



GATEHOUSE SCHOOL

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION POLICY

Updated in line with the DfE's Working Together to Improve School Attendance,	September 2024
Last Review	Summer Term 2024
Next Review	Autumn Term 2025

Admissions Register / First Attendance

The School will enter all pupils' details on the electronic Admissions Register by the first day that the pupil is registered to attend the School. This will include contact details for at least two emergency contacts. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date the School will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the Local Authority at the earliest opportunity.

Attendance Register

The School will record and monitor the attendance of all pupils through "taking a register" for each form at the start of both the morning and afternoon school sessions. The Local Authority will be notified in cases where:

- a pupil is absent from school, without authorised permission, for a period of 10 days or more
- a pupil has not returned to school after an authorised absence of ten consecutive days, except in exceptional circumstances where the school has been notified that a child is being educated elsewhere e.g. where a child is accompanying a parent on an overseas work placement and arrangements have been made to continue short term education whilst overseas or where the pupil is unable to attend school because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

The School will monitor the overall attendance statistics for pupils and there may be circumstances where, if this falls below 85%, Safeguarding concerns apply and the DSL will be notified. The DSL and

Headteacher will decide whether a referral to the Local Authority should be made. It is the responsibility of the DSL to regularly monitor attendance and to inform the Headteacher (as appropriate) should there be any concern relating to the attendance of a pupil.

The school closely monitors attendance, absence, suspensions, and exclusions. A child going missing and absent from education, whether prolonged or on repeat occasions, can be a vital warning sign of a wide range of safeguarding issues and is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation, and child criminal exploitation (county lines) or mental health problems. In accordance with the DfE's Working together to improve school attendance, the school follows up on absences and addresses persistent absence as part of its safeguarding duty. Such an approach prevents the risk of these children becoming children missing education in the future. Staff address daily absence and persistent absence as soon as these problems emerge as part of the school's early help response.

Staff should be alert to children already known to be vulnerable going missing from education especially Children known to a Social Worker and Looked After Children, since absence from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. Staff must also be alert to signs of children at risk of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Children absent from education procedures at Gatehouse

The School has clear procedures in place for following up on unexplained absences and, where necessary, reporting to the Local Authority pupils who are absent from school for more than 10 school days (continuous). Unauthorised Absence Procedures (If a pupil's absence is not reported:)

- We will try to contact parents by phone by 9.30am
- If we cannot reach parents by phone we will email
- If we have no response to the email, we will send a text message asking the parent to contact the school
- If we have no response to the text, we will phone authorised contacts listed on the pupil contact form to advise them that the child is not in school and that we have not been notified of a reason.
- If we have no response from any contact by 12:00 midday, we will call MASH for advice Gatehouse School will follow any advice given by MASH, including visiting the home address.

Pupils who are unwell and absent:

- The school nurse will contact the parents of any absent pupil to ascertain the reason for absence if the pupil is unwell, if no explanation of the illness has been given.
- Once a pupil's whereabouts/reason for absence have been established, it is the responsibility of the School Receptionist, or their substitute, to complete the entry for the given period on the registration system. This is a matter of priority.
- Every child's attendance should be 95% or above. This is monitored by our Safeguarding Lead on a weekly basis.

- 95%-100% is the expected attendance level
- 90%-95% is an emerging cause for concern. The DSL will email the parent to alert them of our concerns..
- 85%-90% is a cause for concern. The DSL will call the parent to discuss our concerns.
- Below 85% is a serious cause for concern. Parents will be invited to attend a meeting.

At Gatehouse, we will refer children to the DSL if they are missing or absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions. See our Children Absent from School Policy and Attendance Policy. for full details.

Gatehouse School has a legal duty to inform the Local Authority if a pupil is to be removed from the roll at a non- standard transition point; i.e., where a compulsory school-aged child leaves the school before completing the school's final year. When this notification is made the following information has to be provided by the School: full name of the pupil; name, address and telephone number of the parent the pupil lives with; details of any new address for the child and parent; the name of the pupil's destination school and expected start date; and the reason why the pupil is leaving the school.

Gatehouse School is also legally required to notify the Local Authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admissions register at a non-standard transition point. The notification includes all the details contained in the admissions register for the new pupil; specifically, their full name; sex; name and address known to be a parent of the pupil (and an indication of which parent he pupil normally lives with and which parents hold parental responsibility); address of new or additional places of residence; at least one contact telephone numbers at which the parent can be contacted in an emergency*; date of birth; name and address of last school attended (if any); and details of whether they are a boarder or a day pupil.

*Note: In line with KCSIE 2023, it is the School's policy to hold a minimum of two emergency contact numbers for each pupil.

When a pupil does not return to school and the whereabouts of the child and their family are not known, the school will make initial reasonable enquiries and refer the child to the Attendance and Welfare Advisor to support with those enquiries to ascertain the child's whereabouts, and only after these steps have been taken to the Local Authority using a Missing Children referral form. Contact: LBTH CME Officer, Tower Hamlets Education Safeguarding Service, Saadia.Anwer@towerhamlets.gov.uk 020 7364 3426 / 07562 431 817 Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Excluded Pupils

In the unlikely event that any pupil is temporarily excluded from the school for a period exceeding 5 days then the school will make arrangements for the pupil to continue his/her education at home.

Maintaining Records

The School will take steps to ensure that the contact details held in the electronic Admissions Register are kept up to date. Parents are encouraged to notify the school of any changes whenever they occur.

When a pupil joins the school after the age of 5 the name of the pupil's previous school will be recorded. When a pupil leaves the school the destination school, where known, will be recorded.

Sharing Information with the Local Authority

The school will notify the Local Authority when a pupil of compulsory school age leaves the school at a non-standard transition point e.g. other than at the end of the Summer Term at the end of Year 6. The school will provide the Local Authority with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives
- at least one telephone number (two wherever possible) of the parent(s) with whom the pupil lives
- where applicable the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil will be going to live with and the date the pupil is expected to start living there
- the name of the pupil's destination school and anticipated start date if known
- the reason/grounds why the pupil has left the school

The school will notify the Local Authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The school will provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.

Where Nursery Childcare Funding is being claimed for a 3 or 4 year old, the school will provide details for the child and parents to the Local Authority.

Unknown Whereabouts of a Child

Where the whereabouts of a child is unclear or unknown, it is reasonable to expect that the Local Authority and the School will complete and record one or more of the following actions:

- make contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours using known contact details;
- check local databases within the local authority;
- check Key to Success or school2school (s2s) systems;
- follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies e.g. those of housing providers, school admissions, health services, police, refuge, Youth Justice Services, children's social care, and HMRC;
- check with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and/or the Border Force;

- check with agencies known to be involved with family;
- check with local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known;
- check with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved;
- check with the local authority where the child lives, if different from where the school is;
- in the case of children of Service Personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS); and
- home visit(s) made by appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessment and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s) and relatives.

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive, so local authorities and the School will treat each case on its individual merits and use its judgement, ensuring all of the facts of the case have been taken into account. It will be recognised that the type of reasonable enquiries required to try to locate a child will differ from case to case and additional enquiries to those suggested above may be necessary. Making these enquiries may not always lead to establishing the location of the child, but will provide a steer on what action should be taken next, for example, to contact the police, children's social care and, in cases where there may be concerns for the safety of a child who has travelled abroad, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Children at Particular Risk of Missing Education

Staff should be aware that children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected, the school will follow local child protection procedures as stated in the school's Safeguarding Policy.