then the child and 2 members of staff will vacate the school, moving outside to the school entrance to await collection.
- While waiting to be collected, the child will be supervised by a member of staff who will offer them as much support and reassurance as is necessary.
- If, after repeated attempts, no contact is made with the parent, carer or designated adult, and a further period of 30 minutes has elapsed, the Manager will call the Police non-emergency telephone number (101) for advice as well as notifying the head or another member of SLT.
- In the event of the Police being called, the Manager will attempt to leave a further telephone message with the parent/carers or designated adult's answer phone, where available. If the child is taken from the club to a place of safety, a note in an envelope, for the parent/carers or designated adult will be left on the school gate. The note will reassure them of their child's safety and ask them to call the club's mobile phone number or Police phone number.
- Under no circumstances will a child be taken to the home of a member of staff, or away from the school premises unless absolutely necessary. Two members of staff will remain with the child.
- The child will remain in the care of the Club until they are collected by the parent, carer or designated adult, or until alternative arrangements are initiated by the Police.

Incidents of late collection will be recorded by the Manager on the 'Late Collection Register' and collections after 5.55pm will also be logged in the Incident Book, and discussed with parents/carers

at the earliest opportunity. Parents/carers will be informed of the charges for late collection and persistent late collection may result the loss of their child's place at the Club.

In addition to asking parents to let OSC know if there is a change in collection, the staff ask for a password for collections from the parents. Members of staff will never release a child to an unknown adult unless they have the password.

## **5 Child who presents a risk of trying to abscond from school**

These children will have an individualised risk assessment and support given to ensure that they are well supported and any SEMH or SEND needs are being addressed, in conjunction with parents/carers and any relevant outside agency.

Key people in the office will be aware of these children and be careful to ensure that the entrances and exits to the school are appropriately secure at all times. At times when they may be open, for example; to allow the flow of adults and children at the end of the day or to allow a car in or out of the car park, additional vigilance will be given.

## **6 POLICY REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Learning and Teaching Committee who will make recommendations for changes to the Governing Body.

This policy should be read alongside the Bridgewater Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, The Adult Code of Conduct and the Critical Incident Plan.

Reviewed by the Learning and Teaching Committee on

Ratified by the Full Governing Body on

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governing Body

**Appendix 1: Permission to Arrive at Out of School Club Unaccompanied Form**



**OUT OF SCHOOL CLUB**

**PERMISSION FOR MY CHILD TO ARRIVE AT SCHOOL UNACCOMPANIED**

Parents / carers are responsible for ensuring all children are brought and signed in to the OSC. Children in years 4, 5 and 6 may present themselves at the morning Club provided parents have given written permission for their child to walk to school and have confirmed that they take full responsibility for their child arriving at the Club.

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**Permission slip to arrive unaccompanied at school (Years 4, 5 and 6 only):**

I give permission for my child ..... to walk to the Out of School Club unaccompanied on the following days:

Monday / Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday / Friday (please delete as applicable)

In order to ensure that we have breakfast available for your child please provide the following details:

My child will normally arrive before : \_\_\_\_\_ (please give time)

My child will / will not require breakfast (breakfast will not be available after 8.25am).

I take full responsibility for my child up until the point at which they arrive at the Out of School Club and understand that I will only be contacted in the event that my child is not present during class registration.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_



## OUT OF SCHOOL CLUB

### PERMISSION TO WALK HOME UNACCOMPANIED

Bridgewater Primary Out of School Club will permit Year 6 children (only) to walk home alone after receiving written permission from their parent/carer. Parents **must** contact the Club or the School on the day to confirm the time that they wish their child to leave and to confirm the child's destination.

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#### Permission slip to walk home alone (Year 6 only):

I give permission for my child ..... to walk home alone from  
Bridgewater Primary Out of School Club on the following days:

Monday / Tuesday / Wednesday / Thursday / Friday (please delete as applicable)

My child may walk home after: \_\_\_\_\_ (please give time)

I agree to call the Out of School Club / School on the day when my child is to walk home alone to confirm this arrangement.

I understand that Bridgewater Primary School's and the Out of School Club's responsibility towards the safety of my child stops as soon as they leave the Club.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_