



The Forest CE Federation

'Small enough to care. Large enough to inspire

Valuing all God's children '

All things are possible for one who believes' Mark 9 v 23

The Forest CE Federation Children Missing from Education (CME) Policy

Date adopted: October 2021



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Visions and Aims

The Forest CE Federation aims to provide children with an exciting, broad and balanced curriculum that will instil a love of learning. Our approach enables all children to become lifelong learners by developing transferable skills to equip them to succeed in a competitive world. A strong **Christian** ethos permeates through our daily lives ensuring our pupils are cared for in a safe, nurturing environment within our small **community**.

Everyone is valued as an individual and helped to develop and progress in their own unique way within a Christian environment. Our vision, '**Small enough to care, Large enough to inspire, Valuing All God's children**' is at the core of everything we do. The curriculum we offer is not merely academic, but embraces the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils and is deeply rooted in our vision that:

'All things are possible for one who believes' Mark 9 v23 .

We believe in the "whole child" and are committed to children's wider well-being through our **creative** inclusive curriculum, which is driven by our spiritual values.

Our curriculum is designed to spark **curiosity** in young minds through carefully planned opportunities for pupils to acquire, apply and master their knowledge and skills in a unique learning environment.

We know that a child who feels happy, safe and secure will have the **confidence** to try their best and achieve in all that they do. We endeavour to provide all children with the knowledge, skills and environment in which to thrive.

We define progress as the widening and deepening of essential knowledge, skills, understanding and behaviours. This is done through how we deliver our curriculum; Continuous Provision.



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Children Missing from Education policy

Definition of Children Missing Education

In Children Missing Education – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2016), children missing education are defined as those who are not on a school roll or receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. Those who are regularly absent or have missed 10 school days or more without permission may be at risk of becoming 'children missing education'.

There will not always be a safeguarding concern for children and young people who are missing education. Most children and young people are moving schools supported by their parents/carer, schools, and local authority admissions services. A smaller number, however, are at risk of dropping out or disengaging from education and being out of school, they are at risk of exploitation, going missing and significant harm.

Risks

These 'missing' children can be vulnerable; it is essential that all services work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible. It is important to establish, at the earliest possible stage, the reasons for the child being missing.

Possible reasons that should be considered include:

- Failure to start appropriate provision and never enter the system
- Stopped attending, due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parents/carers
- Failure to complete a transition between schools
- Children from refugee and asylum-seeking families
- Children from families who are highly mobile
- Children at risk of a forced marriage
- Children experiencing abuse and neglect
- Children supervised by the Youth Justice System

Children who remain disengaged from education are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk such as anti-social behaviour and or/sexual exploitation.

Families moving between local authority areas can sometimes lead to a child becoming 'lost' in the System and consequently missing education. When a child has moved, local authorities should check with other local authorities, either regionally or nationally, and share information to ascertain where the child is living. Once the location of the child is established, the relevant local authority must ensure that the child is receiving an education either by attending a school or otherwise.



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Recognition

Schools

As a result of daily registration, schools are particularly well placed to notice when a child has gone missing. If a member of school becomes aware that a child may have run away or gone missing, they should try to establish with the parents/carers, what has happened. If this is not possible, or the child is missing, the designated safeguarding lead should, together with the class teacher, assess the child's vulnerability.

Enquiries into the circumstances surrounding a child who is missing from school can be effectively supported by schools adopting an admissions procedure which requires a parent/carer to provide documentary evidence of their own and the child's identity, their status in the UK, and the address at which they are residing. Schools should ensure that a family's contact details are regularly updated. These checks, however, should not become delaying factors in the admissions process.

In the circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, the Headteacher should inform the Children Missing Education (CME) Officer of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive school days without provision of reasonable explanation. Prior to doing so, the school should have made enquiries to ascertain whether the child is still residing at the home address and is not attending or whether the child is missing.

Other Agencies

Where any agency in contact with children and families believes that a child is not on the roll of a school or receiving education otherwise, this information should be passed to the CME Officer with any details they have of the child in question.

Response

From the first day that a child does not attend school and there is no explanation or authorisation of the absence, the following steps should be taken:

- A staff member will contact the parents/carers (person with parental responsibility for the child) to seek reassurance that the child is safe at home.
- The outcome of the contact should be assessed and if there are any concerns a consultation with the school/establishment Designated Safeguarding Lead should take place to consider the child's vulnerability.

In the following circumstances a referral to children's social care and/or the police should always be made promptly:

- The child may be the victim of crime
- The child is subject of a Child Protection plan
- The child is subject of section 47 enquiries
- The child is looked after



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- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household

The answers to further questions could assist a judgement whether or not to inform children's social care and the police.

- In which age range is the child?
- Is this very sudden and unexpected behaviour?
- Have there been any past concerns about the child associating with significantly older young people or adults?
- Was there a significant incident prior to the child's unexplained absence?
- Has the child been a victim of bullying?
- Are there health reasons to believe that the child is at risk?
- Was the child noted to be depressed prior to their absence?
- Are there any religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk? E.g. Rites of passage, female genital mutilation or forced marriage planned for the child?
- Has the child a disability and/or special educational needs?
- Have there been past concerns about this child and family which together with the sudden disappearance are worrying? E.g.
 - Is there any known history of drug or alcohol dependence within the family?
 - Is there any known history of domestic violence?
 - Is there concern about the parent/carer's ability to protect the child from harm?
 - Is there any concern about extremist views?

Roles and Responsibilities

The Federation/School

- Will enter pupils on the admissions registers 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, that the pupil will attend.
- In the event that a pupil fails to attend on the agreed date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence and will notify the Local Authority at the earliest opportunity, typically within 5 working days.
- The school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.
- The school will keep an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents to inform them of any changes.
- The school will monitor pupils' attendance through a daily attendance register.
- Follow Local Authority advice and guidance if a pupil is missing education.

Local Authority

- Respond to notifications of children missing education.
- Ensure that the process is followed for children missing education
- Track children logged as missing education



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- Carry out necessary investigations with other agencies.