



Stanley St Andrew's Church of England Primary School

Children Missing Education Policy

September 2026

As a church school we believe that every person, every child and every adult is unique and special with God given gifts and talents which is our job to nurture and cherish.

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Statement of intent

All children are entitled to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving and may also be at increased risk of harm, exploitation, radicalisation, poorer health outcomes and becoming not in education, employment or training later in life.

The local authority has a legal duty to make arrangements to identify, as far as possible, children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. The school will work promptly and collaboratively with Derbyshire County Council and other relevant agencies to support this duty.

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. The school will take a child-centred approach, share information appropriately and take prompt action where a pupil's whereabouts, education or welfare are uncertain.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Education Act 1996, including sections 7, 8, 14, 19 and 436A
- Education Act 2002
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005, as amended
- DfE Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools (September 2025)
- DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance (current statutory guidance, updated July 2026)
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- DfE Working Together to Safeguard Children (current statutory guidance)
- DfE Elective Home Education guidance
- DfE Suspension and Permanent Exclusion guidance (current version)

This policy should be read alongside the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Attendance Policy, Admissions arrangements, SEND Policy and Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy.

2. Definitions

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 a school.

A pupil who is on the school roll but absent from school is not, by definition, CME. However, poor, irregular or unexplained attendance can be a safeguarding concern and can place a child at risk of becoming missing from education. Such absence will be addressed through the school's Attendance Policy and safeguarding procedures.

3. Why children may be missing education

Children may become missing from education for a range of reasons, including:

- failing to start school at the expected time

- an unsuccessful transition between schools or phases
- a mid-year move or transfer
- a family moving into or out of an area
- a pupil leaving school without a confirmed destination
- elective home education where the required registration process has not been completed
- exclusion, alternative provision or other changes in education arrangements
- frequent movement, temporary accommodation or other family circumstances.

Repeated or unexplained absence may also be a warning sign of abuse, neglect, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation including county lines, trafficking, so-called honour-based abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, radicalisation or other safeguarding risks. Staff will respond in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and KCSIE 2026.

4. Children at greater risk of missing education

The school recognises that some children may be at greater risk of becoming CME. This can include, but is not limited to:

- children at risk of harm, abuse, neglect or exploitation
- children in temporary accommodation or experiencing homelessness
- children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities
- children of service personnel
- children who frequently move between local authority areas
- children from migrant or newly arrived families
- children with SEND, including children with education, health and care (EHC) plans
- children in or leaving the youth justice system
- children who have been suspended or permanently excluded
- children whose parents are considering or have chosen elective home education.

The presence of one of these factors does not mean a child is missing education. Staff will consider each child's individual circumstances and any safeguarding or educational risks.

5. Roles and responsibilities

The governing body

- ensure the school has regard to statutory CME guidance and fulfils its duties under attendance and safeguarding legislation
- hold leaders to account for effective attendance, safeguarding and admission-register procedures
- ensure appropriate information is published or available as required.

The headteacher and designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

- ensure staff understand the school's CME, attendance and safeguarding procedures
- ensure daily attendance is monitored and unexplained absence is followed up promptly
- ensure reasonable enquiries are made when a pupil does not arrive as expected or their whereabouts are unknown
- liaise with Derbyshire County Council, children's social care, police and other agencies where appropriate
- ensure safeguarding concerns and actions are recorded on MyConcern

- ensure admission-register additions and deletions comply with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

All staff

- be alert to absence, changes in attendance and other indicators that a child may be at risk
- follow first-day and unauthorised absence procedures
- report safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL or deputy DSL
- record safeguarding concerns on MyConcern in accordance with school procedures
- never assume that another professional or agency has taken action to locate or safeguard a child.

Parents and carers

- ensure their child receives suitable full-time education
- notify the school promptly of absence and provide the reason
- keep contact details, addresses and education arrangements up to date and provide more than one emergency contact number where possible
- inform the school in writing where they intend to withdraw their child for elective home education, in accordance with the legal requirements.

6. Induction and training

The safeguarding response to children who are absent from education or may be missing education will be included in staff induction and safeguarding updates. Staff will understand the difference between absence from school and CME, the school's escalation procedures, and the importance of timely information sharing and recording.

7. Working with others

The school will work with Derbyshire County Council and, where relevant, other local authorities, schools, children's social care, police, health services and other agencies to identify and support children who may be missing education.

When a pupil moves school, the school will use the secure School to School (S2S) system to transfer the common transfer file. Where a destination school is unknown, the school will follow local CME procedures and use S2S/GIAP processes as appropriate rather than treating the pupil as having simply left.

8. Safeguarding and reasonable enquiries

Where a pupil fails to attend on an agreed start date, stops attending unexpectedly, or their whereabouts are unknown, the school will make reasonable enquiries promptly. The nature and extent of enquiries will depend on the individual circumstances and any safeguarding risk.

Reasonable enquiries may include:

- contacting parents/carers using all available contact details
- contacting other known emergency contacts where appropriate
- checking information held by the school and speaking with relevant staff
- checking with a known previous or intended school
- liaising with Derbyshire County Council CME/attendance services and, where relevant, another local authority

- liaising with agencies already known to be working with the family
- undertaking or requesting a home visit where appropriate and in accordance with local procedures and risk assessment
- using national pupil information-transfer systems through the appropriate authorised processes.

The school will not undertake intrusive enquiries beyond its role. Where the child may be at risk of significant harm, the DSL will make an immediate safeguarding referral and/or contact the police as appropriate. Safeguarding concerns, decisions and actions will be recorded on MyConcern.

9. Admission register and returns to the local authority

The school will maintain an accurate admission register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. A pupil's name will be entered on the admission register on the date required by the regulations.

Where a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified start date, the school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts and circumstances and will notify the local authority where appropriate.

The school will make a return to the local authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The school will also provide returns at standard transition points where the local authority requires this.

Parents will be encouraged to notify the school promptly of changes to addresses, contact details and education arrangements. The admission register will be updated with the information required by the 2024 Regulations.

10. Removing a pupil from the admission register

A pupil's name will only be deleted from the admission register when a statutory ground in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is fully met. The school will not retrospectively delete a pupil's name.

Where a pupil has not returned within 10 school days following an authorised leave of absence, or has been continuously absent without authorisation for at least 20 school days, the school and local authority will undertake joint reasonable enquiries. The pupil will only be removed where all requirements of the relevant statutory ground are satisfied, including agreement between the school and local authority that there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again.

Where required, the school will notify the local authority of additions to and deletions from the admission register and provide the information prescribed by the regulations. Where a pupil has a social worker or other relevant professional, the school will ensure appropriate information sharing in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

11. Elective home education and off-rolling

Parents have a right to educate their child at home, subject to the law. Where a parent notifies the school in writing that their child will cease attending after a specified date to receive education otherwise than at school, the school will follow regulation 9 of the 2024 Regulations and Derbyshire County Council procedures. Where the statutory criteria are met and the specified date has passed, the pupil's name will be

removed and the local authority informed. Different requirements apply where a School Attendance Order is in force or where other statutory restrictions apply.

The school will not pressure or encourage a parent to electively home educate in order to avoid supporting a pupil's needs, managing attendance or behaviour, or pursuing a formal suspension or permanent exclusion. Removing a pupil from roll in the interests of the school rather than the pupil, or otherwise outside the statutory grounds, is unacceptable off-rolling.

12. Monitoring and review

The headteacher will monitor implementation of this policy and ensure that procedures remain aligned with current statutory guidance and Derbyshire County Council arrangements.

This policy was reviewed by the headteacher in September 2026 and approved by the governing body on 28 September 2026. It will be reviewed at least annually, and earlier where there is a relevant change to legislation, statutory guidance or local procedures.