




**MOUNT HOUSE  
SCHOOL**

**INSPIRING EVERY INDIVIDUAL**

## **SCHOOL POLICIES**

# **STUDENT SUPERVISION, LOST, MISSING & ABSENT CHILDREN**

<b>Review</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>By</b>
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	<b>September 2024</b>	
<b>Next Review</b>	<b>September 2025</b>	

## **INTRODUCTION**

Mount House School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all students achieve their very best.

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children missing or absent from education (CME) risk underachieving, being victims of abuse, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life.

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 possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation. It is important the School's response to persistently absent students and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent students, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going completely missing education in future. Staff must be aware of the School's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

### **Related documents:**

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- First-Aid Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Prevent Duty Policy
- Risk Assessment for Student Welfare Policy
- RSE Policy (Relationships and Sex Education Policy)
- SEND Policy (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy)
- Smoking, Drugs Alcohol and Other Substances Policy

### **Statutory Guidance**

- KCSIE 2024
- DfE Guidance on School Attendance: 'Working together to improve school attendance' 2024

## **PART A**

### **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE OF A STUDENT FROM THE SCHOOL (Children Absent from Education)**

Where a student'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 students and parents if necessary.

Where a child misses school without reason or satisfactory explanation either for a period of ten school days, or for fewer but regularly, as directed by the local agencies, the DSL will make a referral to social services, being alert to the possible reasons for this absence, and will refer all such concerns to the relevant local agencies. This may help prevent them going missing in future.

The DSL will ensure that all concerns will be reported to the relevant local agencies; in all cases of doubt the relevant local agencies will be contacted for guidance. Such reports will also be made when a child is about to be deleted from the admission register for whatever reason.

The School holds more than one emergency contact number for every student, giving additional contact options to contact a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

#### **DISAPPEARANCE OF A STUDENT FROM THE SCHOOL DURING THE DAY**

If there is a suspicion that a student has gone missing from school during the normal school day, the Deputy Head Pastoral, the Assistant Head Pastoral, Head of Year and Tutor should be informed immediately. In such an instance a member of the Senior Leadership Team may be available immediately and therefore take control of the situation.

Initial investigation should establish (via contact with the student's tutor and checking the current calendar of events on the network) that the student is not on an out-of-school commitment such as sport, music, drama, theatre trip, external lecture, university visit, medical appointment, DofE expedition etc.

In establishing the cause of the absence, all sources of information (i.e. emails) should be checked and mobile phone contact made if possible. Where necessary, make use of a peer to support.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be contacted to see if there is any cause for concern with the student(s) which may lead to emotional difficulties.

The Head of Year should contact the parent or guardian of the student to investigate the incident and/or follow up any leads from friends of the student. If the student cannot be located by staff or parents then the Head should initiate a wider search procedure including contacting the police. The School will then act in accordance with police advice and advise the Chairman of the Board that a student is missing.

Such an incident, with no justifiable reason for absence, will be treated as a serious disciplinary matter.

If no satisfactory cause for absence can be established then the Deputy Head (Pastoral) must be informed and the incident should be documented, including the date and time, the student(s) involved, the member of staff initially reporting the incident, the action taken and any subsequent reasons given by students for their absence.

Staff must take care to fully document the incident.

## **PART B**

### **CHILDREN MISSING (NOT IN) EDUCATION**

This policy complies with the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2023
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2024
- DfE 'Children missing education' 2016
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Children Act 2004
- The Education (Student Registration) Regulations 2006 (as amended 2016)
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2012)
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Students) 2014
- DfE Guidance on School Attendance: 'Working together to improve school attendance' 2024.

#### **Definition**

For the purpose of this policy, a CME is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by a LA, and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition also includes children who are receiving an education, but one that is not suitable; this could include children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Being absent, as well as missing, from education can be warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation.

#### **Why children miss education**

The most common reasons for children missing school include the following:

- Failing to be registered at a school at the age of five
- Failing to make a successful transition
- Exclusion
- Mid-year transfer of school
- Families moving into a new area.

#### **Children at particular risks of missing education**

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 students who are most at risk of missing education:

- Students at risk of harm or neglect – where this is suspected, local child protection procedures will be followed. However, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of

harm, a referral should be made immediately to children's social care (and the police if appropriate). The LA officers responsible for CME will check a referral has been made and will contact children's social care if this is not the case. Should there be a reason to suspect a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the LA will contact the police.

- Children of gypsy, roma and traveller (GRT) families – when a GRT student leaves the School without naming their next destination school, the School will contact the LA. If necessary, the School will consult the LA Traveller Education Support Services/named CME officer for advice on the best strategies to ensure minimal disruption to the GRT student's education.
- Children of service personnel – the School will contact the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service for advice to ensure continuity of education for these children.
- Missing children/runaways – should the School suspect a child has gone missing/run away, an appropriate staff member will consult the DfE for advice on missing children.
- 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 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 into an LA area without the authority becoming aware.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **The School**

- The School will enter students 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 that the student will attend the School.
- In the event that a student fails to attend the School on the agreed or notified date, the School will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence and will consider notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity.
- 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 students' attendance through its daily AM and PM register.
- The School will agree with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of students who are regularly absent from school for prolonged periods and/or 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.
- Where a student 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 student from the admission register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.

- The School will notify the LA if any student is to be deleted from the admission register in the circumstance outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016).
- Students who remain on the school roll are not necessarily missing education, but will be monitored and attendance will be addressed when it is poor.
- The School will provide information to the LA regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the LA.
- 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.
- Where a student joins or leaves the School at non-standard transition times, the School will report this to the local authority. The School will contact and complete all relevant documentation where a student is off-rolled with no onward school destination.

### **The Local Authority**

- The Local Authority (LA) has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and help them back into education. This policy highlights what our School will do to help the LA with its duty.
- Under the Education Act 1996, the LA has a duty to establish the identities of children in the area who are not registered students at a school and are not receiving education provision otherwise.
- The LA will provide full-time education for permanently excluded students from the sixth school day of a fixed-period exclusion.
- 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/guardians to assure the LA that their child is receiving such an education.
- The LA will issue School Attendance Orders to parents/guardians who fail to assure the LA that their child is receiving a suitable education, and the LA believes that the child should attend school.
- The LA will prosecute parents/guardians that do not comply with a School Attendance Order.
- The LA will prosecute or fine parents/guardians of school-registered children who fail to ensure their child attends school regularly.
- The LA will ensure that children identified as not receiving suitable education are returned to full-time education either at the School or elsewhere.
- The LA will ensure that the School demonstrates prompt action and effective early intervention procedures to ensure children are safe and receiving suitable education.
- The LA will apply to court for an Education Supervision Order for a CME.
- 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.
- Students 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 student should receive at home or names a school where the provision will be received, but the parent/guardian 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.

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

### **Parents**

- Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children, who are of compulsory school age, are receiving suitable full-time education.
- Parents are responsible for notifying the School in writing where they will be home-schooling their child, in order for the child to be removed from the admissions register.
- Parents will notify the School regarding any absences or changes to the students' education arrangements.

### **Working with others**

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.

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

To assist them in tracing CME, the LA has contacts with the Department for Work and Pensions, the UK Border Agency and HMRC.

### **Safeguarding**

For the purpose of this policy, "reasonable enquiries" are defined as limited investigative powers that the School may action to determine a child's whereabouts and whether they may be in danger.

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.

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

### **Admissions register**

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.

Students 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 student will attend the School.

Where a parent notifies the School that a student will live at another address, the School will

record the following information on the admissions register:

- The full name of the parent/guardian with whom the student will live
- The new address
- The date from when it is expected the student will live at this address.

Where a parent/guardian notifies the School that the student 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:

- The name of the new school
- The date when the student first attended, or is due to attend, that school.

Parents/guardians are able to elect to educate their children at home and will subsequently withdraw them from School. This can happen at any time unless the student is subject to a School Attendance Order. If a parent/guardian notifies Mount House School, the student will be deleted from our register and we will inform the LA.

### **Removing a student from the admissions register**

Mount House will inform the LA of any student who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents/guardians and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home-schooled.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Have been certified by the school medical officer 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/guardian has indicated the intention to continue to attend the School after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- 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.
- Have been permanently excluded.
- Have died.
- Have been registered at another school where it is not indicated this should be the case.
- 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.
- Have been granted authorised leave but have failed to attend school within ten school days after the period of authorised absence ended, and:
  - There is reason to believe the student is able to attend school.
- The LA and school are unable to determine the student's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- Have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days, and:
  - The absence was not authorised.
  - There is reason to believe the student is able to attend school.



- The LA and school are unable to determine the student's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- Will cease to be of compulsory school age before the School next meets, and the relevant person has indicated the student will not attend the School, or the student does not meet the academic entry requirements for sixth form.

The School will notify the LA that a student is to be removed from the admissions register as soon as any of the above criteria are met, and no later than the time at which the student's name is actually removed.

If a student's name is to be removed from the admissions register, the School will provide the LA with the following information:

- The full name of the student
- The full name and address of any parent/guardian with whom the student lives
- At least one telephone number of the parent/guardian with whom the student lives
- The full name and address of the parent/guardian with whom the student is going to live and the date the student is expected to start living there, if applicable
- The name of the student's new school and their expected start date, if applicable
- The grounds for removal from the admissions register under Regulation 8 of the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), as outlined in section 8 of this policy.

### **Policy review**

This policy is reviewed every year by the DSL, Head and the Directors.

The scheduled review date for this policy is August 2025 or as soon as we are notified about a change in legislation.