





Child Missing In Education Policy



Updated: September 2026



Next Review: September 2027

School	Green Park Community Primary School
Policy	Children Missing Education and Missing Pupil Policy
Policy Lead	Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team
Attendance Lead	Lindsey Kinnon
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Richard Hawkins, Headteacher
Reviewed / Updated	September 2026
Approved by	Governing Body
Next Review	September 2027

1. Policy Statement

The safety, welfare and education of every pupil at Green Park Community Primary School are a priority. The school is committed to reducing the risk of children becoming missing from education and to responding promptly and appropriately if a pupil's whereabouts cannot be accounted for while they are expected to be in school.

Children missing education (CME) can be particularly vulnerable. Unexplained or prolonged absence may indicate safeguarding concerns, family difficulties, exploitation, neglect, or other barriers to education. Attendance and safeguarding information will therefore be considered together.

This policy sets out the school's arrangements for preventing and responding to CME, pupils at risk of becoming CME, and pupils who are unexpectedly missing from school or from a supervised activity.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Attendance Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Absconding Policy and Procedures.

2. Statutory and Local Framework

This policy reflects the statutory requirements and guidance applying during the 2026–2027 academic year. Where legislation, statutory guidance or Kent County Council procedures are updated, the school will follow the current requirements.

Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities and Schools (DfE, September 2025).
School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Working Together to Improve School Attendance – current DfE statutory guidance.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, where safeguarding concerns arise.

Education Act 1996 and other relevant education and safeguarding legislation.

Kent County Council Children Missing Education procedures and current attendance arrangements.

The school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Attendance Policy and Absconding Policy and Procedures.

3. Definitions

3.1 Child Missing Education (CME)

For the purposes of this policy, a child missing education is a child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

A child may become at risk of missing education where they do not start school, cease to attend, leave a school without a known destination, or where there is uncertainty about whether they have secured suitable education elsewhere.

3.2 Pupil at Risk of Becoming CME

This includes pupils whose attendance is becoming irregular or significantly reduced, pupils whose family circumstances or movement between areas create a risk of disengagement from education, and pupils whose future educational provision is uncertain.

3.3 Missing Pupil

For Green Park, a missing pupil is a pupil who is expected to be in school, on a visit, at an after-school activity or in another supervised location, but whose whereabouts cannot be established by the adult responsible for them.

3.4 Absconding

Where a pupil leaves, or attempts to leave, the school site or an agreed supervised area without permission, staff will follow the school's Absconding Policy and Procedures. This policy should not be used instead of the emergency procedures in that policy.

4. Aims

Ensure that every pupil of compulsory school age receives suitable education.

Reduce the risk of pupils becoming missing from education.

Identify pupils at risk of CME at the earliest opportunity.

Maintain accurate admission and attendance records and reliable contact information.

Respond promptly to unexplained or prolonged absence.

Ensure that safeguarding concerns are identified and acted upon without delay.

Work constructively with parents and carers, the Local Authority and other agencies.

Ensure pupils are not removed from the school roll without meeting the relevant statutory requirements.

Provide clear procedures for responding when a pupil is unexpectedly missing from school or a supervised activity.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Governing Body

Provide strategic oversight of attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

Ensure that the school has effective procedures for identifying and responding to CME.

Receive appropriate information about attendance, safeguarding and CME activity.

5.2 Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

Ensure that this policy is implemented and reviewed.

Ensure staff understand their responsibilities and receive appropriate information or training.

Oversee safeguarding responses and escalation.

Liaise with the Local Authority and other agencies where required.

Ensure that decisions about removal from the admission register comply with statutory requirements.

5.3 Attendance Lead / Attendance Officer – Lindsey Kinnon

Monitor attendance and punctuality and follow up unexplained absence.

Maintain accurate attendance information and records of actions taken.

Work with families and the Local Authority where attendance concerns persist.

Identify pupils who may be at risk of becoming CME and raise concerns promptly.

Support CME referrals and information sharing in accordance with current Kent procedures.

5.4 Class Teachers and Other Staff

Complete registers accurately and promptly.

Know which pupils should be present and report unexplained absence or missing pupils immediately.

Maintain appropriate supervision and account for pupils when they move between locations.

Report safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL or another appropriate safeguarding lead.

5.5 Parents and Carers

Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.

Contact the school on the first day of absence and provide an explanation.

Keep the school informed of changes to address, telephone numbers and emergency contacts.

Tell the school promptly if the family is moving or the child will be educated elsewhere.

6. Preventing Children from Becoming Missing from Education

Accurate admissions and attendance records will be maintained.

The school will maintain up-to-date contact details and seek more than one emergency contact where appropriate.

Attendance will be monitored regularly in accordance with the Attendance Policy.

Emerging attendance concerns will be addressed through the school's graduated attendance approach.

The school will work with families to understand and reduce barriers to attendance.

Where SEND, health, safeguarding, family circumstances or other needs affect attendance, appropriate adaptations and support will be considered.

Where a pupil is moving school, the school will seek confirmation of the destination and follow the statutory transfer and notification arrangements.

Pupils who fail to start following an agreed admission or who unexpectedly cease attending will be followed up promptly.

7. Attendance and First-Day Response

The school takes a supportive and safeguarding-led approach to absence. Parents and carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence. Where no reason has been provided, the school will make appropriate contact with the parent or carer.

Failure to make contact on the first day does not automatically mean that a pupil is a child missing education. The school will consider the individual circumstances, previous attendance, known vulnerabilities and any safeguarding information.

Unexplained absence will be followed up promptly.

Repeated or prolonged unexplained absence will be escalated in line with the Attendance Policy.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, the DSL will be informed without delay.

The school will not wait for attendance processes to be completed before taking safeguarding action where a child may be at risk of harm.

Where appropriate, the school will seek advice or make a referral to Kent County Council's attendance or CME service.

8. Children at Risk of Becoming CME

The school will identify and monitor pupils who may be at increased risk of becoming CME. This may include pupils who:

- have stopped attending or have significantly reduced attendance;

- are repeatedly absent without satisfactory explanation;

- are due to move or have moved and their destination school is unknown;

- have not started at the school following an agreed admission;

- are known to be moving between areas or living in temporary or unsettled accommodation;

- are experiencing family, social, health or safeguarding circumstances that may disrupt education;

- are receiving education through another arrangement where the suitability or continuation of that education is uncertain.

The school will work with the family and relevant services to establish the pupil's circumstances and secure appropriate education. A pupil will remain on the admission register until a lawful ground for deletion has been met and the required checks and notifications have been completed.

9. Children Missing Education – School Procedures

Where the school has reason to believe that a pupil may be missing education, the school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the pupil's whereabouts, circumstances and educational provision. Enquiries will be proportionate to the circumstances and may include:

- telephone calls, texts, emails and letters to parents/carers;

- checking all contact details and emergency contacts held by the school;

- speaking with relevant family members or professionals where appropriate and lawful;

- checking whether the pupil has transferred to another school or educational setting;

- liaising with the Local Authority and other relevant agencies;

- considering information held by the school about safeguarding, attendance, SEND or social care involvement.

If the pupil's whereabouts cannot be established, or there is reason to believe the pupil is not receiving suitable education, the school will follow Kent County Council's current CME referral arrangements.

Where there is an immediate safeguarding concern, the school will make an appropriate safeguarding referral without delay and will contact the police where necessary.

10. Removal from the Admission Register

A pupil must not be removed from the admission register simply because they have stopped attending.

Removal will only take place where one of the statutory grounds in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies.

For the grounds relating to a pupil who has failed to return following authorised leave or who has been continually absent without authorisation, the school will follow the statutory requirements for reasonable enquiries and Local Authority involvement before deletion from the admission register.

In particular, where a pupil has been continually absent for 20 school days without authorisation, the statutory requirements must be followed before the pupil's name can be deleted on that ground. The school and Local Authority must make the required reasonable enquiries to locate the pupil and establish their circumstances.

The school will notify Kent County Council of deletions from the admission register in accordance with the statutory requirements and current Local Authority procedures.

11. Safeguarding

CME and unexplained absence are safeguarding matters. Staff must consider whether absence or a pupil's disappearance may indicate abuse, neglect, exploitation, domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, family crisis or another safeguarding concern.

All safeguarding concerns must be reported immediately in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The DSL will consider whether a referral to Children's Social Care, the police or another agency is required. The school will share information appropriately and lawfully where this is necessary to safeguard a child. Staff must not assume that an attendance concern is solely an attendance issue when wider welfare concerns may exist.

12. Start of the School Day

Green Park's current arrangements for the start of the school day are set out below. These arrangements are also reflected in the Attendance Policy.

The school gates open at 8:30am and the designated member of staff and/or Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher remain at the front of the school during the arrival period.

Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are expected to arrive at 8:30am. Pupils in EYFS, Years 1, 2 and 3 are expected to arrive at 8:45am.

Parents/carers remain responsible for their children until they enter the school building or an agreed before-school provision.

Teachers are in classrooms ready to receive pupils and registers are completed accurately and promptly.

The school gates are closed at 9:00am. Before closing the gates, the designated member of staff carries out the school's agreed visual checks of relevant playground, corridor and toilet areas.

Pupils arriving after the gates close must enter through the main entrance and report to the School Office so their arrival can be recorded.

If a pupil is expected in school but cannot be accounted for, the missing pupil procedure in Appendix 1 will be initiated immediately.

13. During the School Day

Staff must maintain appropriate supervision whenever pupils are in classrooms, shared areas or outside.

External gates to pupil areas will remain secured in accordance with school procedures.

When pupils move to another part of the school, the responsible adult must know where they are going, maintain appropriate supervision and account for all pupils on return.

If a pupil is unexpectedly absent from a lesson or activity, the member of staff must immediately inform the office and/or SLT and follow Appendix 1 where the pupil's whereabouts cannot be established.

Pupils leaving school during the day must be signed out through the School Office by a responsible adult, unless another agreed procedure applies.

14. Break and Lunchtime

Duty staff must be in position before pupils enter outdoor play areas.

Staff will actively supervise all designated areas and remain alert to pupils who may leave an agreed area.

External gates will remain closed in accordance with site procedures.

The Senior Leadership Team is available during lunchtime to support staff and respond to concerns.

Registers and handovers will be used where pupils move between supervised areas.

15. End of the School Day

The designated member of staff opens the gates at the agreed collection time.

Pupils leave through their assigned exits.

Children who are not collected as expected return to an agreed supervised area and remain with a member of staff while parents/carers are contacted.

If a pupil's expected collection arrangements cannot be confirmed, the school will follow its safeguarding and late collection procedures.

16. Educational Visits and After-School Activities

16.1 Educational Visits

Risk assessments and appropriate staffing ratios will be in place.

A register of pupils will be taken and checked at appropriate points throughout the visit.

Staff will have access to emergency contact information and a means of contacting school.

Any missing pupil during a visit will be treated as an immediate safeguarding concern and managed in accordance with the visit risk assessment and emergency procedures.

16.2 After-School Clubs

A register of pupils attending each club will be maintained.

The member of staff leading the activity is responsible for knowing which pupils are present.

Any pupil who cannot be accounted for must be reported immediately to the School Office and SLT.

Appropriate collection arrangements must be followed at the end of the activity.

17. Missing Pupil Emergency Procedure

The following procedure applies where a pupil is expected to be in school or in a supervised activity and their whereabouts cannot be established. It should be started immediately; staff should not delay while trying to complete routine attendance checks.

Inform the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or another available member of SLT and the School Office immediately.

Establish the pupil's last known location, who last saw them and when they were last confirmed to be present.

Check the pupil's classroom and other likely locations, including toilets, corridors, halls, playgrounds and agreed safe spaces.

Check the school's attendance, movement, signing-in/out and activity registers as relevant.

Deploy available staff to agreed search areas while maintaining appropriate supervision of the remaining pupils.

Check the school perimeter, entrances and exits in accordance with the school's site arrangements.

Consider the individual pupil's age, needs, vulnerabilities, likely destinations, known risks and any relevant safeguarding information.

If the pupil is not located promptly, the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will decide whether parents/carers, Kent Children's Services and/or the police should be contacted. The police will be contacted immediately where there is an immediate risk to the child or their whereabouts cannot be established and the circumstances warrant police assistance.

If there is evidence that the pupil has left the school site, staff will follow the school's Absconding Policy and Procedures, including the arrangements for contacting parents/carers and police.

Record the incident, actions taken, times, decisions and outcomes on the school's safeguarding/incident recording system.

After the incident, the Headteacher/SLT will review the circumstances, identify any learning and update risk assessments or support plans where necessary.

18. Information Sharing and Record Keeping

The school will keep accurate records of attendance, contact attempts, enquiries, referrals and decisions relating to CME.

Records will be stored securely and handled in accordance with data protection and safeguarding requirements.

Information will be shared with the Local Authority, Children's Social Care, police or other agencies where there is a lawful basis and it is necessary to safeguard or secure education for a child.

The school will retain relevant records in accordance with its information management arrangements and applicable retention requirements.

19. Monitoring and Evaluation

Attendance and unexplained absence will be monitored weekly.

Potential CME cases will be reviewed by the Attendance Lead, SLT and/or DSL as appropriate.

The school will monitor the effectiveness of its procedures, including the timeliness of contact, referrals and safeguarding responses.

Governors will receive appropriate anonymised information about attendance, safeguarding and CME activity to support oversight.

Lessons from incidents involving missing pupils will be used to improve procedures, risk assessments and staff awareness.

20. Related Policies and Procedures

Attendance Policy 2026–2027

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2026–2027

Absconding Policy and Procedures 2026–2027

Behaviour Policy

SEND Policy and Local Offer

Medical Conditions / Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs arrangements

Educational Visits Policy

Health and Safety Policy

Data Protection / Information Management arrangements

21. Policy Review and Approval

Reviewed / updated: September 2026

Policy lead: Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team

Attendance Lead: Lindsey Kinnon

Approved by: Governing Body

Next review: September 2027

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, Kent County Council procedures or school practice changes.

Appendix 1 – Missing Pupil Quick-Response Guide

Use this guide immediately if a pupil is unexpectedly missing from a supervised location.

STOP AND REPORT – Tell the Headteacher/Deputy/SLT and School Office immediately.

ESTABLISH – Confirm the pupil's name, class, last known location, time last seen and who last saw them.

SEARCH – Check the classroom, toilets, corridors, playgrounds, halls, safe spaces and other likely locations.

ACCOUNT – Ensure other pupils remain safely supervised while staff search.

CHECK EXITS – Check the school perimeter and relevant entrances/exits.

ASSESS RISK – Consider age, SEND, medical needs, safeguarding concerns, known risks, weather and likely destinations.

ESCALATE – If the pupil is not found promptly, SLT will contact parents/carers and decide whether Children's Services and/or police involvement is required. Immediate danger = 999.

ABScending – If the pupil has left or attempted to leave the school site, follow the Absconding Policy and Procedures.

RECORD – Record actions, times, decisions and outcome on the school's incident/safeguarding system.

REVIEW – Complete a post-incident review and update risk assessments/support arrangements where needed.

Important: This guide does not replace professional judgement. Where there is an immediate safeguarding concern, staff must act without delay and follow the school's safeguarding procedures.
Green Park Community Primary School • Children Missing Education and Missing Pupil Policy • 2026–2027