

# Attendance policy



**Churchdown School Academy**  
ACHIEVING SUCCESS FOR ALL

Date policy reviewed:	24 September 2023
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Person responsible:	Ms J Hilton

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### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ms Hilton (deputy head) and can be contacted via 01452 713340 or [jsh@churchdownschool.com](mailto:jsh@churchdownschool.com)

### 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Taking calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transferring calls from parents/carers to the head of year in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

- Phoning parents between 9.00am and 10.30am on the first day of absence if no reason has been received
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with the education welfare officer to tackle persistent absence

The attendance officer can be contacted via 01452 713340 or [attendance@churchdownschool.com](mailto:attendance@churchdownschool.com)

### 3.5 Form tutors

Form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school system.

### 3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child and inform the school of any changes to their contact details
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### 3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time.

All pupils should aim for 100% attendance whenever possible. A minimum of 98% attendance is expected by all pupils, and parents are encouraged to support pupils reaching these goals.

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each session of each school day. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.35am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 8.55am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.25pm and will be kept open until 1.45pm.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school's attendance line (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment via the attendance line.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

## **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason
- The head of year may also call the parents later in the day to gain further understanding of the reason for absence and to ascertain if any support needs to be put in place before the child returns to school

- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may request a visit from the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to the parents' house
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not. The absence will be marked as unauthorized until we are able to make contact with the parents
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the EWO. We will aim to complete a home visit on the third day of unauthorised absence due to lack of parental contact

## 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels if they fall below 95%.

# 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

## 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Absence due to family illness or other unavoidable cause
- Absence for religious observance to which the family belongs
- Absence for extra curricular activities

The school encourages pupils' participation in extra curricular activities. Pupils will sometimes need to take away from school to participate in their chosen field. Examples might include:

- Playing sport for a national or county side
- Performing in a drama production or TV/film role
- Instrumental performance for an orchestra
- A dance exam or music exam

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least three weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website and also available in Appendix 2. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to

be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Unauthorised absence is any absence which cannot be justified by reference to an authorised absence, as listed above, or where a pupil's parent has failed to provide an explanation for the pupil's absence.

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

All schools have a duty to inform the local authority of any pupils who have irregular attendance or have 10 or more consecutive school days absence without permission.

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 5.3 Long term absence

Where a pupil has long term absence due to an independent professionally diagnosed medical condition, the school will work closely with parents and all relevant outside agencies (GP, consultant, counsellor, etc) to ensure a programme is in place to provide appropriate educational provision (within the limits of the school's funding and staffing).

## 5.4 Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

The school recognises that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils will be the same as they are for any other pupil. In working with parents to improve attendance the school is mindful of the barriers these pupils face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full time education.

The school will be sensitive and will talk to pupils and parents to understand how they feel and what they think would improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet the individual pupil's needs.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Good attendance and punctuality depend on a partnership between pupils, parents, the school and external agencies. The school defines regular attendance as above 98%.

The school expects that all pupils will:

- Attend every day that the school is open unless an acceptable reason for absence is given and authorised by the school
- Arrive at school by 8.35am
- Arrive at school appropriately prepared to begin their day
- Report to Reception to sign in if they arrive late. This is a health and safety requirement
- Pupils should go directly to their timetabled lesson after signing in

- Pupils authorised to leave site during the day must sign out at Reception

The school expects that all parents/carers will:

- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their child attends school. Parents may be issued with a parenting contract, an education supervision order, a fixed penalty notice or attendance prosecution if their child is repeatedly late or absent from school
- Notify the school on the first day of any absence due to illness, and every subsequent day of absence thereafter
- Respond promptly to any communication from the school regarding their child's attendance
- Provide evidence of their child's illness if requested. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, the school can request parents provide medical evidence to support illness. It is at the school's discretion whether any absences are authorised
- Contact the school at the outset to discuss any concerns they may have about their child's attendance
- Work in partnership with the school to resolve any issues that may be having an impact on their child's attendance and work together to improve the child's attendance
- Endeavour to keep medical appointments out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, the parent should endeavour to keep the pupil out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment
- Avoid taking children on holiday during term time, except in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances, where prior permission of the headteacher must be sought

The school will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
- Closely monitor its pupils' attendance and
- Keep an accurate admissions register that is regularly reviewed and updated
- Contact parents on the first day of absence when a pupil has failed to attend school without explanation
- Take steps to monitor absence and lateness, regularly informing parents about their child's attendance levels and take appropriate action to combat persistent absence and lateness by identifying pupils or cohorts that require support
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps
- Keep at the forefront that attendance issues may indicate safeguarding concerns and at all times follow the school's **Child protection and safeguarding policy**. The school will refer specific attendance issues to pastoral staff and supporting agencies where appropriate
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe
- Ensure that all staff, pupils and parents understand this **Attendance policy**
- Communicate the importance of good attendance regularly to pupils and promote through newsletters and ParentMails. In addition, tutors and heads of year regularly speak with parents where there are concerns. Parents are invited to meet with heads of year or our EWO if these concerns continue



Rewards are regularly used to encourage good attendance. The following are examples of rewards used by the school:

- Good attendance is celebrated in weekly year group assemblies
- Tutor groups are rewarded collectively for the highest attendance each week
- End of term assemblies to celebrate the tutor group with the highest attendance
- Pupils with 100% attendance for the term are entered into a prize draw in week three of every term
- Individual pupils with over 98% attendance for the term are entered into a prize draw at the end of every term
- House assemblies regularly display names of pupils with 100% attendance and celebrate their success

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to heads of year and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies. Our data manager analyses the attendance data bi-weekly and termly to enable the school to react to trends within year groups and throughout the academic year

### **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

- Parents will initially be contacted by their child's tutor following an absence. This is primarily a welfare check and is intended to ensure a positive return to school as soon as possible. If there are continued or sustained absences the parent will be contacted by the head of year or the assistant head of year to

establish if further support is needed within the school or from external agencies. In some instances parents may be contacted by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL at this point

- If the pupil's attendance falls below 95% parents may be invited in to meet with the head of year
- If the pupil's attendance continues to fall below 90% parents may be invited in for a meeting with the EWO to formalise an Attendance Improvement Plan (AIM). During the AIM meeting targets will be set for the pupil, the parents and the school. This plan will be reviewed every 2 weeks
- If attendance continues to be below 90% the school will submit the plan to the local authority and request that legal action is taken. This could result in a fine being issued by the local authority
- Where appropriate the school will provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually, by Ms Hilton. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Special educational needs (SEND) policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Children with health needs who cannot attend school

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>/</b>	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
<b>\</b>	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## **Appendix 2: application for absence from school in ‘exceptional circumstances’**



## APPLICATION FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL IN 'EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES'

If requesting a leave of absence you will need to complete the form on the reverse of this notice, setting out the reasons. If the holiday is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance it will not be agreed. If you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence this **will be recorded as unauthorised leave**.

In the case of unauthorised leave of absence, the headteacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice without further warning to the parent. Please note that such a penalty is issued to **each** parent for **each** child taken out of school. A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 if paid within the first 21 days and increases to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. Thereafter, if the penalty remains unpaid, this may lead to prosecution through the Magistrates' Court.

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### REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

I would like the school to consider my application for the exceptional circumstances outlined on the reverse. **(Please give reasons for your request using the box on the reverse of this letter)**

#### CONTACT DETAILS FOR PARENTS/CARERS

	Parent / Carer Number 1	Parent / Carer Number 2
<b>Name</b>		
<b>Phone Number</b>		
<b>Email Address</b>		

#### DETAILS OF CHILDREN

	Name	Tutor Group
<b>First Child</b>		
<b>Second Child</b>		
<b>Third Child</b>		

#### FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY

AUTHORISED		NOT AUTHORISED		CURRENT ATTENDANCE (%)	
SIGNED				DATE	

by guarantee with registered Company Number 7773693 Registered Office: Winston Road, Churchdown, Gloucester, GL3 2RB





Having attended the Parents' Information Evening in Term 1, I am aware of the school's views on taking children out of school during term time. I understand that taking my child/children out of school may have a detrimental effect on their education. **I also understand that the school's attendance policy states that absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and that the Local Authority may issue a fine in some circumstances.**

I understand that if the absence request is not authorised but the holiday is taken, the headteacher may request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school.

I would like the school to consider my application for the following exceptional circumstances outlined below.

FIRST DAY OF ABSENCE		LAST DAY OF ABSENCE		NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS REQUESTED	

Please ensure that you allow sufficient time for your request to be processed (we suggest three weeks). School will reply to your request by email.

**Ms J Hilton**  
Deputy Headteacher

## Appendix 3: details of penalty notices

Penalty notices may be issued by the local authority under any of the following circumstances:

**An excluded pupil is found in a public place:** An excluded pupil found in a public place, without a justifiable reason for being there, during school hours on a school day during the first five days of a fixed exclusion period or a permanent exclusion.

**Unauthorised holiday during term time (Code G):** A minimum of 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence from school during term-time, in order to take a holiday, within the immediately preceding 10-week period (recorded as Code G on the school attendance register). Each parent may be issued with a separate penalty notice for each child taken out of school.

**Persistent lateness after registers have closed (Code U):** Persistent lateness of a pupil arriving at school after the registers have closed and where there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised lateness within the immediately preceding 10-week period (recorded as Code U on the school attendance register).

Prior to requesting a penalty notice in respect of unauthorised absence for lateness, the school should issue a letter to the parent(s) warning that if there is further unauthorised absence within the next 15 school days then a penalty notice will be requested for each parent.

The warning letter must be sent by first class post and formally addressed to each parent and may need to be exhibited in court. The warning letter should be considered as served, and the 15-day period as starting, two days after being posted to allow for delivery time. If there is no further unauthorised absence within the 15-school day period no penalty notice will be issued but if there are a further 10 sessions of absence within the next 12 month period following the warning letter, a penalty notice may be requested.

The penalty notice must be paid within 28 days of deemed service. The amount that will need to be paid will depend on when the payment is made. If full payment is made within the first 21 days, the fine will be £60. If, however, payment is made between the 22nd and 28th day, the fine will be £120.

## Appendix 4: children missing in education (CME)

Children missing in education refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity, e.g. school, alternative provision, elective home education, and has been out of education provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as 4 weeks)'.

CME also includes those children who are missing (family whereabouts unknown) and are usually children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address and either:

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or
- has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or
- has left school suddenly and the destination is unknown.

We recognise that a child going missing from education, particularly persistently, can be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including abuse, neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and/or criminal exploitation. It is therefore important that the school's response to such absence supports identifying such abuse and helps prevent children going missing in the future.

Where reasonably possible, the school will hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil to provide the school with additional options to make contact with a responsible adult particularly when a child missing from education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

The school will report to the local authority a pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent from school without permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

Our procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education are based on the local authority and South West Region's Safeguarding Children procedures. We will make reasonable attempts to investigate the whereabouts of the child, including phone calls and home visits. If we are unable to make contact with parents, we will notify the local authority of our concerns by reporting the children missing education to the local authority CME officer, in line with the statutory requirements outlined above.