



Policy No: 1j(1)

OUR LADY'S ABINGDON (OLA) CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION POLICY

This policy, which applies to the whole school, is publicly available on the school website and upon request a copy (which can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required) may be obtained from the School Office.

Document Details

Information Sharing Category	Public Domain
Date Published	1 st September 2022
Authorised by (if required)	The Governing Board
Review/Update Date	September 2023
Responsible Area	Head and Leadership Team

We comply with the Government guidance and regulations, currently in force, regarding COVID.

This policy applies to all activities undertaken by the school, inclusive of those outside of the normal school hours and away from the school site.




Availability: All who work, volunteer or supply services to our school have an equal responsibility to understand and implement this policy and its procedures both within and outside of normal school hours, including activities away from school. All new employees and volunteers are required to state that they have read, understood and will abide by this policy and its procedural documents and confirm this by signing the Policies Register.

Monitoring and Review: This document will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Head. This document was reviewed and agreed by the Board of Governors in September 2022 and if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require, prior to September 2023, the policy will be reviewed accordingly.

Signed:

Reviewed: September 2022

Next Review: September 2023

Head	DSL	Chair of Governors
Mr Daniel Gibbons	Chrissi Sharkey	Freddy El Turk
Signed: 	Signed: 	Signed: 

1. Definition

[Statutory guidance for local authorities: Children missing education \(Sep 2016\).](#)

[Oxfordshire County Council Pupil Tracking Policy](#)

"Children missing from education" refers to all children of compulsory school age:

- Who are not on a school roll or being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision); or
- Who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as ten days), without an acceptable reason.

Each year children either fail to start in a new school or appropriate education provision or become lost from school rolls or fail to re-register at a new school when they move home.

OLA is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Children missing from education: Reviewed September 2022

2. 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 the reasons for the child being missing from education at the earliest possible stage.

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 parent/carers;
- Failure to complete a transition between schools.
- Anxiety or school refusal

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. Where a child has moved, local authorities should check with other local authorities – either regionally or nationally – and share information in order to ascertain where a child has moved. 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.

A child missing from education is not in itself a child protection matter, and there may be an innocent explanation for this. However, regular school attendance is an important safeguard and unexplained non-attendance can be an early indicator of problems, risk and vulnerability. Schools should endeavour to deal with this problem in three ways; *by preventing poor school attendance and truancy; acting once absence occurred to establish children's safety and try to get them back to school; and taking action to trace children whose whereabouts were not known.*

3. Process

OLA School

If a child fails to attend school without explanation, we will make all reasonable attempts to contact the family, including telephone calls and home visits. If these attempts are unsuccessful, OLA staff, in consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, should consider what level of risk is presented by the situation. They should then make the appropriate referral to police or Oxfordshire MASH if necessary.

- If contact is made with the family and it is confirmed that the family has left the address, a referral should be made to the Pupil Tracking Officer at OCC if no new educational provision is notified. The Pupil Tracking Officer will advise on whether it is appropriate to remove the child from roll. If OLA has been informed that the child has started at a new school, contact should be made with that school to confirm that the child has started there.
- If contact is made with the family and it becomes clear that they are still living at the same address but the child is not attending school, the school should follow its attendance procedure leading ultimately to a referral to the County Attendance Team.

In any event, the school should inform the Pupil Tracking Officer at OCC of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive school days **without provision of reasonable explanation.**

The Pupil Tracking Officer will apply the pupil tracking procedures on behalf of Oxfordshire County Council. The Pupil Tracking Officer can be contacted on (01865) 810515 or missing.pupils@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

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, then this information should be passed to the Pupil Tracking Officer with any details they have of the child in question.

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Pupil Tracking Officer

The Pupil Tracking Officer should ensure that reasonable enquiries are made - e.g. home visits, liaison with Children's Social Care Services and/or Housing - and notify the school if it appears that the child has moved out of the area.

4. Protection and Action to be Taken

OLA should inform the Pupil Tracking Officer and the child's social worker immediately a child subject to a Child Protection Plan, is missing.

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 a crime;
- The child is subject of a Child Protection plan;
- The child is subject of s47 enquiries;
- The child is looked after;
- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household;
 - There is a history of the family moving frequently;
- There are serious issues of attendance.

In any case where a school seeks to remove a child from the register without new educational provision being confirmed, OLA should seek advice from the Pupil Tracking Officer before removing the child from roll. Where a child on a school roll is missing, the child's name may not be removed from the school roll until s/he has been continuously absent for at least 4 weeks and both the school and the education service have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil and her/his family.

In these circumstances the child's name is kept on a centrally held register, and should be clearly identified as missing from education. Where the child's name has been removed from the school roll, but s/he has not been located, the school should arrange for the pupil's records to be retained until the child is located.

Where a school has been notified by a parent that a pupil is receiving education other than at school, and has removed the child's name from the school roll, notification must be given to the education service immediately.

If a school receives a new pupil without receiving information about the pupil from his or her previous school, the school should contact the Pupil Tracking Officer.

If the Pupil Tracking Officer becomes aware the child has moved to another school s/he should ensure all relevant agencies are informed and arrangements made to forward records from the previous school.

5. Children Missing from Home

The above procedure concerns children who are missing from education. It does not concern children who go missing from home (although joint working may well apply) who should be reported to the police immediately.

As a result of daily registration, schools are particularly well placed to notice when a child has gone missing. If a member of OLA staff 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 assess the child's vulnerability.

Further Information

This guidance should be read in the context of the statutory duties upon local authorities and parents as set out in the following:

- [The Education Act 1996](#);
- [The Education Act 2002](#);
- [The Children Act 1989](#);

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- [The Children Act 2004](#);
- [Statutory guidance for local authorities: Children missing education \(Sep 2016\)](#).
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#), as amended (Education law regarding pupil registration where a child is on a school role): [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and 2016](#).

In particular the guidance provides for professionals seeking to exercise their duty under the following Acts to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- [Section 175 of the Education Act 2002](#);
- And [Section 11 of the Children Act 2004](#).

Additionally, this guidance seeks to ensure that the duty to co-operate to improve the well-being of children under section 10 of the Children Act 2004[32] is discharged. All schools will have a designated teacher for looked after children. These teachers are ideally placed to assist when identifying those looked after children currently in school who may be at greater risk of going missing from education.

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