



South Hetton Primary School

Children Missing in Education



Date Reviewed	January 2026
Next Review Date	January 2027

Children Missing in Education (CME) Policy

1. Policy Statement

At **South Hetton Primary School**, we believe this policy should be a working document that is fit for purpose, reflects the school's ethos, promotes consistency and quality across the school, and ensures that we meet our statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

This policy reflects the **procedures, thresholds, and expectations** of Durham County Council in relation to Children Missing Education (CME) and should be read in conjunction with local authority guidance and statutory safeguarding requirements.

As a **primary school**, we recognise that younger children are particularly vulnerable when missing education and may be at increased risk of harm, neglect, exploitation, or abuse if their whereabouts are unknown.

2. Legislative Framework

This policy is informed by and complies with the following legislation:

- Children Act 1989
- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2002
- Children Act 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016
- Data Protection Act 2018

3. Related Statutory Guidance and Local Authority Documentation

This policy should be read alongside:

- *Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities* (DfE)
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE, 2025)
- *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government)
- *Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools* (DfE)

- *Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0–25 Years*
- *Prevent Strategy* (HM Government)
- Durham County Council CME procedures, flowcharts, and referral pathways

4. Related School Policies

This policy should be viewed in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Attendance Policy
- Behaviour Policy

5. Safeguarding Context

Governing bodies and proprietors must ensure appropriate policies and procedures are in place so that timely action can be taken to safeguard and promote children's welfare (*Keeping Children Safe in Education*, DfE 2025).

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs. Children missing education (CME) are at significant risk of:

- Underachievement
- Abuse or neglect
- Criminal exploitation (including county lines)
- Modern slavery
- Radicalisation
- Becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life

6. Children at Increased Risk of Missing Education

South Hetton Primary School recognises that the following children may be at increased risk:

- Pupils at risk of harm or neglect
- Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families
- Children from Armed Forces families
- Missing children or runaways
- Children supervised by the Youth Justice System
- Children who cease to attend school

- Children at risk of criminal exploitation or modern slavery

7. Attendance Monitoring and Early Intervention

The school has a duty to monitor attendance through **daily registration**.

- All unexplained absences will be followed up on the first day
- Parents/carers will be contacted promptly
- Persistent or irregular attendance will be addressed through support and challenge
- The local authority will be informed when a pupil has been absent for **10 school days or more without permission**, in line with Durham County Council guidance

An **Attendance, Safeguarding and Welfare Officer** is responsible for monitoring attendance and liaising with families.

At least **three emergency contact numbers** are held for each pupil.

8. Establishing the Whereabouts of Missing Pupils

South Hetton Primary School will make all **reasonable enquiries**, jointly with Durham County Council, to establish the whereabouts of any pupil whose attendance causes concern.

Actions may include:

- Repeated telephone contact
- Contacting emergency contacts
- Home visits by school personnel
- Liaison with social care, Early Help, or the police where required

If no contact can be established following a home visit, the police will be informed.

9. Removal from Roll

The school recognises that it is a **statutory requirement** to notify the local authority when a pupil is removed from roll.

A pupil will **not** be removed from roll until:

- Reasonable enquiries have been completed
- Durham County Council has been informed
- Statutory timescales and CTF procedures have been followed

Failure to follow these procedures may place a child at increased safeguarding risk.

10. Prevent Duty and Radicalisation

Under the **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015**, South Hetton Primary School has a duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

The school will:

- Undertake periodic risk assessments
- Train staff to identify vulnerability to radicalisation
- Recognise online risks, including grooming through social media, gaming platforms, and AI-generated content
- Report concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Within a safe and inclusive environment, the school promotes **fundamental British values**, critical thinking, and pupil voice. Pupils are supported to develop resilience and challenge extremist views appropriately.

11. Equality

An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken.

This policy complies with the **Equality Act 2010**, and the school is committed to ensuring equality permeates all aspects of school life. Everyone connected with South Hetton Primary School should feel safe, valued, and treated with respect regardless of protected characteristics.

12. Aims

- To safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils
- To ensure all children receive a suitable full-time education
- To monitor attendance and investigate unexplained absence
- To notify Durham County Council of children missing education
- To identify and support vulnerable pupils
- To prevent abuse, exploitation, criminal involvement, and radicalisation
- To comply with all relevant legislation
- To share good practice with other schools and the local authority

13. Procedures: Pupils Leaving a County Durham School

The school will follow **Durham County Council CME procedures in full**, including:

1. Making reasonable enquiries jointly with the local authority

2. Contacting the First Contact Service (03000 267979) where safeguarding concerns exist
3. Liaising with One Point / Early Help services
4. Contacting the GRT Team (03000 267800) where appropriate
5. Referring to Attendance Improvement Officers when required
6. Correct handling of Common Transfer Files (CTFs)
7. Notification to the CME Officer where pupils cannot be traced
8. Removal from roll only after **20 school days** where all enquiries have been exhausted

All statutory CTF destination codes will be used correctly in line with Durham County Council guidance.

14. Pupils Being Admitted to a County Durham School

- A Common Transfer File (CTF) will be requested promptly
- Admissions will be informed where safeguarding concerns mean the previous school should not be notified

15. Monitoring, Review, and Governance

This policy is reviewed annually and reflects:

- Statutory guidance
- Durham County Council CME procedures
- Safeguarding best practice