Children Absent from Education, Children Missing Education, and Attendance Policy

Florence Bilingual School

ITALY

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the school approach taken to:

- Recording attendance information on a daily basis
- Recording information at the point a pupil joins/leaves the school
- Managing a situation when a pupil has unexplained, persistent and/or prolonged absence
- Working with authorities where there are safeguarding concerns linked to attendance, and
- Working with authorities where a child is identified as missing education

Application

This policy applies to all pupils in the school, those in Early Years.The word 'child (ren)' is sometimes used to represent pupils of the school; the words are used interchangeably.

It is important that staff, parents/carers, and pupils are familiar with this policy.

Content

1. Attendance
2. Children Absent from Education
3. Children Missing Education
4. Effective management of child absence and procedures
5. Safeguarding
6. Elective Home Education
7. Appendix 1- Attendance Guidance for Parents/Carers

1. Attendance

Introduction

Regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Promoting consistent and high attendance (and punctuality) is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the school's day to day vision, values, ethos and culture, alongside positive behaviour. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation; it must be a concerted effort across all staff in school, those with governance oversight, the local authority, and other local partners.

Missing learning time through having unexplained, persistent and/or prolonged absence, and/or missing education completely, leaves children vulnerable to falling behind in their learning, and it is well known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement which reduce longer-term opportunity. Furthermore, poor school attendance can also impact on a child's social and emotional development. Research has also shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extrafamilial harms, including crime.

Children absent from and/or missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, abuse and/or exploitation, including sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance at school is an important protective factor against wider harms, and the best opportunity for a child's needs to be identified and support provided.

Poor attendance is habitual; therefore, prevention and early intervention is crucial. Improving pupil's attendance is part of improving the pupil's overall welfare. This can be achieved by prioritising attendance in strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for potentially disadvantaged pupils such as pupils with a Social Worker and young carers.

However, individual pupils' barriers to school attendance can be complex, and often go far beyond the school gates. Persistent, prolonged and/or unexplained absence and/or missing education is almost always a symptom of wider issues in a pupil's life, and barriers to attendance are often specific to local contexts.

Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources.

The foundation to good school attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils can learn and thrive, plus a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child, beginning from the Early Years.

Monitoring and Review Arrangements

Our school aspires to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents/carers, and considers good attendance to be that above 96%. Regular attendance means attending all sessions, for the full duration of those sessions, except where there is a statutory reason.

We aim to build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school. We regularly and rigourously monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

When a pattern is spotted, we discuss this with pupils and their parents/carers to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how we can work together to resolve them. We seek to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents/carers to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include early intervention and targeted support for the pupil, or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues (see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy). We are particularly mindful of pupils absent from

school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities,and will seek to provide them with additional support or reasonable adjustments.

Attendance rates are reported regularly to the Cognita Board. Proprietorial Governors report on pupil attendance, as well as any patterns or trends of persistent absence from school. Representatives of the Proprietor scrutinise Admissions and Attendance Registers for compliance and safeguarding purposes.

The legal framework

Compulsory education

- Art. 1, paragraph 622, Law no. 296 of 27 December 2006, art. 570-ter of the Criminal Code and art. 114, paragraph 1 of the consolidated text referred to in Legislative Decree no. 297 of 16 April 1994, establish the responsibility of parents or those responsible for the fulfilment of compulsory education (6 to 16 years of age) in guaranteeing school attendance to the child every day the school is open.

Registers

- Law no. 135 of 7 August 2012 Decree-Law No. 45/2025, establishes how educational institutions and teachers are required to adopt online registers via electronic software.

Absence

- Law no. 159/2023 which converted Legislative Decree no. 123/2023, known as the "Caivano Decree", assigns the school Principal the obligation to supervise the fulfilment of compulsory schooling for children.

Home education

- Homeschooling in Italy is governed by Ministerial Decree 5 of 8 February 2021, Legislative Decree 62 of 13 April 2017, Legislative Decree 76 of 15 April 2005, Legislative Decree 297 of 16 April 1994, art. 34 of the Italian Constitution.

Statutory Guidance

Whilst national legislation in Italy and local regulations will prevail, the school's approach in this area also aspires to the leading practice within the UK statutory guidance below and will work in a collaborative way with parents and external agencies, in accordance with the principles of the *latest versions* of:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Working Together to Improve Attendance
- Children Missing Education
- Supporting Students with Medical Conditions
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Early Years Foundation Stage Framework
- Elective Home Education – departmental guidance for local authorities
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school
- Providing Remote Education
- Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's attendance

Information Sharing

Effective information sharing between parents/carers, schools, and local authorities is critical for ensuring that all children of compulsory age are safe and in receipt of a suitable education. With this in mind, and using the principles of the statutory guidance above, the school will share information as soon as possible should concerns arise, and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe including the identification of children missing education (CME, see below).

Parent/carer(s) responsibilities are to:

- Encourage daily regular and sustained attendance for the child in their care, being fully aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for learning.
- Provide clear reasons for any absence for the child in their care which ensures the school can code the absence properly and accurately.
- Contact the school on the first day of the child in their care's absence before the start of the school day
- Avoid making arrangements to remove children in their care from school during term time.
- Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence of the child in their care, including any safeguarding matter.
- Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers. Schools will make best efforts to secure a third contact number and evidence their efforts (see below).
- Update the school with any changes to circumstances/contacts, including changes to telephone numbers, so that the school can amend the child's MIS profile, and the Admissions Register as required (including rare circumstances where it is agreed that a child is dual - registered).
- Update the school with any changes to circumstances in relation to family contact/collection arrangements (separated/divorced parents) so that the school is aware of these and can support any court orders in place.
- Inform the school of the child's next educational setting and address/or how they are intending for their child to be suitably educated as soon as possible if they choose to end their parental contract, especially mid-year, so that the Admissions Register can be updated and the child taken off roll at their specified end date. The parents/carers must also supply the child's new address if this is changing.

- If the above information is not supplied, the school may need to seek advice from the local authority. This may include notifying the Child Missing Education team (or equivalent) where a child has been identified as not having a next educational setting, and the Elective Home Education team or equivalent) where children are leaving school to be home educated. In some circumstances, the local Children's Social Services may also be contacted where there are also safeguarding concerns about a child who is leaving the school (see below).

Leaving school early during the day

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by a known parent/carer for a specified reason, authorised by the Headteacher/Principal. If a pupil has to leave the school during the day for illness or a parent/carer is required to collect them for a medical appointment, they must sign out at the School Office. Where there are known medical appointments, parents/carers must notify the school in advance in writing and await authorisation by the Headteacher/Principal.

- Pupils are never allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by staff members (following written agreement by the Headteacher/Principal) to attend a school visit, an off-site scheduled lesson, or a sporting fixture. **No staff member must take a pupil off site on a one to one basis.**

Requests for absence from parent/carer(s)

- Schools, not parents/carers, authorise absence. Requests to the school for granting permission for leave of absence to a pupil during term time must be made in writing *in advance* directly to the Headteacher/Principal.
- The Headteacher/ Principal/other nominated staff member in the their absence is only able to authorise leave of absence where **exceptional circumstances** relate to the application, at their discretion: if Code C is used, the rationale must be recorded by the school. The Headteacher/Principal will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence *is* granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. Authorised leave will not be granted for the purpose of a family holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation, or for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.
- The school is able to allow pupils of non-compulsory school age to be absent for sessions they are not timetabled to attend.
- We ask that parents/carers make immediate contact with the school prior to the start of the school day, and ongoing at agreed intervals when their child is going to be absent for ill health (mental or physical) reasons in order that the school can keep records updated and, importantly, so that the school can be kept informed of their progress to full health and anticipated return date. If necessary, the school may ask for medical evidence of any illness

(see below). We expect any absence for illness to be evidenced by a note from the parent/carer(s) as soon as possible.

- An absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteachr/Principal /other nominated staff member in the their absence, in advance. The relevant Department of education code will be applied (see below).

Records

The school:

- Uses codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations, including preservation of the entries on both the Admissions and Attendance Registers for a period of six years after the date they were entered. These registers are legal records.
- Keeps accurate and efficient records (electronic) of attendance and registration at school, including attendance at all after school and before school activities. The school's Attendance Register, kept by means of a computer, is backed up in the form of an electronic copy at least once a month.
- Only authorises absences in exceptional circumstances according to government guidance using the relevant code (see above) - authorisation is to be undertaken by the Headteacher/Principal only.
- Holds at least two emergency contact numbers for each pupil on their records, where possible, and where only two are provided, makes every effort to obtain a third (schools must document their efforts to obtain a third). The school will review these contacts regularly with parents/carers to ensure they are correct. Note, the onus is on parents/carers to update the school of any changes in contact details in the best interests of their child.
- Regularly informs parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels, ensuring all parties are made aware of any concerns (unless they are not able to share this information due to court order restrictions/ and/or local Children's Social Services /Police advice).

Oversight of Attendance

All staff

- *All* school staff will maintain a positive school culture where monitoring, promoting, and incentivising attendance is seen as **everyone's responsibility**; staff, child and parent/carer.
- The school has a nominated **Senior Attendance Champion** (a member of the leadership team) who has responsibility and oversight of attendance matters (supported by other colleagues where required). Their name and contact details are: Leonardo Amulfi - Principal.

The Senior Attendance Champion

The Senior Attendance Champion has a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance, establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff.

They will:

- monitor overall attendance and punctuality patterns and trends on a weekly basis, using historic or emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them
- monitor lesson attendance within sessions to identify patterns of absence within the school day and address situations where any pupils who are on site but not attending lessons through pastoral and special educational needs or disability support or the Behaviour Policy
- undertake frequent individual level analysis to identify the pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases. This will not just focus on persistent absence but look at all severities of absence to identify pupils who can be supported earlier before patterns become entrenched.
- use this analysis to implement strategies for promoting improved awareness of attendance (including their punctuality) such as targeted interventions and support for individual pupils and families, cohorts, year groups, and/or vulnerable children
- provide regular attendance reports to relevant colleagues (DSL, SENCO, Heads of Year, class teachers) in order to facilitate discussions with pupils and their parents/carers where required.
- undertake and consider half-termly, termly, and full year data identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance
- benchmark their attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement
- where required, devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- monitor in the data the *impact* of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented or specific cohorts that schools have sought to target. The findings should then be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.
- report on patterns of attendance at Governance Meetings to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- fulfil the schools' duties in regard to CME, in collaboration with the Headteacher/Principal and DSL
- ensure that the correct codes are consistently applied, with oversight from the Headteacher/Principal- clear notes must be made of the reasons given by parent/carers of any abscences

In addition to the Senior Attendance Champion, on a day-to-day basis, parents/carers are able to gain information around attendance from the school principal, Leonardo Amulfi, leonardo.amulfi@cognita.com .

More information can be obtained from the school coordinator for each section.

Attendance Processes

The school will:

- have robust day to day processes to track and follow up absence and poor punctuality; these will be rigorously applied across the schoolwork in partnership with parents/carers, discussing the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing
- ensure that parents/carers understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development (including clarity on the short- and long-term consequences of poor attendance). The school will avoid headline percentages and instead make this data understandable for parents (e.g. the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning).
- where required, will challenge parents/carers' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like. In doing so, the school will seek to take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.
- ensure that the best placed person in the school works alongside and supports a family where a pupil or family needs support with attendance (and wherever operationally possible this person will be kept consistent).
- provide parents/carers of children in their care with the timings of the school day and the calendar through all available channels, for example the school website and any other usual method(s) such as the school newsletter, in advance.
- explain (via this policy and other methods) to parents/carers the school processes for:
  - requesting leaves of absence
  - informing the school of the reason for an unexpected absence
  - promoting and incentivising good attendance
  - how they use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most
- visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies, or in registration periods. Methods will be used sensitively and without discrimination and may also include praising and rewarding improvements in attendance at year group, class/form and individual level.
- ensure that teachers take a register at the beginning of the morning and at least once during each afternoon session of every school day (typically by 10.00 o' clock.)

- record, on each time the register is taken, whether each registered pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) is *physically* present in school and if not, the reason for absence using the appropriate attendance and absence codes. Note: usually, a substantial break such as a lunchbreak separates one session from the next. Lessons that take place

after the lunchtime break will therefore be a different session from the ones before the break and another register needs to be taken. Furthermore, when there is more than one afternoon session, the attendance register will be taken more than once in the same afternoon

- if there is uncertainty about which attendance code to use when registering a pupil,seek advice from the Cognita MD/DE or RSL. It will be uncommon for the criteria for more than one code to be satisfied at the same time. Where codes depend on the reason for the pupil's absence, the school should identify the primary reason for that absence and record that code accordingly
- ensure that should any pupil arrives late for school, they sign in at the school office so that school systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times. Repeated lateness will be discussed with the child's parents/carers to listen and understand the barriers to arrival on time.
- immediately follow up any unexpected/unexplained absence of a child who is on roll, and expected to be present for every session they are absent, with a telephone call to the parent/carer(s); children who are vulnerable **must and will** be prioritised (safeguarding, medical, and learning needs).
- if the child's absence continues during the day without explanation, have further regular contact with the parent/carers to ensure the safeguarding of the child. Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code will be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.
- if the parents/carers do not respond after several attempts to contact them, consider contacting the local Children's Social Services and/or the Police for advice. If the parents/carers do respond to school contact with an explanation for their child's absence, but there are significant safeguarding concerns about their explanation, particularly where there are existing safeguarding concerns, the school may initially seek the advice of the Cognita RSL and/or Children's Social Services.
- if there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, contact the Police (followed by a referral to the local Children's Social Services). There must be no delay.

Vulnerable Pupils

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations and/or variable moods. School staff play a critical role in communicating this expectation to parents/carers. They will work alongside families to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible.

The school is particularly mindful of pupils who may be absent from school due to mental or physical ill health conditions and/or their special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school may provide them with additional support such as a Phased Return, for example, for those

affected by anxious feelings about school attendance and/or a Part-Time timetable (see below for the latter).

Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil (but additional support may need to be provided). However, it is important to note that these pupils are **still** expected to attend school regularly as this is a legal requirement - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future. The school will work alongside pupils and parent/carers to ensure that such circumstances do not act as a barrier to regular attendance, by mitigating anxious feelings in school as much as possible.

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance.

Where a pupil's caring role may be contributing to absence, the school will work in partnership with the pupil and their parents/carers to understand barriers to attendance and to put appropriate support in place. Where needs extend beyond the school gates, the schools will work with the local authority to facilitate access to support through local early help arrangements and other relevant organisations.

This vulnerable group can also include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions and/or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

In cases of both long-term physical or mental ill health, school staff cannot and must not diagnose or treat physical or mental health conditions, but they will work together with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for the pupil.

Medical evidence for recording absences should only be needed in a minority of cases. Howeve, where a pupil's health need means they need reasonable adjustments or support because their absence is complex or long term, or frequently recurring, in the best interests of the child, the school can seek medical evidence, with the parents/carers consent, to better understand the needs of the pupil and identify the most suitable provision in line with the statutory guidance in supporting pupils at school with medical conditions or arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs.

Where the parents/carers do not consent to sharing medical evidence to support their child's needs and fulfil their mandatory duties to send their child to school, consideration may be given to seeking the advice of the local authority or other local partners to formalise that support and as a last resort, enforce attendance through legal intervention.

Where the pupil has an allocated Social Worker, the school Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will keep them informed and involved in the above processes.

The school will:

- Facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the pupil's underlying health issue.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of the pupil who is struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil, their parents/carers, and the local authority.
- Register the child appropriately i.e. for illness, in situations where a child is unable to attend because of illness (only) (short term).
- Consider whether a time-limited phased return to school / a part-time timetable would be appropriate, for example, for those pupils who have been out of school for a longer time due to being affected by mental health/physical health reason (see below for Part-Time timetable). The school can access the many Emotionally Based School Avoidance tools and guidance documents available in these situations and seek the support from the Regional Safeguarding Lead where required
- In all situations, the school will support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps

Other agencies

In the majority of cases, pupils will be supported in school, but where there are multiple issues requiring other service involvement, schools, local authorities, and other services will seek to work together to provide more intensive whole family support to address them as soon as it becomes clear they would benefit from it. Schools and local authorities are also specifically expected to have agreed a joint approach for all severely absent pupils. The school will seek to:

- Make use of school nursing services and mental health support teams where they are available.
- Consider whether additional support from other external partners (including the local authority, children and young people's mental health services, GPs or other health services) would be appropriate and make referrals.
- Where external support is provided work together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.

Part-Time Timetables for compulsory age children

In very exceptional circumstances, where the child is of compulsory school age, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for the school to provide a **temporary** part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school, a part-time timetable may potentially be used to help the pupil access as much education as possible.

Note: a part-time timetable **must only** be used for health reasons, not behaviour.

A part-time timetable must have:

- the written agreement of both the Headteacher/Principal and the parent/carers who the pupil normally lives with
- a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents/carers to ensure the plan is only in place for the shortest time necessary
- a proposed end date that takes into account the exceptional circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend school on site full-time. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process.
- In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term physical/mental health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period. Medical evidence will be needed, and external specialist intervention will need to be in place to support the child during this period (see above).

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the Headteacher/Principal has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record the absence accordingly,

2. Children Absent from Education

Often children can be persistently absent from school or have prolonged absences. Of course, there may be a satisfactory reason for their absence, most often medical, for why this is needed, for example, the child is having operations/treatments. In these situations, the school will offer work to be completed at home/involve the child with their class remotely on MS Teams, only where appropriate, and in collaboration with the parents/carers and children. The parents/carers will have a designated school contact for their child. No work must be sent home if this is thought to have the potential to place additional pressure on any child. Any arrangement will be short-term and reviewed regularly; the school may also request to have visibility of the child via MS Teams during this time and will always require this visibility when there are safeguarding concerns about the child.

However, on other occasions, the child is frequently absent but there does not appear to be an explanation or a satisfactory reason. This is different from a child being a 'child missing education' (as described below) but it is still a concern. Safeguarding procedures may be needed in these situations. For example, where visibility is not agreed by the parents/carers, or they fail to ensure visibility of their child at the agreed time, then consideration may be given to seeking advice from the local Children's Social Services. For pupils who already have existing safeguarding concerns, and all cases where they have an allocated Social Worker, the local Children's Social Services will always be informed of the pupil's absence.

As stated above, it is mandatory that children of a compulsory age attend school, but of most importance, frequent absences impact on a child's development across all domains, not purely cognitive. Schools must follow their local regulations where:

- Pupils fail to attend regularly or have missed several school days or more without authorisation

- There are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss several consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

Each local authority may have different thresholds and criteria for making notifications. The guidance from the local authority i.e. the 'home' local authority where the pupil is mainly resident will be used.

3. Children Missing Education (CME)

CME are defined as:

'children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school'

CME includes children who:

- are in the process of applying for a school place
- have been offered a school place for a future date but have not yet started
- are receiving home education that has been assessed by the local authority as being unsuitable
- have been recorded as CME for an extended period, for example where their whereabouts is unclear or unknown

CME are **not** children who:

- are registered at a school, even if they are persistently or severely absent from that school
- are receiving a suitable education otherwise than a school (for example, those who are home educated (EHE) or attending alternative provision which is suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have
- are EHE but the local authority has not had an opportunity to assess whether the education being provided is suitable

Children Missing Education (CME) are therefore different to those who are 'absent' from education.

Outcomes

More generally CME are at greater risk of underachieving and becoming 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) later in life. They are also more likely to have poorer health outcomes.

Vulnerabilities

- CME are more likely to be of secondary school age, and when compared to the overall population more likely to be known to lovcal Children's Social Services either being subject to a child protection plan or a looked after child plan
- Whilst some families are settled, children of Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller families can also be potentially at increased risk of missing education if they are moving regularly. Dual registration may be agreed by the local authority (only) for such situations.
- Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and children of new migrant families can also be at increased risk of CME due to their unsettled, often temporary housing situations, their potential for unrecorded arrivals, and sudden moves between local authorities.
- Children who have offended or are at risk of doing so are also at risk of disengaging from education. Should this situation arise for a pupil, the school will work collaboratively with the Youth Offending Team/Police/child's parents (or carers) to support the child's school attendance.
- Children of service personnel are likely to move more frequently, both in Italy and overseas, sometimes with short notice, and therefore are at some risk of becoming CME,
- Home educated children (see below) who are not known to the local authority as being home educated; parents not responding to local authority enquiries; or those who are not receiving suitable home education, could be at risk of being CME.

Risk

Some CME may be at greater risk of being victims of harm, exploitation (including sexual and criminal exploitation) and/or radicalisation. Research has also shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra familial harms, including crime.

Drivers

There are a range of circumstances where a child may be a CME. Some of the main drivers of CME include, but are not limited to:

- Routine movement in and out of the country
- Awaiting school application outcomes
- Movement between local authority areas

If children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action in the identifications and support of CME.

Reasonable enquires to locate a suspected child missing education

New pupils

If a new pupil fails to attend at the beginning of first day of the agreed or notified admissions date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and

consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. Schools must monitor all pupils' attendance through their daily register.

Existing pupils

See CME in Safeguarding section for more information about undertaking 'reasonable enquiries'.

Should/when the child be located, and their circumstances established, before their name is deleted from the Admission Register, all parties must agree there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the child will attend the school again (even when a new school has not been secured.

4. Effective management of child absence and procedures, including CME

Step 1- Early Intervention

The Senior Attendance Champion, alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and all staff will work together to identify patterns/changes in all pupil's attendance at an early stage. Schools must address all attendance concerns with both parents/carers and child as soon as challenges emerge.

School staff will listen to children and their parents/carers to understand any 'in school' /external barriers to the child's good attendance, working jointly with families to remove those barriers wherever possible. They will agree actions and interventions, such as referrals to services or organisations that can support them.

These actions will be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families. Where interventions are failing, all parties will work together to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach. If the attendance does not improve, then then next step will be taken.

Step 2-Targeted Support

Where absence intensifies, so will the support provided, which may require the school to work in tandem other relevant partners such as Children's Social Services.

Where engagement in support is proving challenging, the school will continue to hold formal conversations with the parents (and pupil where they are old enough to understand). This meeting is likely to be led by the school's Senior Attendance Champion and the DSL with the Headteacher/Principal.The school will make a written record that they have completed these procedures on their safeguarding systems.

Absence of a pupil without adequate justification determines a legal obligation for the Headteacher/Principal to take action. The legislation assigns the school Principal the task of verifying the attendance of pupils, identifying those who exceed 15 days of absence. However, the law requires constant monitoring of absences, without waiting until the end of the quarter to

act. According to legislation, if the absences are not justified, and exceed 15 days in a quarter, it is necessary for the school to initiate actions. First, the Headteacher/Principal must send an official communication to the parent or person responsible for the pupil. If the school receives reasons in response, the school must evaluate them thoroughly.

The school will make a written record that they have completed these procedures on their safeguarding systems.

Step 3 – Legal action

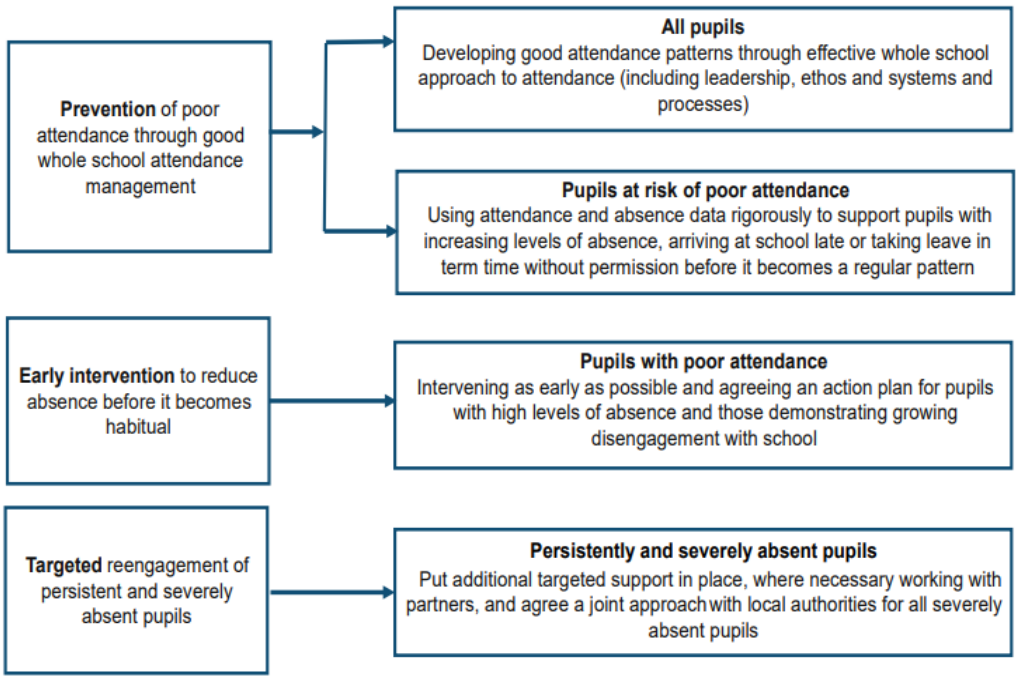
In the event of absences exceeding the above threshold, and failure by the pupil's parents to justify reasons for absence, and/or their failure to engage with the above steps, the school will follow its national legislation and local regulations/protocols by notifying the authority (Mayor).

The authorities may, decide to:

- address the person in charge of the pupil for not having fulfilled the compulsory education
- intensify support through statutory children's Social Services involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
- prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate.

The flowchart below shows a graduated approach to improving attendance.

It starts with a whole school focus for all pupils, building strong attendance culture and systems.



5. Safeguarding

Children Absent from Education

- Ensuring that attendance improvement is prioritised and strategies and action plans are put in place for pupils with persistent, prolonged and/or unexplained absence is crucial to safeguarding and improving pupils' overall welfare and outcomes in both the short and long term.
- The school has a safeguarding duty in respect of its pupils, and as part of this will investigate any unexplained, persistent, and/or prolonged absences (see above for visibility). Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions (including truanting) can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, and/or child sexual and/or child criminal exploitation.
- It is important that the school's response to persistently absent pupils supports identifying such abuse, neglect and/or exploitation and, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging, but also where children are already known to the local Children's Social Services and have an allocated Social Worker, where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns about any child's absence, whether this be persistent, prolonged or unexplained, absence, the school will always talk to the child and parents/carers about their concerns, in order to understand the barriers to attendance as soon as problems begin to emerge (see above). They will also follow its Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- As stated above, where children are absent and there are safeguarding concerns, the school will arrange to have twice weekly check-ins with the child via online methods e.g. MS Teams. The school has a duty to know where children are and have visibility of them. If the parent/s carers of the child do not agree to this request, or do not respond to any such request, consideration will be given to seeking advice from/making a referral to local Children's Social Services.
- Where there are existing/potential safeguarding concerns around a child, and the parent/carer unexpectedly removes their child to home educate them, a referral to local Children's Social Services must and will always be made (see above). For any pupil that has an existing allocated Social Worker, the latter will be updated.
- If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed whether this relates to a child's absence or not, the school will inform the Police.
- If there is reason to believe a child who is absent from school is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, whether there has been communication from parents/carers or not, a referral must and will be made to the local Children's Social Services and the Police will be contacted.

  This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds (and medical evidence) to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

- The school will work in collaboration with external organisations and local authorities when school absence is a significant concern.
- Severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute **neglect**. In these situations, local Children's Social Services will be involved and make decisions around the child/family.

Children Missing Education

When the whereabouts and circumstance of a child are unclear or unknown (and the child has been previously registered at the school) the school will do their own initial proactive work to locate a child at risk of becoming a CME before (and after) referring to the local education department/equivalent to make enquiries, as far as reasonably possible, to identify the location of the CME, and any provision of education they are receiving.

This joint activity is called making 'reasonable enquiries', meaning that they should be proportionate to the situation (for example, where risk may be involved). Joint actions may include:

1. Making contact with the parent/carer's using known contact details
2. Checking with agencies known to be involved with the family
3. Checking with sibling's schools whether they have contact with the parents/carers (if applicable)
4. Where the child had previously moved or changed school, check with the local authority and school from which the child originally moved, if known
5. Checking with the local authority or school to which a child may have moved
6. Checking with the local authority for the area where the child lives, if different ot that of the school
7. Making contact with known relatives, if appropriate, using known contact details
8. Speaking to landlords if appropriate (private, social, or temporary housing providers)
9. Referring to databases within the local authority where possible (for example, admissions or Children's Social Services)
10. Establishing and following local information sharing arrangements (where needed) to access, and check data bases of external agencies (housing providers, health services, Police, refuge, youth justice services, and council tax)
11. Checking with national databases
12. Home visits- made by the local authority only
13. If it is thought that a child may have moved abroad, consideration may be given to contacting the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and/or Border Force agencies/equivalent.

Please note that schools will usually undertake points 1-7 during their initial proactive enquiries prior to/in collaboration with the local authority. If asked by the local authority to undertake any of points 8-13, the school must and will consult with the RSL before proceeding.

No home visits must or will be undertaken by the school unless agreed by the RSL and risk assessed, even when another agency advises this.

The above list is not exhaustive or prescriptive. Cases will differ and additional enquiries to the above may be suggested.

These enquiries must continue until the local authority has informed the school that they have no further role.

6. Elective Home Education

Where a parent/carer has expressed their intention to remove their child from school from a certain date with a view to educating them at home, the school should first coordinate a meeting with parents/carers to explore why they are considering this option. Schools will explore keeping the child in school whilst respecting parental choice.

If the parent /carer still chooses to withdraw their child after the above meeting, the school must delete the child's name from the Admission Register on the date the child is no longer attending. The school will notify the local authority of the leaver, including (where appropriate) the local authority's Elective Home Education Team (or equivalent) (informing the parents that they have done this so that they can receive the necessary ongoing support).

However, where parents/carers orally indicate that they intend to withdraw their child to be home educated, but they do not put this in writing or provide an end date, this may trigger the school notifying the local authority CME department at the earliest opportunity. The local authority may wish to undertake its own informal enquiries and establish what education is being/planned to be provided.

Appendix 1

Attendance Guidance for Parents

Introduction

Regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Missing learning time leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and it is well-known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, beginning from the early years.

The legal framework

Legislation in Italy specifies the legal responsibility of parent/carer(s) of compulsoryschool age children to ensure they attend school every day.

The regulations require the school to have an Admissions Register and an Attendance Register, and to place all children on both registers. Failure to do so is an offence.

Parent/carer(s) have responsibility to :

- Be fully aware of their legal responsibilities for ensuring the child in their care attends school every day
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for learning.
- Ensure that the school has at least 2 emergency contact numbers
- Provide clear reasons to the school for any absence which ensures the school can code the child's absence properly and accurately.
- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence before the start of the school day.
- Avoid making arrangements to remove children from school during term time as this can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, and only by the Headteacher/Principal.
- Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence related to the child in their care, including any safeguarding matter.
- Adhere to any Part-Time Timetable and/or co-constructed reintegration plan where the child in their care has been absent from school for a longer period.

School has the responsibility to:

- Promote pupils' good attendance and reduce absence.
- Work to ensure every pupil has good attendance so they can access the education they are entitled to.
- Act early with parents/cares and children to address patterns of absence by listening and understanding any barriers to attendance.
- Encourage parents/carers to ensure their child attends all learning opportunities regularly and punctually.

- Keep accurate and efficient records of attendance and registration at school, using the appropriate codes, including attendance at all after school and before school activities

Late arrival

If a pupil arrives late, they must sign in at the school office so that our systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times.

Leaving school early during the day

Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by a member of staff or their known parent/carer; or to attend a school visit, an off-site scheduled lesson, or a sporting fixture. This must be authorised by the Headteacher/Principal.

If a pupil has to leave the school during the day for illness or a parent/carer is required to collect them for a medical appointment, they must sign out at the school office. Where there are known medical appointments, parents/carers must notify the school in advance in writing and provide evidence. This must be authorised by the Headteacher/Principal.

Requests for absence from parent/carer(s)

Schools, not parents/carers, authorise absence. Requests to the school for granting permission for leave of absence to a pupil during term time must be made in writing in advance directly to the Headteacher/Principal. The Headteacher/Principal in their absence is only able to authorise leave of absence where exceptional circumstances relate to the application.

We ask that parents/carers make contact with the school when a child is going to be absent for ill health reasons in order that the school can keep records updated and importantly, so that the school can be kept informed of their progress to full health and anticipated return date. If necessary, the school may ask for medical evidence of any illness. We expect any absence for illness to be evidenced by a medical note from the parent/carer(s) as soon as possible.

Good attendance

Our school considers good attendance to be above 96%. The school will contact the parent/carer(s) of the child if there are emerging attendance concerns. If attendance does not improve, the school will contact the local authority in accordance with local authority procedures (see policy).

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