Oxfordshire County Council

Children Missing Education Policy

1. Rationale:

To lay out Oxfordshire's duties and responsibilities to resident children missing education (CME) and describe how the local authority discharges these duties and provides services to ensure their needs are met.

To ensure that Oxfordshire families are safe, healthy, prosperous and self-reliant because they have the aspirations and means to succeed.

2. Legislative framework informing this policy:

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (added by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)

Education Act 1996 (section 7, 8, 14 and 19)

Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 4 and 38)

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2024

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2022

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021

Children Missing From Education Statutory Guidance 2016

Working Together to Improve School Attendance August 2024

Oxfordshire has a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in this area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. This duty only relates to children of compulsory school age.

3. Introduction:

Oxfordshire County Council is committed to ensuring that each resident child receives their full-time educational entitlement to support every available opportunity that leads to

- Strong Families*:* families thrive because they have developed the skills, knowledge, behaviours, capabilities and resilience to do so.

- Safe Families*:* families stay safe because they are resilience to and able to effectively manage risks and protect themselves from harm.

- Healthy Families*:* families are healthy because they have obtained the skills, knowledge, behaviours and capabilities to lead healthy and socially responsible life-styles; and

- Economically Prosperous Families*:* families prosper because they have secured the means to live independently through sustained engagement in employment, education and training.

4. Commitment:

Oxfordshire County Council is committed to

- Ensuring that all pupils who go missing, are removed from roll of schools in Oxfordshire, move into Oxfordshire without a school place or move to other areas are speedily located.
- Supporting other local authorities to locate their own missing/lost resident children.
- Complying with the requirements of regional CME protocols.
- Supporting all colleagues and partners within Oxfordshire's children's workforce that identify children missing education or children whose whereabouts are unknown.
- Delivering this as underpinned by all the relevant statutory requirements in relation to children missing education.
- Connecting with the national School 2 School (S2S) database.
- Keeping children safe and following best practice underpinned by the statutory framework which places a duty on all professionals to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Definition of children missing education:

- A child of statutory school age (5-16years) not on roll at a registered school.
- A child allocated a place at a school but has not attended.
- A child listed as being educated at home but not receiving a suitable and sufficient education.

This guidance does not replace the Working Together to Safeguard Children Child Protection Procedures.

This document should be read in conjunction with Department for Education 'children who run away or go missing from care or home' statutory guidance January 2014.

5. Oxfordshire's strategic direction:

Oxfordshire recognises its duty as champion of vulnerable children in the County and accepts that children missing education are at high risk of underachieving in all aspects of their learning and development, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. They are considered as a shared responsibility across the children's' workforce in Oxfordshire in the same way that safeguarding is everyone's business. Children Missing Education features in Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children's' Partnership key priorities.

6. Children at particular risk of missing education:

There are numerous reasons that children miss education, so every circumstance needs to be considered on a child-by-child basis. However, some groups of children who are vulnerable to missing education have been identified as: -

- Young people who have committed offences
- Children living in refuges
- Children of homeless families including those living in temporary and emergency accommodation
- Missing children and runaways
- Children with long term medical or emotional issues
- Children We Care For
- Newly migrant children
- Young Carers
- Children from Gypsy/Traveller heritages
- Teenage mothers
- Children who are permanently excluded from school
- Children who are electively home educated due to dissatisfaction with their original school
- Children and young people who abuse drugs and alcohol
- Children of Military personnel
- Trafficked children
- Privately Fostered Children
- Children at risk of radicalisation

- Children at risk of harm/neglect
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice & Exploitation Service
- Children who cease to attend school
- Children being forced into marriage
- Children involved in 'honour' based violence
- Children involved with female genital mutilation
- Children leaving independent schools due to permanent exclusion or non-payment of fees

7. Children missing education and partner agencies:

Oxfordshire has identified key stakeholders both statutory and non-statutory to provide information about children through Oxfordshire's Safeguarding Children Board. Oxfordshire has publicised notification routes for all stakeholders nationally through Department for Education CME network.

CME may become known to partner agencies that then have a duty to share this intelligence with the Oxfordshire County Council Children Missing Education Officer to act upon this. This is particularly likely from all schools and academies, independent schools, Police, CAMHS, Young Carers services, YJES, Youth service providers, Housing, Admissions, Border Agency, other boroughs and counties, Health A&E, Health Visitors and G.P.s, residents.

Oxfordshire County Council has a data sharing protocol with His Majesty's Revenue and Customs agency to track children missing education through benefits payments.

Oxfordshire County Council has a data sharing protocol to identify children who are not enrolled at school or electively home educated from the term following their 5th birthday.

8. ICT information sources to support the identification of CME in Oxfordshire include:

- LCS Protocol Liquid Logic
- S2S (School to School)
- NBTC Data Governance
- Get Information About Pupil (GIAP)

9. Monitoring and Tracking:

Each local authority is required to have a named person responsible for CME in their area. For Oxfordshire County Council this is Jaswinder Didially, Assistant Director – Schools and Settings (Sufficiency) Children, Education and Families

Oxfordshire will track, locate and ensure access to education for children who: -

- Have never accessed education (through enrolment at a school or otherwise since reaching the age of 5).
- Leave educational provision without a confirmed education destination and/or fail to access education when moving to a new area.
- Fail to transfer between key stages.
- Have been withdrawn by parent/carer from the education system without stating their intention to provide for future education.
- All enquiries pertaining to children missing education will be addressed daily through the team email inbox childrenmissingeducation@oxfordshire.gov.uk managed by the Children Missing Education Officers.

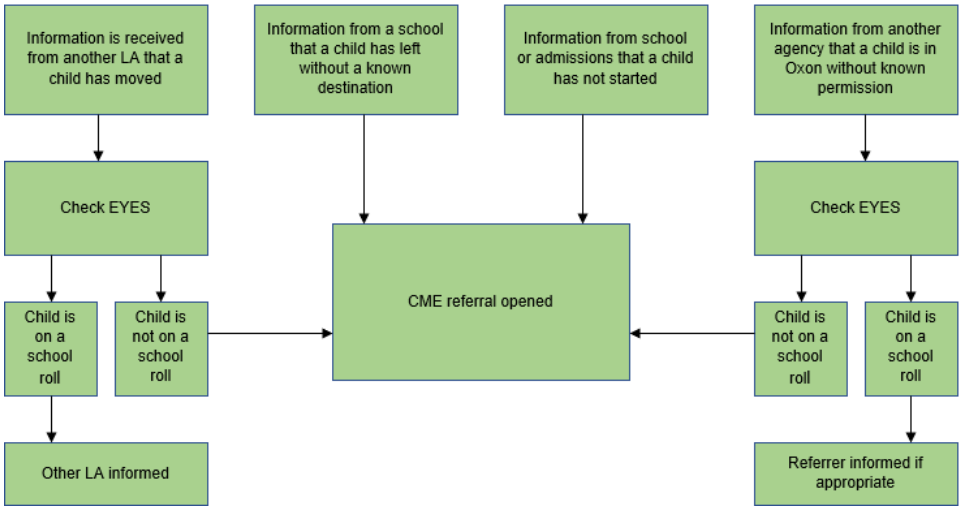
10. Oxfordshire will consider all CME matters closed when:

- The child is confirmed on roll at a school either within Oxfordshire or within the United Kingdom or overseas.
- The child is confirmed by parent as electively home educated, with assurance that parents are able to provide a suitable and sufficient education which prepares their child/children for a fulfilled adult life.
- All reasonable checks have been conducted, and the child cannot be located in Oxfordshire or elsewhere (including overseas when relevant), including with partner agencies through the Oxfordshire CME multi-agency panel (held once per term, terms of reference available) and the child's details are uploaded to School 2 School.

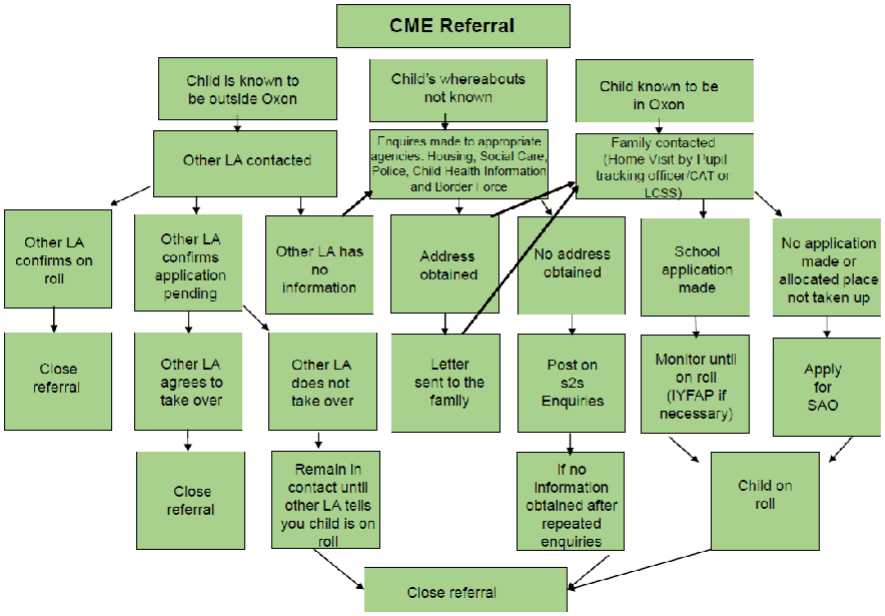
11. Services for Children Missing Education in Oxfordshire:

In addition to the intelligence sources detailed in sec. 7 above, Oxfordshire has adopted a daily data feed from all schools through the WONDE system (DfE system).

Oxfordshire Children Missing Education Tracking Process



Oxfordshire Children Missing Education Tracking Process



Electively home educated children are not considered to be missing education. A list of electively home educated children (when reported or identified) is held by the Elective Home Education Team within Oxfordshire County Council.

When partners within the children's workforce in Oxfordshire or residents identify a child, who is nominally electively home educated but concerns arise around their safety, well-being or sufficiency and appropriateness of education, this is reported to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (if threshold is met for a referral) and Elective Home Education Team. Investigation into the safety and well-being of the child is conducted with EHE Officers and Social Care colleagues. Concerns solely about the quality of education are noted and the Oxfordshire EHE policy is adhered to.

12. Management of this Policy:

Strategic oversight of this policy sits with Jaswinder Didially, Assistant Director – Schools and Settings (Sufficiency) Children, Education and Families

Operational delivery of this policy sits with the Children Missing Education Team who sit under the County Attendance Team. This policy is approved by the Deputy Director for Education. To be reviewed annually.

Review and evaluation of this policy by senior management and lead Members will be regular as para. 10 of the current guidance. In Oxfordshire, this will be annually or more frequently considering legislative changes.

Oxfordshire raises awareness of this policy through partners within the children's workforce through Oxfordshire's Safeguarding Children Partnership and through engagement with regional CME networks and the Department for Education.

Notes:

To be reviewed April 2026 or earlier depending on legislative changes and as appropriate.