Heath House Prep School

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION POLICY

Introduction

This policy applies to all children at Heath House, including those within the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), and has regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026) (KCSIE), Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools (September 2025), Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026), the Education Act 1996, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. This policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding Policy and Attendance and Pupil Welfare Policy.

All children of compulsory school age, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. A child missing education (CME) is a child of compulsory school age who is not a registered pupil at a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. Local authorities have a statutory duty to make arrangements to identify, as far as possible, children of compulsory school age in their area who are missing education. Heath House will work with the relevant local authority to support the identification of, and appropriate response to, children missing education.

Children being absent from education, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can be vital warning signs of a range of safeguarding concerns. These may include abuse, neglect, sexual or criminal exploitation, radicalisation and other forms of harm. The school recognises that early identification and prompt action are essential to safeguarding children and preventing them from becoming missing from education.

This policy supports the school's duties and commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and should be read with regard for the school's safeguarding procedures as set out in the Safeguarding Policy.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Raise awareness of individual responsibilities in identifying and reporting children missing education;
- Provide a systematic means of monitoring, recording and reporting concerns about and cases of children missing education;
- Provide a framework for inter-agency communication and effective liaison;
- Identify strategies and interventions available to support children at risk of missing education;
- Ensure that any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.

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Children Missing Education

Children missing education are at increased risk of underachieving, experiencing poorer health outcomes, becoming victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and later becoming not in education, employment or training. Regular attendance at school is an important protective factor and provides opportunities for children's needs and safeguarding concerns to be identified. The school will therefore monitor attendance closely, respond promptly to unexplained or irregular absence and work with parents, the relevant local authority and other agencies as appropriate to prevent children from becoming missing from education.

The school will provide attendance returns to the relevant local authority in accordance with statutory requirements and locally agreed arrangements, including where a pupil has poor or irregular attendance. Where a pupil lives in a different local authority area from the school, the school will notify and work with the pupil's home local authority where appropriate.

Understanding and Identifying Risks

Staff should:

- Be aware that children being absent from education, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods, and children missing education can be vital warning signs of a range of safeguarding concerns;
- Be alert to safeguarding risks associated with absence from education, including abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, radicalisation and other forms of harm;
- Understand that taking the attendance register on a twice daily basis is a legal requirement, and an essential part of identifying children who go missing from education;
- Follow the procedures below for taking the attendance register;
- Follow the school's procedures for unauthorised absence as set out in the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Policy.

Responding to Unexplained Absence and Potential Children Missing Education

Where a pupil's absence is unexplained or gives rise to concern, the school will act promptly to establish the child's whereabouts and welfare. The school will make appropriate and proportionate enquiries, which may include contacting parents or carers and other emergency contacts, checking information held by the school and making enquiries with relevant professionals or agencies where appropriate.

Where the school is unable to establish a child's whereabouts, or there are concerns that the child may be missing education or at risk of harm, the school will notify and work with the relevant local authority without delay. Where there is reason to believe that a child is at immediate risk of significant harm, the school's safeguarding procedures will be followed and a referral will be made to children's social care and/or the police as appropriate.

The school will continue to cooperate with the local authority and undertake reasonable enquiries as required even after a Children Missing Education referral has been made. All enquiries, actions and decisions will be recorded.

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Admission Register and Removal from Roll

Where the statutory ground requires joint reasonable enquiries by the school and local authority, the pupil will not be removed from the admission register until those enquiries have been completed and the relevant statutory conditions for deletion have been satisfied. Where a statutory ground for deletion is met, the pupil's name will be deleted from the admission register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. A pupil's name will not be retrospectively deleted from the admission register.

Notification to the Local Authority

The school will make the required returns to the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the admission register outside a standard transition point, in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

When a pupil is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point, the school will make the required new-pupil return to the local authority within five days. When a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register at a non-standard transition point, the school will make the required deletion return to the local authority and provide the prescribed information, including, where known, the pupil's destination and new educational arrangements. The school will also provide returns at standard transition points where required by the local authority.

Elective Home Education

Where a parent notifies the school in writing that their child will cease attending Heath House on a specified date in order to receive education otherwise than at school, the school will follow the statutory requirements relating to removal from the admission register and notification to the local authority. The school will not seek to persuade or encourage parents to electively home educate their child as a means of addressing attendance, behavioural or other difficulties.

The school will not engage in off-rolling. A pupil will not be removed from the admission register, prevented from attending normally or encouraged to leave the school or move into elective home education for the purpose of protecting the school's interests, attendance figures or performance. Any removal from the admission register will only take place where a statutory ground for deletion is satisfied.

Where there are safeguarding concerns about a child whose parent intends to electively home educate, these concerns will be shared with the relevant local authority and/or other agencies in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and information-sharing duties.

Pupils Who Fail to Attend on the Expected Start Date

Where a pupil who has been entered on the admission register fails to attend on the agreed or notified start date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and the reason for their absence. The school will contact the parent or carer and, where appropriate, previous

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schools, the relevant local authority and other agencies or professionals who may hold relevant information.

Where the child's whereabouts cannot be established, the school will work with the local authority in accordance with the Children Missing Education statutory guidance. Any safeguarding concerns identified during this process will be referred immediately to the DSL and dealt with in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy.

Pupils Moving to Another School or Area

Where the school is informed that a pupil is moving to another school or area, it will obtain and record, as far as reasonably possible, the child's new address, the full name of each parent with whom the child will normally live, the date from which the child will normally live at that address and details of the child's new school or educational arrangements.

The school will take reasonable steps to confirm the child's destination and will cooperate with the relevant local authority where necessary. Where the destination or new educational provision cannot be confirmed, the pupil will not simply be removed from the admission register; the school will follow the statutory Children Missing Education procedures and the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Transfer of Pupil and Safeguarding Information

When a pupil transfers to another school, the school will ensure that relevant pupil information is transferred securely in accordance with statutory requirements. Where a child has a safeguarding or child protection file, this will be transferred separately from the main pupil file, securely and in accordance with the school's Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE 2026.

Where the child's destination is unknown, the school will follow the appropriate Children Missing Education procedures and work with the local authority to assist in locating the child. Safeguarding information will be shared with relevant agencies where necessary to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

The Role of Staff

Staff must have regard for the risks associated with children going missing from education as outlined in this policy, the Safeguarding Policy, and the Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

Staff must:

- Understand and have regard for the risks associated with children going missing from education;
- Comply with the school’s safeguarding procedures in the Safeguarding Policy;
- Comply with this Children Missing Education Policy;
- Comply with the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Policy;
- Complete the attendance register for their class at the start of each morning and once during each afternoon session;

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- Report unexplained absences and any concerns about a child's attendance or whereabouts promptly in accordance with the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Policy and Safeguarding Policy, and immediately to the DSL where there is a safeguarding concern;
- Use the codes and instructions in the attendance register;
- Follow the guidance and processes for completing attendance registers set out in this policy.

Please see the Attendance and Pupil Welfare Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct Policy.

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and updated sooner where there are changes to relevant legislation, statutory guidance or local Children Missing Education procedures.

Internal use only

Last reviewed	September 2026
Date for review	September 2027

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