



Clovelly House School  
Stay safe, respect, achieve

# **Children Missing Education Policy**

**January 2023**



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## Children Missing Education Policy

### 1. Purpose

This Policy aims to clarify the school's role in supporting children's attendance. The school believes that good school attendance will facilitate the learning opportunities and well-being of the child. Good school attendance will also help the pupil to learn good timekeeping and attendance practices which are important skills for the world of work. Further to this, the school has a statutory duty to ensure 'regular' school attendance as stated below.

The DfE's statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour explains on page 5: Parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education.

Page 6 of the DfE guidance also notes: If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which [he/she is] registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for [him/her], the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority (LA).

The requirement for parents to ensure their child receives a suitable "efficient full-time education ... either by regular attendance at school or otherwise" is set out in section 7 of the Education Act 1996. Section 444(1) of the same act states: If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.

Absence is permitted in certain circumstances. The DfE's advice document for schools on attendance explains on pages 11-12 that schools **should** authorise absence for:

- Illness, unless they believe the child is not actually ill
- Medical or dental appointments, where it is not possible for the appointment to take place outside of school hours
- Days exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong
- Study leave
- Traveller pupils, where their families are travelling and this has been agreed with the school.

**Authorising absence in 'exceptional circumstances'**. The document adds on page 17: Headteachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for the headteacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school.

### 2. Understanding attendance and registration requirements

#### Admission

The school is contracted by the Local Authority, LA, of each child to provide education for that child. Each LA has a duty to identify any pupil who is of compulsory school age and not receiving education.

The school monitors attendance through the daily register.

This includes:

- \* Addressing poor or irregular attendance
- \* Referring poor attendance to the LA
- \* Investigating any unexplained absences as part of wider safeguarding duties.

In order to comply with LA requirements, the school will:

- \* Keep the admissions register accurate and up-to-date



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\* Remind parents to inform the school of any changes to their information.

\* As soon as a parent tells the school about a change of address, this will be recorded the following in the admission register together with:

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

\* The school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil, as it's more likely the school will be able to get in touch with an adult if the school has concerns about a pupil.

\* The school will amend the admission register as soon as changes to the roll are made

\* If a pupil starts or leaves the school at a non-standard transition point (for example, joining mid-year or leaving before your school's final year) the school will:

- Notify the LA within 5 days
- Provide the LA with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil,

\* The school will enter new pupils onto the admission register as soon as they start

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\* If the school is told that a new pupil will be joining the school, but the pupil doesn't attend on the agreed date, the school will try to establish the child's whereabouts and consider alerting the LA.

### **Pupils Leaving the School**

If a pupil leaves Clovelly House school the school will record this in the admission register as a discharge, including:

- The date they left for another school
- The name of the new school
- The date when the pupil is due to start attending their new school

If a child leaves to go to a new school, Clovelly House School will contact the new school to hand over the files. If the new school is unknown, Clovelly House School will inform the LA.

**If the school removes a child from roll at a non-standard transition point**, the school will tell the LA immediately and provide them the following information:

- The pupil's full name
- The full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives
- At least one phone number for the parent the pupil lives with
- The full name and address of the parent 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 destination school and the pupil's expected start date (if applicable)
- The ground in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the register

### **3. The types of pupils who are most at risk of going missing from education**

This group includes children who:

- Are at risk of harm or neglect
- Come from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller families
- Come from the families of service personnel



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- Go missing or run away from home or care
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Cease to attend a school
- Come from new migrant families

If a pupil has a social worker, the school will inform them and the LA's about them missing education where there are known safeguarding risks. (Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sep 2022).

\* The school will make 'reasonable enquiries' for pupils who aren't attending.

This applies to pupils who:

- Haven't returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, **or**
- Have been absent without authorisation for 20 consecutive days

Making 'reasonable enquiries' includes **1 or more** of the following:

- Contacting parents, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Checking local databases within the LA,
- Following local information sharing arrangements, making enquiries to:
  - other local databases and agencies
  - agencies known to be involved with the family
- Checking with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force
- Checking with the LA and school from which the pupil moved from originally, or any past LAs or schools that have educated the pupil
- Checking with the LA where the pupil lives, if its different from the one where the school is
- In the case of children of service personnel, checking with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service
- Conducting a home visit, following the school's own policies and risk assessment procedures. If appropriate, making enquiries with neighbours and relatives

If the school still isn't able to locate the pupil, (and neither can the LA), the school can remove them from the register (as set out above).

### **4. Children Missing Education Policy, (CME)**

All staff members are required to be familiar with the CME Policy. The statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sep 2022 expects:

- The School will have appropriate safeguarding measures in place when responding to children who go missing from education
- All staff will be aware that CME can be a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities
- All staff will be trained and expected to know the school's unauthorised absence and CME procedures

### **5. Term time absences**

Term-time absences can only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances'

The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances', according to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

If a headteacher grants leave, s/he will determine the number of days the child can be away from school.



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The headteacher will decide what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances'.

The Schools will consider each application, for authorised leave of absence, individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

The Headteacher may decide what constitutes an exceptional circumstance, and, according to guidance from the DfE, the school will not be penalised for granting leave during term time.

Before authorising an absence, the Headteacher will consider:

- The impact on the pupil's progress
- The pupil's annual attendance rate
- Whether the period of absence falls during any national tests or exams

The following may be considered acceptable reasons for the school granting absence during term time:

- The funeral of a parent, grandparent or sibling
- Another traumatic event
- Sudden loss of housing (up to a maximum of three days)
- Weddings of parents and siblings
- A religious observance
- Transport not provided by the LA when it should have been
- Children of service personnel who are about to go on deployment
- There is an exceptional circumstance that requires the family to be away for an emergency and childcare arrangements cannot be made

The following reasons are not considered to be exceptional. These include:

- Holidays taken in term time because of lower costs or parental work commitments
- Pilgrimages by parents, such as the Hajj
- Birthdays
- Incidents of bullying
- Head lice
- The death of a pet

The Headteacher will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school.

DfE regulations do not allow for the school to give retrospective approval for leave taken.

The school will always be reasonable and sensitive when dealing with requests for absence during term times, particularly if the pupil in question has recently suffered a traumatic event such as a family bereavement.

The school will carefully consider any possible safeguarding risks to the pupil. This is particularly true if the pupil may be travelling abroad to a potentially dangerous location.

### **Guidance from a local authority**

Before granting leave of absence from school the Headteacher will require the following information:

- Any evidence the parents can supply that supports the need for the pupil to be absent from school
- Contact details for the parents or carers during the period of absence, including an email address and telephone number
- Where the child will be staying during the period of absence
- What the expected return date is, explaining that the school needs to know this and is happy to negotiate a time that is convenient for all parties



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- Whether there is any way for the pupil to keep in contact with teachers and peers during his/her absence
- Whether the school can provide work for the child to do while away.

If the child does not return to school on the expected day, the school will notify the LA.

According to the DfE parents can be fined for taking their children on holiday during term time

Government advice for parents on school attendance, and when their children can miss school, includes the warning:

You can be fined for taking your child on holiday during term time without the school's permission. It also explains that LAs and schools can issue penalty notices.

### **6. Monitoring and Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if government guidance and regulation determine. It will be reviewed by the Principal, the Safeguarding Committee and the Senior Leadership Team.

**See also:** Clovelly House 'Child Protection' Policy