Radnor House
SEVENOAKS
celebrating every individual

Children Missing (who are absent from) Education Policy

Applies to:

- All staff (teaching and non-teaching), the directors and volunteers working in the School.
- Pupil, Parents and Caregivers and Prospective Pupils
- Visitors and Contractors

Availability:

This policy is made available in the following ways:

- The School's website www.radnor-sevenoaks.org;
- Via Teams, All Staff Shared Documents, Compliance, Policies;
- On request a copy may be obtained from the School's Office.

Monitoring and Review:

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Head.
- The Board of Directors undertake a formal annual review of this policy.

Signed:

David Paton
Head

Ian Davies
Chairman of the Board of Directors

Reviewed: September 2026
Next Review: September 2027

1. Introduction

1.1. Radnor House Sevenoaks (the School) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff, agency staff, volunteers, students on placement, contractors, directors and proprietors to share this commitment.

1.2. Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation and county lines. The School's response to pupils who are persistently or repeatedly absent supports the early identification of potential safeguarding concerns and helps to reduce the risk of a child becoming missing from education in the future. This includes the importance of effective information sharing with the Local Authority and other relevant agencies, where appropriate, to ensure that children are safe and are receiving suitable education. Early intervention is necessary to identify any underlying safeguarding risk, to provide timely support and to help prevent future absence or escalation into children missing education. Repeated absence may also indicate wider risks, such as mental health concerns, substance misuse, travel to conflict zones, female genital mutilation or forced marriage.

2. Related documents:

- Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities 2025
- Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE 2026
- DfE Guidance on School Attendance: 'Working together to Improve school attendance' 2024

3. Definition

3.1. Children Missing in Education (CME) 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.

3.2. CME includes children who:

3.2.1. are in the process of applying for a school place

3.2.2. have been offered a school place for a future date but have not yet started

3.2.3. are receiving elective home education (EHE) that has been assessed as unsuitable

3.2.4. have been recorded as CME for an extended period, for example where their whereabouts is unclear or unknown

3.3. CME are not children who:

3.3.1. are receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school (for example, pupils who are electively home educated or attending alternative provision) which is suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have

3.3.2. are EHE but the local authority has not had an opportunity to assess whether the education being provided is suitable

3.3.3. are registered at a school, even if they are persistently or severely absent from that school

4. Why children miss education

4.1. The most common reasons for CME include the following:

- Failing to be registered at a School at the age of five, so they do not enter the educational system.
- Failing to make a successful transition, then removed by their parents due to problems at School, disinterest or poor attendance.
- The personal circumstances of the family (e.g. if the family is homeless and they are living in temporary accommodation or refuge, or if there are long-term medical or emotional problems).
- Exclusion, illness or bullying.
- Mid-year transfer of School.
- Families moving into a new area who fail to find a suitable School.
- Moving to Elective Home Education (EHE)

5. Children at particular risks of missing education

5.1. 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, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families – when a GRT pupil leaves the School without naming their next destination School, the School will contact the LA.
- Children Service (CEAS) on 01980 618 244 for advice to ensure continuity of education for these children.
- Missing children and runaways – should the School suspect a child has gone missing or run away, staff must alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- 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 new 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 in the LA area without the authority becoming aware.

6. Roles and Responsibilities - The School

6.1. The School monitors the attendance of its pupils closely and will take action to address poor or irregular attendance.

6.2. 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 Local Authority (LA) at the earliest opportunity. (For the purpose of this policy, "reasonable enquiries" are defined as limited investigative powers that the School may exercise to determine a child's whereabouts and whether they may be in danger).

6.3. The School agrees with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of pupils who are regularly absent from School for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions, or who have missed ten School days or more without permission, as this can be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation, and a pre-emptor to going longer-term missing from education.

6.4. The School will notify the LA if any pupil is to be deleted from the admission register in the circumstances outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016).

6.5. 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.

6.6. The School will provide information to the LA regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the LA.

7. Specific procedures

7.1. 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 of Year, who can check for any patterns of absence and follow up with the pupils and parents if necessary.

7.2. The School has a statutory duty to inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

7.3. The School holds more than one emergency contact number for every pupil.

7.4. The School's DSL will co-operate with external agencies, where appropriate, 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.

7.5. Referrals are normally managed by the DSL, who will contact the LA when a child is identified as being in need of additional support. However, anyone can make a referral, but must inform the DSL as soon as possible.

7.6. 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 on a course of action with due regard to the referral thresholds of the LA Safeguarding Children Partnership.

7.7. The LA 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 on immediately by the relevant DSL.

7.8. 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.

7.9. 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.

7.10. 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.

7.11. All concerns, discussions and decisions made, and the reasons for those decisions, will be recorded in writing and on MyConcern. The DSL will advise on the recording requirements. The record will be kept by the DSL.

7.12. Where a pupil joins or leaves the School at non-standard transition times, the School will report this to the LA. The School completes a CME form for pupils who are off-rolled with no onward school destination.

7.13. For specific details of the reporting procedures, please see Children missing education - Kent County Council and the related guidance document at Missing children - Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership

8. The Local Authority (the LA)

8.1. Under the Education Act 1996, the LA has a duty to establish the identities of children in the area who are not registered pupils at a School and are not receiving education provision otherwise.

8.2. 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.

8.3. The LA will issue School Attendance Orders (SAO) 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.

8.4. The LA will prosecute parents/carers who do not comply with a School Attendance Order.

8.5. The LA will prosecute or fine parents/carers of school-registered children who fail to ensure their child attends school regularly.

8.6. The LA will ensure that children identified as not receiving suitable education are returned to full-time education either at the School or elsewhere.

8.7. The LA will ensure that the School demonstrates prompt action and effective early intervention procedures to ensure children are safe and receiving suitable education.

8.8. 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.

8.9. 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.

8.10. The LA is responsible for liaising and sharing information with other agencies to support children who miss education.

8.11. 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.

9. Parents

9.1. Parents have a duty to ensure that their children, who are of compulsory school age, are receiving suitable full-time education.

9.2. Parents are responsible for notifying the School in writing where they will home educate their child, in order for the child to be removed from the admissions register.

9.3. Parents will notify the School regarding any absences or changes to the pupils' education arrangements.

10. Working with others

10.1. 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.

10.2. The LA will raise awareness of its procedures with local Schools, partners and agencies working with children and families.

11. Safeguarding

11.1. 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.

11.2. The DSL will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to the children's social care or police.

12. Attendance and Admissions Register

12.1. The School also has an attendance register which records pupil attendance. The attendance register is taken at the start of each morning session of each School day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion we will record whether each registered pupil is physically present in School or, if not, the reason they are not in School by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

12.2. 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.

12.3. 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.

12.4. 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:

12.4.1. The full name of the parent/carer with whom the pupil will live

12.4.2. The new address

12.4.3. The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

12.5. 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:

12.5.1. The name of the new School

12.5.2. The date when the pupil first attended, or is due to attend, that School.

12.5.3. Parents can 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 (SAO). If a parent notifies the School, the pupil will be deleted from our register, and we will inform the LA.

13. Removing a pupil from the admissions register

13.1. The School will inform the LA of any pupil who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

13.2. Have been taken out of School by their parents/carers and are being educated outside the School system, e.g. home educated.

13.3. Have ceased to attend School and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the School.

13.4. Have been certified by a medical professional 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.

13.5. 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.

13.6. Have been permanently excluded.

13.7. Have died.

13.8. Have been registered at another School where it is not indicated this should be the case.

13.9. 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.

13.10. Have been granted authorised leave but have failed to attend School within 10 School days after the period of authorised absence ended, and:

13.10.1. The LA and School are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.

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

13.10.3. The absence was not authorised.

13.10.4. There is reason to believe the pupil is able to attend School.

13.11. The LA and School are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.

13.12. 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.