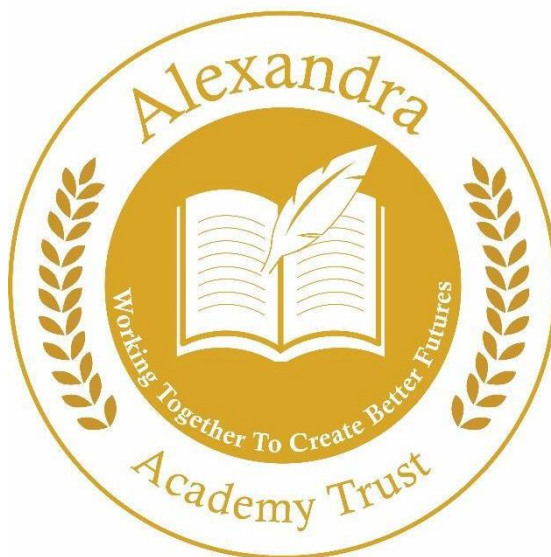


Alexandra Academy Trust

Child Missing in Education Policy



If you need this in an alternative format
please contact the Alexandra Academy Trust.

For approval by the Curriculum Committee	Autumn 2024
For Review Annually	Autumn 2025

Signed _____ (Chair of Curriculum Committee)

Dated _____

Child Missing in Education Policy

Trust Mission Statement

‘Working together to create better futures’

Introduction

Under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 we have a duty to investigate any unexplained absences especially as a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

At Alexandra Academy Trust, we follow Cheshire East’s procedures for dealing with children that are absent or who go missing from lessons and/or school. All staff are aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly or prolonged, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation, including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, so called ‘honour’-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future.

This policy recognises the importance of reducing the risk of children missing from education, and it is envisaged that this will be best achieved by implementing and maintaining the following:

- Procedures for making prompt referrals to the Children Missing Education Team and The Attendance and Children Out of School Team
- Procedures to identify and locate children who go missing or are absent from education through liaison with the other services and agencies who are most likely to come into contact with such children

Children Missing from Education in this policy refers to:

- Any child whose name has been deleted from any of our Academies admissions registers (after reasonable enquiry to locate the child) because they have continuous unauthorised absence for a period of 20 school days
- Any child who leaves any of our Academies and future provision is unknown
- Any child who fails to return from extended leave within 10 school days
- Any child who is due to start or transfer to any of our Academies and fails to enrol on that Academy’s admissions register

How Do Children Go Missing From Education

Below is a list of children who are likely to go missing from education.

This list is not exhaustive:

- Pupils at risk of harm/neglect – Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect
- Failure to start the Academy at Early Years (EYFS) entry, hence never entering Cheshire East Authority's system
- Transfer between Local Authorities
- Cease to attend for an unknown reason and the whereabouts of the child/young person cannot be established
- Failure to complete transition at: EYFS, Key Stage 1 to 2, Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System
- Children living in women's refuges/escaping domestic abuse or families who have to move quickly under the Police Protection Witness Scheme
- Children in homeless families, living in temporary accommodation or multiple occupancy
- Missing children and runaways – Children who go missing or run away from home or care may be in serious danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation or abduction as well as missing education.
- Children with long-term medical or emotional health problems
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees, or the children of asylum-seeking families
- Cared-for-Children within Cheshire East
- Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families particularly in the transition from primary to secondary school
- Young Carers
- Children of Service Personnel – Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently and often at short notice
- Children from transient families, i.e. children who have experienced high levels of mobility between different education providers, as they move from area to area
- Children who are suspended or permanently excluded from school

- Children in private fostering arrangements
- Children taken off roll following a lengthy absence due to an extended family holiday taken in term-time or not returning to the UK
- Children entering or leaving the independent schools sector
- Children of new migrant families may not have yet settled into a fixed address or may have arrived into a local authority area without the authority becoming aware, therefore increasing the risk of the child missing education
- Young people who have come from abroad to live in Cheshire East Authority including potentially sex trafficked young people

Procedures

Rigorous and robust systems are in place for monitoring attendance in order to safeguard the welfare of all children. The details are outlined in our Attendance and Punctuality Policy. Each Academy will carry out daily registration. Any absences will be dealt with in accordance with the Academy's Attendance and Punctuality Policy.

If children do not attend school, we have a duty of care to ensure they are safe. This may involve visiting the child's home to ensure their welfare and safety and will always be done in the best interests of the child.

Schools will always endeavour that parents/carers and the child/ren themselves are involved in this process. If we are unable to be assured of the child's safety, we will, through our Designated Safeguarding Lead, seek advice from other agencies such as, The Attendance and Children Out of School Team, the police or ChECS, if deemed necessary.

The following procedures will be implemented when a parent/carer informs an Academy that their child is leaving for a known destination and identified education provision:

- On notification that a child is leaving, the parents/carers will be asked to provide details of the new home address and the name and address of the destination school, if known
- Contact will be made with the receiving school/academy to ensure the child is registered at the school/academy and has a starting date to attend
- Once the child has left the Academy, contact will be made with the new school/academy to ensure that the child is on their admission register. Only upon confirmation that the child has been admitted to the new school/academy, will the child be removed from the Academy's admission register

- The office staff will check that the Common Transfer File (CTF) has been downloaded and accepted by the receiving school/academy. The Academy has a statutory requirement to send the (CTF), electronically, to the receiving school/academy **within 15** school days of deletion of the child from the Academy's admission register
- The Academy must contact the receiving school/academy if this does not happen **within 2 days** of the file being sent
- The full school information will be replicated on the electronic system
- The word 'CONFIRMED' will be added to the information when the Academy has received phone or email confirmation of the child's whereabouts
- Any Safeguarding/Child Protection/SEND documents will be forwarded to the receiving school/academy in a confidential manner in line with guidance contained within Keeping Children Safe in Education and in line with The Data Protection Act 2018.
- A transfer of information sheet should be retained by all parties. When information is transferred through the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) confirmation of transfers will be stored electronically.
- If the child has not arrived at the receiving school/academy, the Attendance Lead at the Academy will notify the Children Missing Education Officer (CME) at Cheshire East.
- When a child leaves an Academy and their destination is unknown, the school will ensure that all necessary checks are completed. The Safeguarding Lead will make a referral to the Children Missing Education (CME), using the [appropriate notification form](#) on the Cheshire East website, to allow tracking procedures to be started. (Appendix 1 informs staff of the information required).
- Staff are aware of the trafficking of children and the importance of rigour around our attendance procedures to reduce this as a threat to our children's safety.
- Only upon receipt of appropriate evidence from the CME Officer, will the child be removed from the Academy admission register
- If there is no information as to the whereabouts of the child, the Academy **will not** remove the child from roll until all enquiries have taken place over a period of **20** school days
- Each Academy will keep written documentation - full name of child, date of birth, address of any parent/carer, telephone contacts where the child normally resided

- Each Academy will keep written documentation to support both the reason and the date that a child has been removed from the Academy admission register, and the grounds upon which the deletion was made. This information will be recorded on Arbor (Management Information System)

Sharing information with the Local Authority

Each Academy will:

- Inform Cheshire East of any child who has been absent without the Academy's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more
- Inform Education Welfare Management of any child who fails to attend the Academy regularly, or there is a repeated pattern of absence
- Liaise with Cheshire East's Attendance and Children Out of School Team, Education Welfare Management where the reason for a child's absence is unclear or unexplained, in line with the Academy's Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Home visits will be completed where concerns are raised
- Cheshire East's Children's Consultation Service (ChECS) will be informed where there are concerns about the nature of a child's absence
- All schools must make a Deletion Return to Cheshire East, when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register. This duty does not apply at standard transition points- where the pupil has completed the school's final year
- All schools must make a 'New Pupil Return' to Cheshire East, within 5 days when a pupil is added to the admission register

Children Subject to a Child Protection Plan

If a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan and is believed to be missing, the Academy will immediately inform the relevant Social Worker/ChECS Team. Where absence concerns begin to emerge for a child on a Child Protection Plan, the Academy will make a referral to the Education Welfare Management Service.

Cared for Children within Cheshire East

Daily attendance checks are carried out with a Welfare Call for all Cared-for-Children. Where absence concerns begin to emerge for a Cared-for-Child, the Academy will make a referral to the designated Social Worker and the Virtual School Team. If a Cared for Child is absent or believed to be missing, then the named Social Worker for the child will be immediately informed.

Elective Home Educated

Where a parent notifies the school in writing that they intend to home educate their child after a certain date, the name of the child will only be deleted from

the admissions register of the Academy after the Academy has informed Cheshire East's Attendance and Children Out of School Team who may arrange a meeting with the parent/carer.

However, where parents, carers orally indicate that they intend to withdraw their child to be home educated, the school will notify the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

Child Due to Start EYFS Reception or Transfer into the Academy

Where a child is due to start or transfer to an Academy and does not arrive, the Academy will make contact with the parent/carer.

If the Academy receives no response within a week, Cheshire East Admissions Department will be contacted to find out if the child is registered elsewhere. The Academy will make investigations immediately.

After two weeks of a child not attending the Academy, a referral will be made to CME (Appendix 1) via an electronic form on the Cheshire East website, [Online CME Form](#) in the normal way.

However, where Child Protection concerns exist or a Social Worker is involved, the Academy will contact Cheshire East Consultation Service (ChECS) immediately.

In order to safeguard children who may be missing from education more effectively, every Academy will:

- Record on the electronic Management Information System the child's destination school/academy and new home address (where this information can be reasonably obtained)
- Obtain the name and address of the destination school/academy including when a child is moving abroad, or at least as a minimum, the child's home address abroad if school/academy is unknown
- Provide full details in the electronic Management Information System of child's destination school/academy, including full name of school/academy (and school address if out of Cheshire East area)
- Forward the Common Transfer File (CTF), to the receiving school/academy **within 15** school days of deletion of the child from the Academy roll. If this information is unknown, the CTF will be forwarded to the Cheshire East Authority
- Complete the online Child Missing in Education (CME) referral form which is available on the LiveWell portal. The Safeguarding Lead will need to register with LiveWell to access the form and click on portal account. (Appendix 1) and Academy Information Form (Appendix 2) 1a, 1b, providing full and accurate information on the referral form including information collected on admission as quickly as possible to enable a quick resolution.

Every Academy will continue to work with Cheshire East Authority and other agencies to provide an integrated way of working to safeguard and support children and their families. The Academies will continue to raise awareness with the general public regarding the need to know about any children missing or being absent from education.

Outcomes

This policy will promote the excellent ethos of the Alexandra Academy Trust. It will foster the safety and well-being of children at all of the Academy. It will promote the high standards and expectations set out in the Academy Trust's aims and Code of Conduct.

This policy demonstrates the Academy Trust's commitment and compliance with safeguarding legislation; it should be read in conjunction with:

- Acceptable Use Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Cared-For-Children Policy

- Cheshire East Safeguarding Children's Partnership (CESCP)
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Emotional Resilience, Mental Health and Well-Being Policy
- Equality Policy
- GDPR Policy
- Health and Relationships Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE 2024
- Online Safety Policy
- Prevention of Extremism and Radicalisation Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying DfE July 2017
- Safer Working Practice Guidance May 2022
- Schools and Colleges - When to call the Police DfE
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy
- Substance Misuse Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy
- Suspensions and Exclusions Policy
- Trust Staff Handbook (includes Staff Code of Conduct)
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance DfE August 2024
- Working Together to Safeguard Children DfE 2023
- Young Carers Policy

Appendix 1a

ALEXANDRA ACADEMY TRUST

ACADEMY INFORMATION FOR CME REFERRAL

Details of Child Missing Education:

Academy Name:

Child's First Name:

Surname:

Also known as:

Date of Birth:

Address:

Postcode:

Names of parents/carers:

Family Information: to include siblings, any pre-school or high school child associated with the missing child

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Details of parents/carers

Parent 1:

Parent 2:

Home contact number:

Mobile contact number:

Other contact numbers:

Name: Signature:

Date of completed checks

Appendix 1b

ALEXANDRA ACADEMY TRUST

ACADEMY INFORMATION FOR CME REFERRAL

Last known school/academy:	Contact and Referrer:
UPN:	Last attendance date:

Please tick if any of the below apply to this child:

☐ FSM	☐ Known to Engagement Service
☐ Cared-For-Child	☐ Known to School Health
☐ Targeted Family Help or Child in Need	☐ Known to CAMHS/Mental Health Team
☐ Subject to CP Plan	☐ A refugee / asylum seeker
☐ In temporary accommodation	☐ From a travelling family

Please provide details of any siblings of extended family:

Checks completed to date by the Academy:

☐ Phone calls	☐ Checks to other schools/academies
☐ Home visit	☐ Checked with friends/neighbours
☐ Other relevant agencies	

ances around child going missing, relevant background information:

CME Referral and date	Email received:
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Signature:.....
(Typed name counts as signature online)