

THE HAVEN

Operated by the Autistic Girls Network charity — 1196655 (England and Wales), SC054837 (Scotland)

Children Missing from Education Policy

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Scope — under review

Parts of this policy read across from a maintained or registered school template. Sections 7 and 8 describe admission-register duties under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, which apply to registered schools. **The Haven is not a DfE-registered school and does not hold an admission register in that statutory sense.** Where a learner is placed by a local authority or a commissioning school, the duty to maintain the register and to notify sits with that school or authority; The Haven's duty is to report absence and non-engagement promptly to them so they can discharge it. This policy is scheduled for rebuild alongside the registers work identified in the OEAS Policy Readiness Review. Until then, read sections 7 and 8 as a description of the commissioning school's or local authority's duties and of The Haven's reporting obligations into them, not as duties The Haven holds directly.

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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. The LA has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and help them back into education. This policy highlights what The Haven will do to help the LA with its duty. For the purpose of this policy, a “child missing from education” is defined as a child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school, not placed in alternative provision by an 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 policy does not address learners who are considered to be absent from education, which is where a registered learner is not attending regularly, including where they are persistently or severely absent from education. Procedures for addressing instances where learners are not attending regularly are instead set out in The Haven's Attendance and Absence Policy.

When The Haven is used to supplement a child's education in partnership with a school or for elective home education, it is important to clearly delineate the roles of The Haven, parents, and LAs in ensuring children receive a suitable education. The Haven acts as a supplementary educational provider and not as the primary educational institution.

Legal framework

This policy 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)
- 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 (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2026) 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'
- DfE (2018) 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'School Admissions Code'

This policy also has due regard to the "Elective Home Education Guidelines for Local Authorities" to ensure alignment with best practices for home education.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy v01.26
- Attendance and Absence Policy
- Admissions Policy

1. Roles and responsibilities

The appropriate The Haven staff are responsible for:

- Entering learners on the admissions register.
- In the event that a learner fails to attend The Haven 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/guardians to inform them of any changes.
- Monitoring learners' attendance through a daily register.
- Agreeing with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of learners who are regularly absent.
- Removing learners from the admission register where they have not returned to The Haven for 30 consecutive school days, and The Haven and LA have failed to establish the learner's whereabouts after making reasonable enquiries.
- Notifying the LA if any learner is to be deleted from the admission register.
- Providing information to the LA regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the LA.

When a child is electively home educated, The Haven will keep detailed records of the education provided and regularly update parents and LAs about the child's progress.

The Haven should notify the LA promptly if there are any concerns about the suitability of the education provided in the home setting.

The governing board is responsible for:

- Where reasonably possible, ensuring The Haven holds more than one emergency contact number for each learner.

All staff are responsible for:

- Being alert to the potential need to implement early help for a learner who is frequently missing.
- Being aware of The Haven's procedures for managing unauthorised absence and children missing from education.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual learners 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 learners at a school and 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 learners from the sixth school day of a suspension.
- Serving notices on parents/guardians 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/guardians 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/guardians that do not comply with a School Attendance Order.
- Prosecuting or fining parent/guardians 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 The Haven or elsewhere. Ensuring that The Haven 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 learners with SEN statements or EHC plans where their parent/guardian 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 learner has a social worker with The Haven.
- Referring to the LA's CSCS 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.
- Ensuring the LA is proactive in supporting parents who electively home educate and utilise The Haven, offering guidance and resources to assure the education is suitable.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their children, if of compulsory school age, are receiving suitable full-time education.
- Parents/guardians using The Haven do so to supplement their child's education and do so using their rights to Electively Home Educate. Parents cannot outsource their responsibilities to The Haven and remain in charge of providing their child with an appropriate education.

- Notifying The Haven regarding any absences or changes to the learner's education arrangements.
Reinforcing that parents using The Haven for supplementary education are still responsible for providing a full-time suitable education for their children. Parents must inform The Haven and the LA of any changes in their child's educational status or contact information.

Central to how attendance codes are used is:

- Code K: Attending Education Provision arranged by a local authority. Schools must also record the nature of provision including unregistered AP (Alternative Provision), such as home tutoring or non-OEAS (Online Education Accreditation Scheme) online education.
- If schools have arranged the provision, then Code B or Code P must be used:
 - Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity. This must be of an educational nature, and attendance must be supervised by the correct skill and training level to ensure that the educational purpose is fulfilled. For example, unregistered AP arranged by the school. Safeguarding must be in place, and absences must be reported by the provider to the school.
 - Code P: Participating in a sporting activity.

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
- Families not providing evidence of education.
- Children not participating in arranged sessions with Haven

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
- So-called 'honour-based' abuse, including FGM and forced marriage
- Mental health issues
- Risk of substance abuse
- Risk of travelling to conflict zones
- Risk factors pertinent to home-educated children, such as:
 - Lack of socialisation opportunities.
 - Limited access to specialised educational support for SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) children.

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 learner going missing in the future. All staff will be made aware of unauthorised absence procedures and this policy 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 Haven will use its professional judgement on a case-by-case basis. The following list, however, indicates groups of learners who are most at risk of missing education and the procedures The Haven will follow in response:

- Children 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.
- Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families – when a learner from a GRT family leaves The Haven without naming their next destination school, Haven will contact the LA.
- Children of service personnel – The Haven will contact the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service for advice to ensure continuity of education for these learners.
- Missing children and runaways – should The Haven 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 Haven prior to custody, The Haven will keep the place open for their return.
- Children who cease to attend school – where the reason for a learner who has stopped attending a school is not known, the LA will investigate the situation.
- Children of migrant families – The Haven 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. 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.

The Haven will ensure that staff receive training on the nuances of home education, including understanding the legal responsibilities of parents and the LA in this context.

5. 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. The Haven will ensure that staff are familiar with these procedures and when they need to be followed.

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

We emphasise the importance of close collaboration between The Haven, parents, and LAs to ensure seamless transitions and continuity in education. Regular meetings and communications should be established to discuss the child's progress and any concerns.

6. Safeguarding

The Haven recognises that CME can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. Where there are concerns that a learner missing from education is linked to a safeguarding issue, action will be taken in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy v01.26.

In line with the Children Act 2004, The Haven 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 policy, "reasonable enquiries" are defined as limited, investigative powers that The Haven may take 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.

Specific safeguarding procedures when children are being educated at home. This includes:

- Periodic home visit, calls or virtual check-ins to ensure the child's welfare and educational needs are being met.
- Immediate action if there are concerns about the child's safety or educational provision.

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

- Make contact with the parent/guardian, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- 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 learner moved originally
- Check with the LA where the learner lives, if this is different to where Haven is located
- Check with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service in the case of children of service personnel

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

7. Admissions register

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

Learners will be recorded on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by The Haven, or the day that Haven has been notified, as the date that the learner will attend The Haven. Once a learner has been recorded on the admissions register, The Haven 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 learner.

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

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

The Haven will maintain detailed records for home-educated children, ensuring that any changes in the child's educational setting or attendance are promptly communicated to the LA.

8. Removing a learner from the admissions register

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

- Have ceased to attend The Haven.
- Is not in a fit state of health to attend education before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither they nor their parent/guardian has indicated the intention to continue to attend The Haven 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 Haven does not reasonably believe they will be returning at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.
- Have died.
- Are registered at more than one school, but have failed to attend The Haven and the proprietor of any other schools concerned have consented to the deletion.

- Have been continuously absent from school for a period of at least 30 school days, and:
- The absence was not authorised.
- There is reason to believe the learner is not unable to attend school.
- The LA and school are unable to determine the learner's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- Will cease to be of compulsory school age before The Haven next resumes (e.g. following the Summer break), and the relevant person has indicated the learner will not attend The Haven, or the learner does not meet the academic entry requirements or sixth form.

The Haven will notify the LA that a learner 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 learner's name is actually removed.

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

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

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

9. Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed annually by the DSL and the Proprietor to incorporate any changes in home education legislation or best practices. We include feedback from parents and LAs to ensure the policy remains effective and relevant.

This PDF was generated from the published policy at policies.thehavenonline.school on 26 August 2026. The website is the authoritative, most current version of this policy.