



The Academy at  
**St James**  
Aspire, Achieve, Believe

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# **The Academy St James**

## **Children missing in Education Policy.**

**Reviewed and Approved by:- Governors**

**Date:- September 2023**

**Signature:- Miss Rebecca Oxley**

**Position:- DSL**

**Next review date:- September 2024**

The school fulfils its duty of care towards its pupils by carrying out the following procedures in relation to pupils who are missing for reasons of internal or external truancy, or where it seems the family are no longer in residence at their address. "Going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding risks, including abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation; child criminal exploitation; mental health problems; substance abuse and other issues." Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 guidelines.

**Aims.** To identify procedures for dealing with children who are missing from school or missing in school. To allocate roles and responsibilities when dealing with children who are missing from school or missing in school.

**Procedures.**

**1. When children go missing during school hours. Where a child has been marked as present in the am / pm registers but is not in attendance at a timetabled lesson, the following steps will be taken by the member of staff on call:**

- a) Check the signing out book to ensure that the child has not been signed out by the parent;
- b) Check all areas of school
- c) Assemble members of SLT to look around the school site in an agreed and planned manner, making clear arrangements about where and when to rendezvous.
- e) Ask friends if they know pupils' whereabouts
- f) When staff are absolutely sure that the pupil is not on site, contact parents to check whether they have taken the pupil out of school without signing out. Inform parents that the Police are being informed.
- g) Contact West Yorkshire Police, using 101, unless there is reason to believe the pupil is in immediate danger. If so, ring 999.

**2. When a child has set off for school but fails to arrive. When the Attendance Officer receives information that a child set off for school in the morning, but has not arrived, the following steps are taken:**

- a) Parents are asked to contact the pupil by phone if they can, to ascertain their whereabouts
- b) If the child cannot be located, parents should be told to inform the Police, using 101 or 999 if they feel their child is in danger. They must tell the Police that the school is taking steps to ask friends for information and look around the local area.
- c) The Head teacher and another member of staff drives around the local area
- e) The DSL calls the parents back to establish whether they have made contact with their child and for an update/log number from the Police.
- f) The class teacher/Head teacher speaks to Police Officers when they arrive at school.

**3. When a child goes missing after school. When a parent/carer arrives at school to collect a pupil and they have failed to find them, the following steps will be taken:**

- a) Parents/carers are asked to contact the pupil by phone if they can, to ascertain her whereabouts
- b) Parents/ carers are asked to contact other family members to see if they may have collected the pupil
- c) A search of the school is organised.
- e) If the child cannot be located, parents should be told to inform the Police, using 101 or 999 if they feel their child may be in danger.
- g) A member of staff waits at school to liaise with the Police.
- h) Following an incident where the Police have been involved, the Designated Safeguarding Lead maintains contact with the family and uses an early help plan to support them over the next 6 weeks. "Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in future." Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019 guidelines.

**4. When children have stopped attending school.**

If the Child has stopped attending school, and communication cannot be made by telephone, home visits form part of the effort to establish their whereabouts. Every home visit, contact with family and / or other information must be recorded on the school MIS. If a child cannot be found, despite the school's best efforts then Bradford procedures for reporting a CME will be followed, as laid out in Appendix 1. The attendance officer completes a CME school enquiries form (Appendix 2) to summarise the information from the MIS as part of this process.

**5. Links School emergency plan End of day procedures**

# Children Missing Education

## Guidance for School

### September 2017

#### Introduction

Since 2006 Bradford Council has had in place robust procedures to support schools when children go missing from education.

These procedures are in line with the Local Authorities statutory duty under Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 1996 and requires all local authorities to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by 'suitable education' we mean efficient full-time education suitable to her/his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have." These responsibilities are also in place in order that children are safe from harm. Going missing from education for any reason is damaging to the well-being of a child/young person, but of even more concern is when the disappearance from school is an indication that a child/young person's safety is at risk.

Over the last four years the Education Social Work Service has supported schools to successfully trace numerous pupils who have gone missing with their families. This has been achieved by close cooperation and information sharing arrangements with a number of key agencies across Bradford. The service has also supported children who have lost their school places following a period of leave of absence and more significantly thousands of children new to Bradford have been assisted to find appropriate school places.

Bradford Council is also part of the National network for children missing education and we have given and received support from local authorities in tracking and tracing children missing from education.

This guidance sets out the responsibilities of schools and Bradford Council in respect of children who go missing from education and is underpinned by an overarching safeguarding message to ensure that children who go missing or lose their school places following leave of absence do not slip through the net.

## **Children at Risk of Going Missing From Education**

There is general agreement that some children who have experienced certain life events are more at risk of going missing from education. These include:

- young people who have committed offences;
- children living in women's refuges;
- children of homeless families perhaps living in temporary accommodation, house of multiple occupancy or Bed and Breakfast;
- young runaways;
- children with long term medical or emotional problems;
- unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees or children of asylum seeking families;
- looked after children;
- children with a Gypsy/Traveller background;
- young carers;
- children from transient families;
- teenage mothers;
- children who are permanently excluded from school.

## **The Out of School Register**

All children known to Bradford Council as missing from education are placed on the 'Out of School Register' Until recently the register was circulated to schools on a monthly basis in paper format. From January 2011 the Out of School Register will be 'live' on Bradford Schools Online and can be viewed on [Bradford Schools Online](#). To view the register you must be logged in. You will find the Register in the 'Our School' section – Children Missing Education.

All schools will receive an email every Thursday indicating the number of missing pupils who have been added to the Out of School Register each week. There is an expectation that school will check the Out of School Register on a regular basis to establish if any missing children have been admitted to their school. The online Out of School Register provides schools with the means to inform Bradford Council electronically if they have admitted a missing child.

## **Changes to Pupil Registration Regulations - Admissions and Deletions**

### **Improving information in identifying children missing education.**

Following the recent consultation on the amendments to the Pupil Registration Regulations the amendments came into force on 1 September 2016.

The new statutory guidance can be found on BSO. These amendments will affect all non-standard transitions; this is whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves a school before completing the school's final year. All schools (including independent schools) would be required to:

- inform their LA in every circumstance when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the admission register;
- inform their LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school (where they can reasonably obtain this information); and
- provide information to their LA when registering new pupils, including the pupil's address and previous school (again where they can reasonably obtain this information).

In addition, the proposed amendments will give LAs the discretion to require the same information on standard transitions, which occur when a pupil reaches the final year of that school.

There are two other proposed amendments relating to sections 8(1)(f)(iii) and 8(1)(h)(iii) of the Regulations which will require 'reasonable enquiries' to track down a pupil's whereabouts to be performed collaboratively between the school and LA, rather than separately.

### **How we will manage this?**

We have designed a web based pro-forma which will be accessed via a secure log in on Bradford Schools Online.

***The procedure is only required for pupils of statutory school age joining the school or leaving the school at Non-Standard Transition times***

**For a child being removed from the school roll.**

**The pro-forma will require you to provide:**

- Basic details of the child, name, DOB, UPN etc.
- Details of the child's current and new address (if known), parents names and contact details
- The reason they have been removed from roll
- Details of the new school if known

In the case of a missing child it will prompt you to make a Children Missing Education referral to the LA.

### **For a child being admitted**

We will ask you to provide details of the child's previous school – it will also ask if you have informed that school of the admission and received the child's common transfer file.

A number of fields on the pro-forma will be mandatory and the form cannot be submitted without these fields being completed.

## **If A Child Goes Missing**

If a child in your school stops attending and you believe may have left the area and details of a new school and a new address have not been provided, The Education Social Work Service can assist you in trying to trace this child. There is an expectation that the school will have made 'reasonable enquiries' to establish the whereabouts of the child prior to referral to the ESWS.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>If</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>You have concerns regarding the child's safety or welfare.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Or</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>you believe that the child may be the victim of a crime.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Or</b></p>
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- Checks with the pupil's friends, siblings, and known relatives at the school and other schools;
- Telephone calls to any numbers held in the school records.
- A visit to the last known address.

When making a referral to the Education Social Work Service the information they require is:-

- Name of the child;
- DOB;
- Last known address and outcome of home visit;
- Names of Parents or carers;
- Names of any known siblings;
- Details of the child's attendance;
- Any information you may have gathered regarding the child's whereabouts. This may be very vague information gathered from the wider school community eg "we have heard they have moved to the other side of Bradford" "they have moved to Blackpool" etc.

The Education Social Work Service referral form can be found [here](#)

The Education Social Work Service will:-

- Visit the last known address if it is still unclear if the family have moved;
- Send out a standard letter to Housing & Health. Carry out a Children's Social Care, Welfare Benefits & Police check requesting any information they may have as to the child and families whereabouts;
- Contact partner agencies in person if serious concerns regarding the child's welfare and safety exist eg the child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan

Nationally, every Local Authority has a named person for Children Missing Education.

If there is information that the child has moved to another Local Authority and there has been no contact from a receiving school the Education Social Work Service will contact the named person in that LA informing them that this child may be in their area and asking them to make enquiries to try and establish this.

- The child will be placed on the ***Out of School Register***
- If after four weeks after the child's last attendance in school the ESWS have not been able to establish the whereabouts of the child. The school will be advised to remove the child from the school roll; Schools must complete the relevant section on Bradford Schools On-line regarding removal from roll.
- The School will also be advised that the Child's Common Transfer File (CTF) should be uploaded by the school to the DfE School to School (S2S) Missing Children Database.

**If at any time after the child has been removed from the roll the school receive any information regarding the child's whereabouts or are contacted by a receiving school, the Education Social Work Service must be informed.**

If a child's whereabouts have not been established within 6 weeks of being placed on the ***Out of School Register***, the Education Social Work Service will :-

Again contact Housing, Health, Children's Social Care, Welfare Benefits, Police etc in case any further information has been received during the intervening period.

Check the DfE School to School (S2S) Missing Children Database to see if the CTF has been downloaded by another school.

**Children not resident with parent – parents/carers still resident in the authority.**

**If you have concerns regarding the child's safety or welfare or you believe that the child may be the victim of a crime or the child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan or the parents do not know the whereabouts of their child - Child Protection Procedures should be followed immediately.**

In cases where the parents/carers are still resident in the authority but advise their child/ren are living elsewhere, under no circumstance should a child be removed from roll without establishing their whereabouts or making a referral to the Education Social Work Service. Parent/carer should be asked to provide the name, address, telephone number of the person/s with whom the child/ren are now living. If parent/carer does not give the information child protection procedures should be followed immediately.



## **Children Removed from Roll having failed to return from Leave of Absence**

The Bradford Council Policy on Leave of Absence reflect that of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the amendment to these regulation in September 2013 in that Headteachers will not grant leave of absence in term time except in exceptional circumstances and where leave of absence is granted the Headteacher will determine the number of days allowed.

Where leave of absence has been granted, if a child fails to return from leave of absence within 10 school days of the agreed return date that the child can be removed from the roll of the school.

Prior to removal from roll the school should attempt to make contact with the family or extended family members to establish the reasons for non return. If there is no good reason for the non return then school should write to the family informing them that their child has been removed from the roll of the school.

A referral should be made at the same time to the Education Social Work Service informing them of this. The Education Social Work Service will attempt to establish regular contact with the family or extended family until the child returns to Bradford. The service will also provide support to the family in finding a new school place once the child returns.

<p style="text-align: center;">If</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>You have concerns regarding the child's safety or welfare.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>you believe that the child may be the victim of a crime.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p>
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## **Families who take Leave of Absence or Extended Leave of Absence without the School's Permission**

We are aware that some families take leave of absence without first seeking the schools permission.

The Pupil Registration Regulations state that the pupil cannot be deleted from the school roll until 20 school days have elapsed and should be marked in the school register as 'G' Family Holiday – Not Agreed.

During the period of absence the school should attempt contact with the family or extended family and inform them that the child will be removed from the school roll when 20 days have elapsed.

As in the case of children who fail to return to school on the agreed date following leave of absence, a referral must be made to the Education Social Work Service.

## **Families who are Emigrating**

If you are informed by a family that they are moving abroad and do not intend to return, the child can be deleted from the school roll following their last day of attendance. However if you have concerns about the welfare or safety of the child, child protection procedures should be followed.

## **Extended Leave of Absence and Forced Marriage**

### **The difference between arranged and forced marriage**

The tradition of arranged marriages has operated successfully within many communities and many countries for a very long time. A clear distinction must be made between a forced and an arranged marriage.

In **arranged marriages**, the families of both spouses take a leading role in choosing the marriage partner but the choice whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the young people. In **forced marriage**, one or both spouses **do not** consent to the marriage or consent is extracted under duress. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure. Forced marriage is primarily, but not exclusively, an issue of violence against women. Most cases involve young women and girls aged between 13 and 30, although there is evidence to suggest that as many as 15 per cent of victims are male. Some children as young as 8 years old may know that they will be expected to marry by the time they are 16 years old. In some cases, this may concern the young person and have a detrimental effect on their education.

### **Incidence of forced marriage**

Currently, some 300 cases of forced marriage are reported to the Forced Marriage Unit each year. Many more cases come to the attention of police, social services, health, education, and voluntary organisations. Many others go unreported. With greater awareness, the number of cases reported is likely to increase. The majority of cases of forced marriage encountered in the UK involve South Asian families. This is partly a reflection of the fact that there is a large, established South Asian population in the UK.

However, it is clear that forced marriage is not solely a South Asian problem and there have been cases involving families from East Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and Africa. Some forced marriages take place in the UK with no overseas element, while others involve a partner coming from overseas or a British citizen being sent abroad.

### **Motives prompting forced marriage**

Parents who force their children to marry often justify their behaviour as protecting their children, building stronger families, and preserving cultural or religious traditions. They may not see anything wrong in their actions.

## **Forced marriage cannot be justified on religious grounds;**

Every major faith condemns it and freely given consent is a prerequisite of Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh marriages. Often parents believe that they are upholding the cultural traditions of their home country, when in fact practices and values there have changed. Some parents come under significant pressure from their extended families to get their children married. In some instances, an agreement may have been made about marriage when a child is in their infancy.

Some of the key motives that have been identified are:

- Controlling unwanted behaviour and sexuality (including perceived promiscuity, or being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender) – particularly the behaviour and sexuality of women.
- Protecting “family honour”.
- Responding to peer group or family pressure.
- Attempting to strengthen family links.
- Ensuring land, property and wealth remain within the family.
- Protecting perceived cultural ideals (which can often be misguided or out-of date).
- Protecting perceived religious ideals which are misguided.
- Preventing “unsuitable” relationships, e.g. outside the ethnic, cultural, religious or caste group.
- Assisting claims for residence & citizenship.
- Fulfilling long-standing family commitments.

There have been reports of individuals with mental and physical disabilities being forced to marry. In these situations, parents often feel they are protecting their children by providing a carer for them. Some individuals do not have the capacity to consent to the marriage. Some individuals may be unable to consent to consummate the marriage.

While it is important to have an understanding of the motives that drive parents to force their children to marry, these motives should not be accepted as justification for denying them the right to choose a marriage partner.

## **Forced marriage should be recognised as a human rights abuse.**

- Extract from Dealing with Cases of Forced Marriage – Guidance for Education Professionals – available to download at -

<http://education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/FCO%2075263>

**If you suspect a child is being removed from your school to be forced into marriage the appropriate child protection procedures should be followed.**

See also the [Bradford Safeguarding Children Board policy and procedures](#) regarding Forced Marriage

Resources for schools regarding Forced Marriage and Honour Based Violence are available at:

<http://education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00575-2008>

## **Primary to Secondary Transition**

From September 2006 the 'nominal' roll of new Year 7 pupils ceased to exist instead all pupils allocated to a Secondary School will be deemed to be on roll there from the first day that they are expected to attend the school. (Pupil Registration Regulations 2006).

We know from experience that a number of children fail to attend at their new Secondary school for a number of reasons:-

- The family have successfully appealed for a place at another Secondary School;
- A Secondary School place has been found for the child in another LA (eg North Yorkshire, Leeds);
- The family have opted to place their child in private education;
- The family have opted to educate their child at home;
- The family are unhappy with the place that has been allocated and are refusing to send their child to that school.

If by the end of the first week of the new academic year a new Year 7 pupil has failed to attend, the school should make reasonable efforts to establish which school the child is attending by contacting the parents and/or Bradford Council. Enquiries should also include contacting the new school and confirming that the child is on roll and attending.

**The child should not be removed from the school roll until it has been established beyond reasonable doubt that he/she is on the roll and attending another school.**

In those cases where the school are unable to establish if the child is attending an alternative school or provision an immediate referral should be made to the Education Social Work Service who will investigate the circumstances of the child's non-attendance. While this investigation is being carried out, the child should remain on the roll of the school in line with the provisions set out by The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (SI 1995/2089).

**Actions by schools where a pupil does not arrive on the expected start date and the effect on the ‘other’ school when it is found the pupil has started at another school**

Step	Event	School A (school expecting a pupil)	School B (school where pupil actually starts)
1.	Enrolment	Enters pupil on admission register with enrolment status of C	Enters pupil on admission register with enrolment status of C
2.	Attendance (prior to school A finding where pupil is)	Marks pupil as absent, no reason given (Code N)	Marks pupil as present or absent in the normal way
3.		Make pupil a leaver from the date that the pupil is found registered at another school	
4.	Enrolment (once school A finds where pupil is)	Change enrolment status to S (Dual subsidiary) (from the date of enrolment to the date of leaving)	Change enrolment status to M (Dual main) (from the date of enrolment to the date agreed with school A that the pupil will be made a leaver at School A). Enrolment status reverts to C from the date that the pupil is marked as a leaver from school A.
5.	Attendance (once school A finds where pupil is)	Contact school B to request information on actual attendance and absence from date of enrolment to date marked as a leaver from school A. Mark any present session as Code D and any absence with the same absence code used by school B.	Provide information to school A on attendance and absence at school B from date of enrolment to date marked as a leaver from school A. No changes need to be made to the attendance register at school B.

NOTE: Step 4 is the procedural change that takes place i.e. recognising that the pupil was registered at two establishments for the period in question. Schools and their MIS systems, however, are not required to hold a ‘history’ for enrolment status. As a result, it may not be necessary for school B to make any change to the enrolment status for the period of the dual registration if that will not be stored in the MIS system. However, school B should keep a manual note to this effect.

**Deletions from the Register**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 enable schools to delete compulsory school-age children in the following circumstances:

- the school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order;
- the School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority;

completion of compulsory school age;  
permanent exclusion;  
death of the pupil;  
transfer between schools; and  
pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.  
failure to return for an extended family holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil;  
a medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age;  
in custody for more than four months;  
20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil; and  
Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and Local authority have tries to locate the pupil.  
Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered and parents have no intention of maintaining the school place

All other deletions are illegal and could result in result in court proceedings against the person responsible

It is essential that schools indicate with the correct code within their MIS system the reason the child has been removed from the school roll. The code 'Other/Unknown' should only be used once all attempts to locate the whereabouts of the child and reasonable enquiries have taken place.

**All pupils who are removed from the school roll and a new school or education provision has not been identified must prompt a referral to the Education Social Work Service**

## **Waiting Lists**

Waiting lists for the Reception intake will be maintained by the School Admissions Team until the end of the school year for which the application was made for all community and voluntary-controlled schools. Once waiting lists are closed, parents would need to apply on an 'in-year application form' for a place in Year 1 if they still wish to be considered for a place at their preferred schools.

Voluntary-aided and foundation schools may keep their own waiting lists for any year group, but it is good practice to close these lists at the end of each academic year to avoid encouraging parents to move children who have since settled into other schools and to keep lists becoming unmanageable.

## **Further Information**

School Attendance – Departmental Advice – can be found [here](#)

Children Missing Education – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities November 2013 can be found [here](#)

## **Contact Information**

**If you require further information regarding ‘Children Missing Education’ please contact**

The Education Social Work Service

Tel 01274 439651

Or Email [cme@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:cme@bradford.gov.uk)