

# High Tunstall College of Science



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## Children Missing Education Policy

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Stakeholder Consulted	- Quality of Education Committee
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Responsibility for Review	- Designated Safeguarding Lead, Attendance & Safeguarding & Headteacher.

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## Statement of intent

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children missing education (CME) risk underachieving, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life, and it can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including abuse and neglect.

The LA has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and help them back into education. This policy highlights what our college will do to help the LA with its duty.

For the purpose of this policy, a “**child missing education**” is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending the school (college), not placed in alternative provision by an LA, and not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition also encompasses children who are receiving an education, but not one that is suitable, including children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, SEND.

This policy does not address students who are considered to be absent from education, which is where a registered student is not attending regularly, including where they are persistently or severely absent from college. Procedures for addressing instances where students are not attending regularly are instead set out in the college's attendance policy.

## 1. **[Updated]** Legal framework

1.1. **[Updated]** This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended in 2018)
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2018)
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2014)
- DfE (2018) 'Working together to safeguard children'
- **[Updated]** DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- **[Updated]** DfE (2013) 'Children missing education' (Updated 2025)
- **[Updated]** DfE (2014) 'School Admissions Code' (Updated 2022)
- **[Updated]** DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance' (Updated 2024)
- **[New]** School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following college policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Admissions Policy.

## 2. **[New]** Defining children missing education

2.1. The college will recognise that CME includes children who:

- Are in the process of applying for a place at the college
- Have been offered a place in the college for a future date but have not yet started
- Are receiving elective home education (EHE) that has been assessed as unsuitable
- Have been recorded as CME for an extended period, e.g. where their whereabouts is unclear or unknown.

2.2. The college will recognise that CME does not include children who:

- Are receiving suitable education otherwise than at the college or a school, e.g. they are home educated or attending alternative provision, which is suitable for the child's needs.
- Are receiving EHE but the LA has not had an opportunity to assess whether the education being provided is suitable.
- Are registered at a school, even if they are persistently or severely absent from school or this college.

2.3. For the purpose of this policy:

- The term "student" will be used when referring to children who are on the college roll, including those who may be at risk of becoming CME through absence or transition.
- The term "child" will be used when referring to children who are already missing education – that is, children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school or this college and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school or this college, in line with the above definitions.

## 3. **[Updated]** Reasons for children missing education

3.1. There are a number of reasons as to why children miss education, including the following:

- Failing to be registered at a school at the age of five (5)
- Failing to make a successful transition
- Exclusion
- Mid-year transfer of school

- **[Updated]** Children who have moved into or out of the area, including those who have recently arrived in the country
- **[New]** Children who are awaiting the outcome of an application to the college or who have not taken up the place offered
- **[New]** Children who have been withdrawn from this college by their parents for EHE, where the education provided is later assessed as unsuitable
- **[Updated]** Children who have been permanently excluded and for whom suitable alternative provision has not yet been arranged
- **[New]** Children who have been removed from a school roll or this college's roll without a confirmed new school or college place or without evidence of suitable education otherwise
- Children whose whereabouts are unclear or unknown, or who have been recorded as CME for an extended period.

3.2. Aside from these reasons, if a child is missing from education, particularly repeatedly, this can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, such as the following:

- Abuse and neglect – including child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE), potentially involving county lines
- So-called 'honour-based' abuse – including risk of FGM or risk of forced marriage
- Mental health issues
- Risk of substance abuse
- Risk of travelling to conflict zones.

Staff will be aware that early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding relating to CME and to help prevent the risks of a pupil going missing in the future. All staff will be made aware of unauthorised absence procedures and this policy to ensure they know how to respond to possible cases of CME.

#### 4. **[Updated]** Children at particular risks of missing education

4.1. As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, the LA will make a judgement on a case-by-case basis. The following list indicates students who are most at risk of missing education:

- **Students at risk of harm or neglect** – where this is suspected, local child protection procedures will be followed; however, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral will be made

immediately to children's social care (and the police if appropriate). The LA officers responsible for CME will check whether a referral has been made and will contact children's social care if this is not the case. Should there be a reason to suspect a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the LA will contact the police.

- **Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families** – when a GRT student leaves the college without naming their next destination school, the college will contact the LA. If necessary, the college will consult the Virtual School for advice on the best strategies to ensure minimal disruption to the GRT student's education.
- **Children of service personnel** – the college will contact the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service for advice to ensure continuity of education for these children.
- **Missing children and runaways** – should the college suspect a child has gone missing or run away, an appropriate staff member will consult the DfE for advice on missing children.
- **[New] Students who go missing from home or care** – The college will follow safeguarding procedures, notify the LA of any concerns, and work with partners to reduce risks.
- **[New] Students with SEND whose needs are not being adequately supported** – The college will work closely with parents and the LA to review support, and will request an early review of an education, health and care plan where appropriate.
- **[New] Students who are excluded from college** – The college will notify the LA without delay of all suspensions and permanent exclusions, in line with statutory requirements, and will take steps to minimise disruption to the student's education.
- **Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System** – in this case, LA youth offending teams are responsible for supervising children (aged 8 to 18). Where a young person is registered at the college prior to custody, the college will keep the place open for their return.
- **Children who cease to attend school** – where the reason for a child who has stopped attending a school is not known, the LA will investigate the situation.
- **Children of migrant families** – there is an increased risk of a child missing education if they are part of a new migrant family who may

not yet have settled into a fixed address, or may have arrived into an LA area without the authority becoming aware.

- **[New] Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and new migrant families** – The college will work with the LA to ensure these children are placed on roll promptly and to share information where education has not yet been arranged.

## 5. **[Updated] Roles and responsibilities**

**[Updated]** The college is responsible for:

- 5.1. Entering students on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the college, or the day that the college has been notified, that the student will attend the college.
- 5.2. In the event that a student fails to attend the college on the agreed or notified date, the college will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence and will consider notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity.
- 5.3. Aiming to hold more than one emergency contact number for each student.
- 5.4. Keeping an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents to inform them of any changes.
- 5.5. Monitoring students' attendance through a daily register.
- 5.6. Agreeing with the LA what intervals are best to inform them of students who are regularly absent from college, or who have missed ten (10) days of education or more without permission.
- 5.7. Removing students from the admission register where a student has not returned to college for ten (10) days after an authorised absence or is absent from the college without authorisation for twenty (20) consecutive school days, if the college and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child after making reasonable enquiries.
- 5.8. **[Updated]** Notifying the LA if any student is to be deleted from the admission register in the circumstance outlined in Regulation 9 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- 5.9. Students who remain on the college roll are not necessarily missing education but will be monitored and their attendance will be addressed when it is poor.
- 5.10. Arranging full-time education for excluded students from the sixth (6) school day of a fixed-period suspension.
- 5.11. Providing information to the LA regarding standard transitions, if requested to do so by the LA.

- 5.12. **[New]** Being proactive in locating students at risk of becoming a CME.
- 5.13. **[New]** Offering appropriate support to successfully integrate students into the college.

Staff members are responsible for:

- 5.14. Being alert to the potential need to implement early help for a student who is frequently missing or goes missing from care or home.
- 5.15. Being aware of the college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.
- 5.16. Where staff have concerns about students relating to CME, staff will use their professional judgement and knowledge of individual students to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated to the **[Updated]** Designated Safeguarding Lead, Attendance & Safeguarding.

The LA is responsible for:

- 5.17. Under the Education Act 1996, the LA has a duty to establish the identities of children in the area who are not registered students at a college and are not receiving education provision otherwise.
- 5.18. Providing full-time education for permanently excluded students from the sixth (6) school day of a fixed-period suspension.
- 5.19. When it is brought to the LA's attention that a child may not be receiving a suitable education, the LA will serve notices on parents/carers to assure the LA that their child is receiving such an education.
- 5.20. Issuing School Attendance Orders to parents/carers who fail to assure the LA that their child is receiving a suitable education, and the LA believes that the child should attend the college.
- 5.21. Prosecuting parents/carers that do not comply with a School Attendance Order.
- 5.22. Prosecuting or fining parents/carers of school-registered children who fail to ensure their child attends school regularly.
- 5.23. Ensuring that children identified as not receiving suitable education are returned to full-time education either at the school or elsewhere.
- 5.24. Ensuring that the college demonstrates prompt action and effective early intervention procedures to ensure children are safe and receiving suitable education.
- 5.25. Applying to court for an Education Supervision Order for a CME.
- 5.26. Ensuring that children who return to full-time education are appropriately supported, taking into account the reasons why they missed education in the first place.

- 5.27. Students with SEN statements, or EHC plans, are able to be home educated. If the statement/EHC plan sets out the provision that the student should receive at home, or names a school where the provision will be received, but the parent/carer chooses to home educate the child, the LA will arrange the provision and ensure that it is suitable to the child's special educational needs. The LA will review this statement annually.
- 5.28. Liaising and sharing information with other agencies to support children who miss education.
- 5.29. Sharing the fact that a child has a social worker with the college.
- 5.30. Referring to the LA children's social care where there is concern for a child's welfare, as well as the police if there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed.

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- 5.31. Ensuring that their children, who are of compulsory school age, are receiving suitable full-time education.
- 5.32. Notifying the college in writing where they will be home-schooling their child, in order for the child to be removed from the admissions register.
- 5.33. Where requested, meeting with the college, LA, and other key professionals to consider whether home education would be in the best interests of their child, particularly where they have SEND, are vulnerable, or have a social worker – ideally, this would be done before a final decision has been made.
- 5.34. Notifying the college regarding any absences or changes to the student's education arrangements.
- 5.35. **[New]** Supplying information to the school about how their child will continue to receive suitable education if proposing to withdraw their child from the college.

## 6. **[Updated]** Induction and training

- 6.1. The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education will be explained to staff during their induction.
- 6.2. **[Updated]** All staff will receive annual safeguarding and child protection training, including an update on the various safeguarding concerns and risks of harm, exploitation, neglect or radicalisation possibilities that CME could represent. Additionally, any changes to the early help process and staff members' role in this process and understand how to respond in line with the college's safeguarding procedures and statutory guidance.

## 7. **[Updated]** Working with others

- 7.1. **[New]** The statutory duty to identify CME rests with the LA; however, the college will take a proactive and preventative approach before working jointly with the LA to locate a student at risk of becoming a CME. Where it is necessary to submit a CME referral to the LA, the college will continue to play its role in conducting joint reasonable enquiries.
- 7.2. **[New]** The college will work collaboratively with the LA to return CME in the local area into education.
- 7.3. Families moving from one LA to another can sometimes lead to a child being lost in the system and consequently missing education. When a child moves, LAs will work with other LAs, regionally or nationally, to ensure this does not happen.
- 7.4. The LA will raise awareness of its procedures with local schools, partners and agencies working with children and families. The college will ensure that staff are familiar with these procedures and when they need to be followed.
- 7.5. To assist them in tracing CME, the LA has contacts with the Department for Work and Pensions, the UK Border Agency and HMRC.
- 7.6. The college uses a CPOMS, DfE school2school, to allow schools to transfer student information when a child moves education setting.
- 7.7. **[New]** The college will uphold its duty to send a CTF to the new school when a student moves to another school within England or Wales. The college will use S2S to upload CTFs of any students who have left but their next school is unknown, or the student has moved abroad.
- 7.8. **[New]** If a new student arrives at the college without a CTF transferred alongside them, the college will contact the LA to locate the CTF through the S2S system.
- 7.9. If a student with a social worker is absent from college for an unexplained reason or they are missing from education, the college will inform the students social worker.

## 8. **[Updated]** Safeguarding

- 8.1. **[New]** The college will take immediate action where there is a concern that a student's safety or well-being is at risk. All staff will follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and will report concerns without delay to the DSL. The DSL will consider whether a referral to LA children's social care is required and, where appropriate, whether the police should be contacted, particularly if there is a concern that a student is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

- 8.2. The college recognises that children missing from education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues. Where there are concerns that a student missing from education is linked to a safeguarding issue, action will be taken in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- 8.3. **[New]** The college will play an active part in its involvement to identify and support CME and ensure that this approach is child-centred.
- 8.4. **[Updated]** For the purpose of this policy, “**reasonable enquiries**” are defined proportionate checks undertaken to establish a student’s whereabouts and safety. The college will carry out such enquiries within its remit and support the LA in its wider enquiries where necessary.
- 8.5. In line with the Children Act 2004, the college will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the Attendance Student Support Officer conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.
- 8.6. **[Updated]** The Designated Safeguarding Lead, Attendance & Safeguarding will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to the children’s social care or police.
- 8.7. Where the whereabouts and safety of a child is unknown, the college, in conjunction with the LA, may carry out the following actions:
- Make contact with the parent/carer, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
  - Check local databases
  - Check data transfer systems such as school2school or Key to Success
  - Follow local information sharing arrangements, and making enquiries via other local databases and agencies where possible
  - Check with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force
  - Check with agencies known to be involved with the family
  - Check with the LA and school from which the student moved originally
  - Check with the LA where the student lives, if this is different to where the school is located
  - **[Updated]** Cooperating with the LA if it conducts checks with other agencies or undertakes home visits
  - Check with the Ministry of Defence Children’s Education Advisory Service in the case of children of Service Personnel

- Conduct home visits via an appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessments, and making enquiries with neighbours or relatives, if appropriate

**NB.** This list is not exhaustive – the college and LA will use their judgement towards what reasonable enquiries are appropriate, once all the facts of the case have been taken into account.

## 9. **[New]** Information sharing

- 9.1. The college will share information with the LA in line with statutory requirements and local CME procedures. This includes:
  - Providing statutory returns to the LA when a student is added to or removed from the admission register, or where attendance raises concerns.
  - Sharing relevant student information promptly where a child leaves the college without a confirmed destination, or where there are concerns about CME.
  - Cooperating with the LA and other partners in making reasonable enquiries to establish a child's whereabouts.
  - Informing a student's social worker without delay where a student with a social worker is absent or missing from education.
- 9.2. The college will ensure that all information sharing complies with data protection legislation and statutory guidance and prioritises safeguarding.

## 10. **[Updated]** Admissions register

- 10.1. **[Updated]** The college will ensure that the admissions register is kept up-to-date at all times and will encourage parents/carers to notify the college of any changes as they occur, such as via email or newsletters, to notify the college of any changes to their child's personal details and education arrangements whenever they occur.
- 10.2. **[New]** The attendance register will be closely monitored on a daily basis to ensure that proactive steps are taken to address poor or irregular attendance to prevent children become CME. The college will cooperate with the LA to accommodate any requests to access the attendance and admissions registers to carry out statutory functions.
- 10.3. **[New]** Appropriate support will be provided to successfully integrate students into the college, including the incorporation of efficient decision-making processes for admissions in place to prevent delays.
- 10.4. **[New]** Poor attendance identified in the attendance register will be referred to the LA by an attendance return. Where a student resides in a different LA area from the college, the college will notify and work with

the student's home area LA to enable effective joint working between all involved parties

- 10.5. Students will be recorded on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the college, or the day that the college has been notified, as the date that the student will attend the college.
- 10.6. Once a student has been recorded on the admissions register, the college will notify the LA within five (5) days and will supply the LA with all of the details contained on the admissions register for the new student.
- 10.7. Where a parent/carer notifies the college that a student will normally live at another address, the college will record the following information on the admissions register:
  - The full name of the parent/carer with whom the student will live
  - The new address
  - The date from when it is expected the student will live at this address.
- 10.8. Where a parent/carer notifies the college that the student is registered at another school, or will be attending a different school in future, the college will record the following information on the admissions register:
  - The name of the new school
  - The date when the student first attended, or is due to attend, that school.
- 10.9. Parents/carers are able to elect to educate their children at home and will subsequently withdraw them from the college. This can happen at any time, unless the student is subject to a School Attendance Order. If a parent notifies the college that their child will be education at home, the student will be deleted from our admission register and the college will inform the LA.

## 11. **[Updated]** Removing a student from the admissions register

- 11.1. **[New]** The college will ensure that guidance on removing or adding students' names from or to the admissions register is closely followed. In some specific cases, this will involve joint actions to be undertaken between the college and LA before decisions can be made.
- 11.2. The college will inform the LA of any student who will be deleted from the admission register where they:
  - Have been taken out of college by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home-schooled.

- Have ceased to attend college and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the college.
- Have been certified by the School Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend college before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither they nor their parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the college after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- **[Updated]** Are detained under a sentence of detention, and the school does not reasonably believe they will return after the detention ends.
- Have been permanently excluded.
- Have died.
- **[Updated]** Have been registered at another school, unless a school attendance order is in force or this school is agreed as the student's main school.
- Are registered at more than one (1) school but have failed to attend the school and the proprietor of any other schools concerned have consented to the deletion.
- **[Updated]** Have been granted authorised leave but have failed to attend college within ten (10) school days after the period of authorised absence ended, and the college and LA have jointly made reasonable enquires which either:
  - Have not located the student, or
  - Have located the student and agreed there are no reasonable grounds to believe they will return.
- **[Updated]** Have been continuously absent from college for a period of not less than twenty (20) school days, and the college and LA have jointly made reasonable enquires which either:
  - Have not located the student, or
  - Have located the student and agreed there are no reasonable grounds to believe they will return.
- **[New]** Have been the subject of a school attendance order that has been amended by the LA to name another school.
- **[New]** Have been the subject of a school attendance order that has been revoked by the LA because arrangements have been made for suitable education otherwise than at school.

- Will cease to be of compulsory school age before the college next resumes (e.g. following the summer break), and the relevant person has indicated the student will not attend the college.
- 11.3. The college will notify the LA that a student is to be removed from the admissions register as soon as any of the above criteria are met, and no later than the time at which the student's name is actually removed.
- 11.4. If a student's name is to be removed from the admissions register, the college will provide the LA with the following information:
- The full name of the student
  - **[New]** Their current address
  - The full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the student lives
  - **[Updated]** At least one (1) telephone number by which any parent/carer with whom the student normally lives can be contacted in an emergency
  - **[Updated]** If applicable, the student's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the student is going to live with, and the date the pupil will start living there
  - **[Updated]** The name of the student's new school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend, if applicable
  - **[Updated]** The reason set out in regulation 9 – of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 – under which the student's name has been deleted.

Where the name of a student with a social worker is to be removed from the admissions register, the college will inform the student's social worker.

## 12. **[Updated]** Adding names to the admission register

- 12.1. The college will enter a student's name on the admission register on the first day that the college and a person with control of the student's attendance have agreed that the student will attend. Where the college has a duty to admit the student, the name will be entered on the register on the first day a person with control of the student's attendance has notified the college that the student will attend. If no date has been agreed or notified, the name will be entered on the first day the student attends the college. All names will be entered from the beginning of the first session.
- 12.2. If a student does not attend on the agreed date, the college will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and will work with the LA where necessary.

12.3. The college will also make a return to the LA within five (5) days when a student's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. This will include all information about the student that is held within the admission register. Where the LA has requested it, the college will also provide this information at standard transition points.

### **13. [Updated] Monitoring and review**

13.1. This policy is reviewed annually by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Attendance & Safeguarding and the Headteacher with the next review being March 2027.