



CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION POLICY

**Reviewed - September 2025
To be reviewed: Autumn Term 2027**

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to inform Local Authority (LA) officers, schools (including academies and any other educational establishment), governing bodies and other involved agencies about Wigan LA's policy to prevent children missing education. The procedures adopted to meet the requirements of the policy are detailed in a separate document – "Procedure for Children Missing Education"

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. It is a key responsibility of the LA and its schools to safeguard all children resident in Wigan or attending Wigan schools. Children not receiving a suitable education are vulnerable and can be at significant risk of a range of negative outcome outcomes (e.g., Child Sexual Exploitation, underachieving, becoming NEET etc) that could have long-term damaging consequences for their life chances. The best way for the LA and its schools to track the welfare of all children is to ensure that they are all on a school/alternative providers roll or that they are registered with the LA as home educated.

Section 11 of The Children Act 2004, places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children. In addition to this, section 436A of the Education Act 1996 is to ensure that local authorities' arrangements enable them to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

Such principles underpin this policy and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure children are on school/alternative providers rolls or that they are formally registered as home educated.

2. DEFINITION OF A 'CHILD MISSING EDUCATION'

The definition of Children Missing Education refers to all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g., privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more).

For the purpose of this policy, Children Missing Education will be considered as the following:

- Children persistently absent from school
- Those children that have been permanently excluded or on a supported transfer
- Those children who have particular social and behavioural difficulties and have personalised plan which means that they do not attend school full time
- Have medical or mental health needs
- Have complex needs and no suitable school place is available
- Those children that are new to the area and require a school place
- Those that are new to the country
- Those that have not taken up a school place within 20 school days of it being offered
- Those new to area and not secured a school place within 20 school days

- Children Looked After placed in or out of Borough with no suitable educational placement
- Those who are pregnant or are young mothers of compulsory school age.
- Those who are returning from custody and a school place has not been found for them
- Those who are from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background and alternative provision has been made (January 2015)

3. CURRENT ARRANGMENTS FOR CHILDREN NOT IN RECEIPT OF FULL TIME EDUCATION

Exclusions - The Pupil Inclusion Team have systems in place to monitor exclusions from school and challenge schools where appropriate. The following is monitored:

Any exclusions that are 6 days or over to ascertain provision.

Any exclusions over 15 days in a term to ensure that schools are following guidance and having disciplinary committee meetings.

Manually import all exclusions and highlight areas of concern.

Challenge instances of illegal exclusion.

Monitor all exclusions and provide annual summary report to senior management and schools.

Reduced Timetables – The Pupil Inclusion Team (in close liaison with Targetted Education Support Service) have introduced a system to identify pupils those pupils who are placed on a part time / reduced timetable and may offer challenge and support where it is felt appropriate. This is regularly monitored through contact with the school. This information is shared with other teams to ensure that investigations can take place, any updates are provided, and concerns can be raised.

Attendance – Schools have a responsibility to monitor a child's attendance and investigate any unexplained absence. They should inform the Safeguarding Hub of the details of pupils who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission. It is also important that pupils' irregular attendance is referred.

Independent schools (in and out of the borough) / free schools - A central list has been compiled to detail schools within and outside the borough that our children attend. This includes independent schools, free schools, UTC's and out of borough special schools. The Pupil Inclusion team will make contact with all of the schools to raise attendance, pupils on roll and CME duties. (New September 2015)

Children attending Alternative provision - The Pupil Inclusion Team maintain a central list of any pupils that are accessing off site alternative provision (i.e., construction, fishing, hairdressing, mechanics etc).

Schools are being asked to notify the team once a pupil is placed on alternative provision and once a pupil is removed from alternative provision so that our records are accurate, and discussions can take place regarding other arrangements for the pupil. (September 2015).

4. CHILDREN REMOVED FROM ROLL FROM A WIGAN LA SCHOOL

On a weekly basis the Pupil Inclusion Team will access a list of pupils taken off roll and will take action to identify those pupils where no destination has been provided. The team will also access the data on a termly basis to ensure that any students taken off roll where the entry has been backdated are also identified.

The circumstances in which a school may delete compulsory school-age children from their registers are limited. Schools are obliged to comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

5. CHILDREN ARRIVING INTO WIGAN LA FROM OUT OF BOROUGH

Next Steps - Please refer to "Procedure for Children Missing Education"

6. THE CME GROUP

Officers from the following services/agencies make up the CME Group

- Pupil Inclusion
- Sexual Exploitation and Missing
- Ethnic Minority Achievement Service
- Startwell Services
- Health Service
- Housing
- School Organisation
- Youth Offending
- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Social Care
- Virtual School Team

Members of the CME group have entered into a Data Sharing Agreement which has been approved by the local authority's Data Protection Officer and Legal Department.

CME Meetings are held every 6-8 weeks. Prior to each meeting, officers update the CME list on the AGMA website. This is updated as and when a child becomes / is removed from CME list.

Under the Data sharing Agreement referred to above, all group members have access to the AGMA website where CME case notes are also stored.

The CME list is a standard agenda item at each meeting. Each case is discussed to determine actions and timescales and the appropriate service or agency or multi-agency approach to reach the desired outcomes most effectively and expediently. Any cases in which the group agree that all attempts to locate the child have been exhausted, then it will be placed on the CME dormant list and CME dormant base on ONEV4. The Pupil Inclusion Team will also check the list on a termly basis and at the end of each academic year to see if any children have returned to education within Wigan.

The CME group will undertake case file audits twice a year to review current practice and will implement an audit action plan.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Procedure for Children Missing Education.