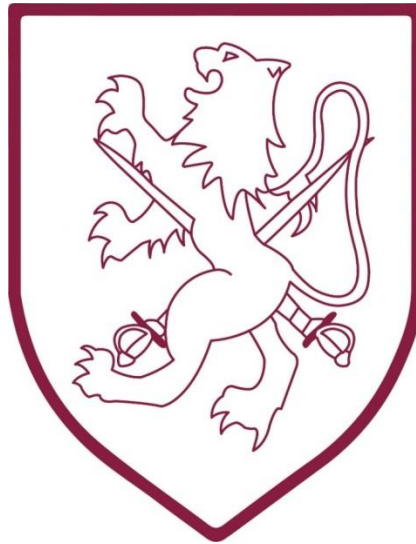




**WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Walter Infant School and Nursery



CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION POLICY (CME)

**WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY (including Early Years Foundation Stage) –
SAFEGUARDING AND PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN AND
YOUNG PEOPLE**

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Action	By	Date
1	Approved	Full Governing Body	10/07/18
2	Approved	Full Governing Body	14 th September 2023

Walter Infant School and Nursery recognises its responsibilities for safeguarding children and protecting them from harm.

This Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed by the Policy and Review Committee of the Governing Body.

Date of Next review: when policy changes directed by WBC

1. Introduction

Walter Infant School and Nursery is concerned about any child missing education not only because it impacts on the child's potential achievement but also in relation to their safety and welfare.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Children Missing Education Policy is to ensure that children from Walter Infant School and Nursery who are missing education are re-engaged in education in the shortest possible time and to ensure that 'no child slips through the net'.

3. Aim

The aim of this policy is to;

1. Assist the local authority and partner agencies in identifying Children Missing in Education.
2. Raise awareness of the notification process

4. Legal Context

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed a duty on all local authorities in England and Wales for them to make arrangements to identify Children Missing Education in their area. The duty applies to all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and are not receiving a suitable education.

5. Definition

For the purpose of this document a child missing education is defined as:

"Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is not on a school roll being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, privately, or in alternative provision) and who had been out of any education provision for a substantial period of time (four weeks or more)."

6. Children at Risk of Missing Education

Children and young people with poor school attendance are often the most vulnerable and are more likely to become children missing from education.

The duty to identify children not receiving education does not apply in relation to children who are registered at school who are not attending regularly, but does apply to children who are long term non-attenders who have missed school for 4 consecutive weeks.

The monitoring of children at risk of missing education is carried out by EIS in partnership with the local authority where attendance of individual pupils gives cause for concern with the aim of reducing the risk in the future.

7. Why children go missing from education

Children can go missing from school or agreed education provision, for a wide variety of reasons. Their personal circumstances or those of their families may contribute to the withdrawal process. Children can go missing when there is no systematic process in place to identify them and ensure they re-engage with appropriate provision.

The most common reasons why children miss education include:

- fail to start appropriate provision and hence never enter the system;
- cease to attend, due to exclusion (including illegal, unofficial exclusion);
- live a lifestyle which involves travelling;
- are withdrawn from school by their parents; or
- fail to complete a transition between providers (e.g. being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new LA).

Certain vulnerable groups are more likely to be affected by the factors; these are;

- Children living in women's refuges;
- Children of troubled families i.e. suffering bereavement, trauma, domestic violence, homelessness etc;
- Young runaways;
- Children with special educational needs;
- Refugee and asylum seeking children;
- Travelling families;
- Looked after children;
- Teenage parenthood;
- Children with mental health issues;
- Young carers;
- Children who are permanently excluded from school;
- Young people being forced into marriage;
- Children involved in substance misuse.

To limit the opportunity for children to go missing when they fall out of the education system, Wokingham Borough Council has a range of processes and procedures including:

- regular monitoring of school attendance and auditing of school registers;
- maintenance of a 'Central Register' of children at risk of missing education;
- multi-agency meetings to track children out of mainstream education;
- monitoring of children educated by their parents (EOTAS);
- identifying children who are 'travelling';
- multi-agency agreement on procedures to be adopted when children go missing or run away from home or from the care of the local authority; and
- a coordinated Admissions' scheme.

8. Key Stakeholders

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information. In order to fulfil the requirements of the Children Missing Education policy the authority has agreed to work in collaboration to ensure the early identification and intervention of children who are not receiving a suitable education. All stakeholders have a responsibility for Children Missing Education.

Walter Infant School and Nursery will work closely with stakeholders to ensure the safety of a child.

Key stakeholders include:

- Children's Services including Admissions and Education Welfare Officers
- Other schools and Academies;
- Health/PCT
- Youth Offending Service;
- Voluntary Organisations;
- Housing Associations;
- Police;
- CAMHS

9. Reducing the Risk of Children Missing Education

The Education Welfare Service will maintain a list of children known to be missing from education. Parents who do not ensure their children are accessing a 'suitable' education can be deemed as breaking the law. Walter Infant School and Nursery is committed to notify the Education Welfare Service if they identify any such child. Notifications can be made using the pro-forma found in Appendix A.

9.1 Failure to register following enrolment

When a pupil is expected to join the school either at a normal time of starting (Reception) or at any time if a pupil does not arrive by the agreed start date, Walter Infant School and Nursery will firstly try to make contact with the parents by telephone or letter. If after one week no contact has been made we will contact the Admissions Department to find out if the child has been registered elsewhere. After two weeks, we will inform the Education Welfare Officer who will follow the procedure for 'missing pupils'. The pupil will not be removed from roll until the Education Welfare Officer has ascertained the pupil's whereabouts and safety, and has confirmed that the pupil is registered at another school or is being educated otherwise or alternatively investigation confirms the child is missing education.

9.2 Unauthorised Extended Absence

If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period (other than agreed extended leave of absence) or fails to return from a holiday on the date agreed with parents, Walter Infant School and Nursery will follow the normal procedure for investigating pupil absence (i.e. telephone calls, letters, invitations to meeting at the school etc) (See Attendance policy). The matter will also be referred to the Education Welfare Officer. The pupil will not be removed from roll until the Education Welfare Officer has made all reasonable enquiries to ascertain the pupil's whereabouts and safety or has confirmed that the pupil is registered at another school or being educated otherwise.

If a pupil 'disappears' without any warning, Walter Infant School and Nursery will notify the Education Welfare Service and the Local Authority Lead Officer for Child

Protection Where a pupil has a statement of special educational need, the SEN team should also be notified.

9.3 Reports of Children Missing from Home

If a parent reports to Walter Infant School and Nursery that their child has gone missing from home they should advise them to:

- contact the Police to inform them that the child is missing;
- contact and talk to people who know the child. Also, visit places known to the child and talk to anyone who may have seen the child. Tell them that the child is missing. Ask if they can help to find the child by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts, or by actively searching for the child; or
- contact the family GP and Accident & Emergency Centres near where the child lives and goes to school, in case he/she has sustained an injury and has been taken for medical treatment.
- Notify Social Care staff for guidance and process steps on assessing a child's vulnerability.

9.4 Procedure for Removal from the Admissions Register

When a pupil's name is removed from the admissions register, Walter Infant School and Nursery will clearly indicate the date and reason for the removal. In the event of a pupil moving to another known school the name of the new school and the leaving date will be indicated in the releasing school's system (SIMS). An electronic Common Transfer File (CTF) of the pupil's records will be generated and sent to the new school within 15 days via the s2s website. If a child's name is removed from the admissions register, we will inform the Local Authority.

9.5 Home Education Procedure

In the event of a parent informing the school in writing that a child is being withdrawn to home educate, we will inform the Education Welfare Officer who will ensure that contact is made with the parents by letter, and the local procedures are put in place for monitoring the situation.

9.6 Vulnerable Pupils

If a child goes missing from our school, and:

- Is looked after or subject of a protection plan;
- It is suspected that they are being sent out of UK for female circumcision; or
- It is suspected they may have been abducted (particularly where there are domestic abuse circumstances).
- Or there is any concern regarding safeguarding or vulnerability

In the first instance, we will contact the duty social worker at the Referral & Assessment Team on **0118 908 8002** without delay.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our:-

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy

Appendix A – Notification of Child Missing from Education



**WOKINGHAM
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NOTIFICATION OF A CHILD MISSING FROM EDUCATION

Date:

To: Principal Education Welfare Officer
Children's Services
Wokingham Borough Council
2nd Floor, Shute End
Wokingham
RG40 1BN
Tel: 0118 974 6194

Email: cme@wokingham.gov.uk

Pupil Details:

Name.....

DOB.....Gender: M / F.....NCY.....

Parent / Carer:

Address

Postcode.....TelNo.....

Is parent / carer aware of the notification? Yes / No

School:

New Address if known

Reason out of Education:

Referrer Name.....

Organisation.....

Tel No.

Email