

# THE LION WORKS SCHOOL POLICY



## Children Missing from Education Policy

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## 1. Context

The Lion Works School is an Independent special school. We are part of an ethical and progressive organisation that believes it can achieve real change for children, young people and their families.

The Lion Works School is situated within the BCP local authority. We offer an academic and vocational specialist learning provision across KS3, KS4 and Post 16 aiming to reduce barriers to enable successful learning experiences and outcomes. There are a variety of routes a student can take, which include GCSEs, BTECs and other accredited qualifications whilst building confidence, improving wellbeing, enabling self-regulation and increasing attendance. Our school is full of life and has a wealth of resources to spark interest and ignite that passion to achieve, equipping our students for everyday life and the opportunities that await them.

We adhere to the values of **ARC**:

**Ambition**

**Resilience**

**Community**

The Lion Works School operates within the SPELL framework. SPELL is The National Autistic Society's framework for understanding and responding to the needs of children and adults on the autism spectrum. It focuses on five principles that have been identified as vital elements of best practice in autism and emphasises ways to change the environment and our approaches to meet the specific needs of each person.

**SPELL** stands for Structure, Positive approaches and expectations, Empathy, Low arousal, Links:

<b>Structure</b>	Structure makes the world a more predictable, accessible and safer place. We can support people on the autism spectrum in creating structured environments using visual information.
<b>Positive (approaches and expectations)</b>	We must seek to establish and reinforce self-confidence and self-esteem by building on natural strengths, interest and abilities.
<b>Empathy</b>	We must try to see the world from the standpoint of the autistic child or adult, knowing what it is that motivates or interests them but importantly what may also frighten, preoccupy or otherwise distress them.
<b>Low arousal</b>	Approaches and the environment need to be calm and ordered in such a way so as to reduce anxiety and aid concentration.
<b>Links</b>	Autistic people, their parents or advocates should be seen as partners. Open links and communication will reduce the risk of misunderstanding, confusion or the adoption of fragmented, piecemeal approaches.

## 2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Ensure all children on roll are accounted for and that unexplained absences are promptly investigated.
- Identify and support children at risk of becoming CME, with particular attention to their SEND and EHCP requirements.
- Comply with statutory duties under the Education Act 1996 and related regulations.
- Maintain a collaborative approach with the local authority and external agencies to track and support children missing education.

## 3. Legislation & Guidance

This policy is informed by the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(2024\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2023\)](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance \(2024\)](#)
- [Children Missing Education - statutory guidance for Local Authorities](#)
- [Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)
- [Regulation 8 of the Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

We also comply with the arrangements agreed and published by Pan-Dorset Safeguarding Children's Partnership: <https://pdscp.co.uk/>

## 4. Definitions

A Child Missing from Education (CME) is defined as a child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is:

- Not registered at a school or receiving suitable education otherwise (e.g., home education, alternative provision).
- No longer attending a registered school and whose whereabouts are unknown.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Children who fail to take up a school place and cannot be contacted.
- Children who cease attending school without explanation.
- Children removed from roll without evidence of enrolment elsewhere.
- Children who move between local authorities without notification.

- Children of compulsory school age who are on roll at a school and have been missing through unauthorised absence for 10 consecutive days (although a shorter time is appropriate where there are child protection concerns or the child is considered vulnerable).

## **5. Categories of Risk**

Some children are at greater risk of becoming CME, including:

- Children with SEND and EHCPs, who may struggle with transitions, changes in routine, or placement breakdown.
- Children experiencing neglect, abuse, or exploitation.
- Children in families experiencing domestic violence.
- Children in care or previously looked-after children.
- Children from Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller families.
- Children from refugee or asylum-seeking backgrounds.
- Children of families experiencing homelessness or frequent relocation.

## **6. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **School Responsibilities**

- Maintain accurate attendance records and follow up on unexplained absences.
- Notify the local authority when a child is removed from the school roll without a confirmed destination.
- Ensure any child missing education continues to receive appropriate support in line with their EHCP.
- Work with safeguarding teams to identify vulnerable children at risk of becoming CME.
- Conduct risk assessments for students who are persistently absent or at risk of missing education.
- Engage parents, carers, and professionals to explore suitable educational provisions if a placement is at risk of breakdown.

### **Local Authority Responsibilities**

- Monitor and track children who are missing from education.
- Work with schools and other agencies to re-engage children in education.
- Maintain a central register of children missing education.
- Take appropriate safeguarding action where necessary.

## **7. Procedures for Identifying and Reporting CME**

### **Daily Attendance Monitoring**

School must record attendance and follow up on absences immediately.

### **Investigation of Unexplained Absences**

School should contact parents/carers and conduct home visits if necessary.

### **Referral to Local Authority**

If a child is absent for five consecutive school days without reason (rather than 10, considering the additional vulnerability of SEND students) and efforts to contact the family fail, a referral must be made.

### **Collaborative Approach**

The school should liaise with SEND caseworkers, social care, health services, and other professionals involved in the child's EHCP where there are safeguarding concerns.

### **Tracking and Re-Engagement**

School and the local authority should work together to locate and reintegrate CME into education, ensuring that alternative provision meets the child's EHCP requirements.

## **8. Safeguarding Considerations**

- CME cases should always be considered as potential safeguarding concerns, particularly for pupils with EHCPs who may be more vulnerable.
- If there is reason to believe a child is at risk of harm, schools must refer immediately to children's social care.
- Schools should be alert to signs of child exploitation, trafficking, or forced marriage.
- All staff should receive training on CME indicators and safeguarding responsibilities, with specific training on how SEND factors may increase vulnerability.
- The school should work closely with parents and local authorities to ensure that any alternative provision or change in education setting aligns with the child's EHCP.

## **9. Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every year by the Senior Leadership Team. An Executive Director will approve the policy before publishing.

## **10. Links with Other Policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Admissions Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy