

Missing Learner Policy and Procedure

2026-2027

Organisation	Century Training Academy Ltd
Document type	Policy
Version	3.0 updated following local authority safeguarding scrutiny, August 2026
Reviewed	20 August 2026
Next review	20 August 2027

1. Policy Statement

Children missing education (CME) are defined as those of compulsory school age who are either not registered at a school or are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. CME are at significant risk of underachieving and not meeting their academic potential. Through the operation of this policy we aim to: protect the health and safety of learners at Century Training Academy Ltd; ensure that staff know how to respond if a learner goes missing or is at risk of becoming a child missing education; and comply with statutory guidance on children missing education (DfE, September 2025) and attendance regulations.

Scope: this policy applies to staff (including volunteers), learners and parents at Century Training Academy Ltd; should be read with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, and Learner Code of Conduct, Behaviour and Attendance Policy; and reflects the mandatory requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education and Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools (DfE). The procedures in this policy may be adapted as necessary; reference to the Director includes anyone to whom the responsibilities of the Director have been delegated. The policy is held in the main office, all staff have access, and parents and learners may request a copy.

2. Legal Definition of a Child Missing Education

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996, inserted by the Education and Inspections Act 2006, places a duty on every local authority to make arrangements to establish, so far as it is possible to do so, the identities of children in its area who are of compulsory school age but are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children who fall within this description are children missing education (CME).

Suitable education means efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have. A child is of compulsory school age from the start of the term following their fifth birthday until the last Friday in June in the school year in which they turn 16.

A child is not regarded as missing education where they are on a school roll (even if recorded as having unauthorised absence), are receiving suitable full-time elective home education, or are attending an alternative educational provision such as a pupil referral unit. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and of becoming NEET.

3. Duty to Report a Child Missing Education to the Local Authority

Century Training Academy Ltd will notify the relevant local authority CME team of any learner who has been absent from education for 10 school days or more without a reasonable explanation, once reasonable enquiries to establish their whereabouts have been made. Notification is made without waiting for the outcome of further enquiries where a child cannot be located, and immediately at any point where there is a safeguarding concern.

- Where a learner fails to attend on the agreed start date, or fails to return within 10 school days following an authorised leave of absence, reasonable enquiries are made and the local authority is notified.
- Where a learner is continuously absent for 20 school days without authorisation, joint reasonable enquiries are made with the local authority before any decision about removal from roll is taken.
- Notification is made to the CME team for the authority in which the child lives, and the referring school and commissioner are informed at the same time.
- Suffolk CME Team: cme@suffolk.gov.uk or 01473 265224. Reports may also be made through the Suffolk Child Safeguarding Portal, or by calling Customer First on 0808 800 4005 where there is a safeguarding concern. Web: www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/pupil-attendance-and-welfare/children-missing-from-education
- Norfolk CME Team: <https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/pupil-safety-and-behaviour/children-missing-education/contact-the-cme-team>
- A written record of the notification, the enquiries made and the response received is kept on the learner's file.

4. Responsibility

The Director of Century Training Academy Ltd delegates appropriate responsibilities for day-to-day management to the staff. In practice, all members of staff contribute to the safety of learners by providing appropriate supervision in accordance with the directions of the Director and Senior Management Team. Alternative provision settings are under a general duty to supervise learners to the standard of a prudent or careful parent. All staff must monitor attendance daily through the attendance register and identify any unexpected or unexplained absences promptly, making reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts. Any member of staff who notices a learner is missing, or whose absence is unexplained, has a duty to inform the relevant Tutor immediately. Where a learner fails to attend on the agreed date, Century Training Academy Ltd must undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and notify the local authority where required.

Attendance is reported to the referring school or commissioner within 30 minutes of a learner's planned arrival time, covering non-arrival, late arrival and early departure, so that the commissioner can act on any unexplained absence the same morning. Attendance patterns, including any emerging barriers to attendance, are reviewed with the commissioner at least every six weeks, and sooner where a concern arises, so that any provider-level barrier to attendance can be identified and addressed jointly with the commissioner, the learner and their parents or carers.

5. Procedure for a Missing Learner

If a member of staff or volunteer notes that a learner is missing, they should contact the learner's Personal Tutor immediately. The Tutor will notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL without delay, and does not undertake any further action in locating the missing learner. The DSL/Deputy DSL is responsible for:

- Checking attendance records to confirm whether the absence is authorised or unexplained.
- Contacting the learner's parents/guardians or carers using all known contact details.
- Instigating a search of the Century Training Academy Ltd building and outside areas using available staff.
- Contacting the learner's school where appropriate.
- Making reasonable enquiries in collaboration with the local authority where a CME situation is suspected.
- Contacting the police if appropriate and following their advice.
- Making a referral to children's social care if there is a risk of significant harm.
- Maintaining a full written record of all actions taken in accordance with statutory guidance.

If the learner is found on site or in the vicinity, staff will make a concerted effort to persuade the learner to return; if the learner refuses, staff will continue to monitor their whereabouts and inform the DSL/Deputy DSL. If the learner is not found after reasonable enquiries and an initial search, the DSL/Deputy DSL will contact the learner's school and/or parent/guardian to report the situation and gather information on possible whereabouts. Where a child on the academy register is absent and the absence is unexplained, Century Training Academy Ltd must continue to

make enquiries to ascertain the child's whereabouts and notify the local authority if the child's education status remains unknown. If a learner has been absent for 10 consecutive school days without explanation and reasonable enquiries have been made, the academy must notify and work with the local authority CME team in accordance with statutory guidance.

- Norfolk CME Team: <https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/pupil-safety-and-behaviour/children-missing-education/contact-the-cme-team>
- Suffolk CME Team: <https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/service.page?id=kc4-BmKHGe8>

6. Procedure for Learners Missing During Trips or Journeys

Century Training Academy Ltd does not currently arrange trips, off-site activity or journeys, and this section does not apply to the provision as delivered. It is retained as a contingency procedure only. Should a trip or journey ever be arranged, if a learner is missing from it, or has not arrived following it, the member of staff in charge will: attempt to contact the learner's parents/guardians or carers; check whether there were any delays or changes to the journey; check with other learners and staff for information; and contact the venue or the people that the learner had visited, if applicable. If the learner is not found, the staff member must contact the DSL/Deputy DSL, who will advise on the appropriate course of action, including contacting the learner's school, parents/guardians, hospitals and the police.

7. Information to be Provided to the Police

When informing the police (via 999 if there is immediate danger, or the non-emergency number if appropriate), the following information is required: full name and any nicknames; date of birth; physical description, including any distinguishing features; what they were wearing and carrying when last seen; time when last seen; and home address and parents'/guardians' contact details. It is also useful to consider additional contextual information, such as whether anything is missing from personal belongings or whether there are any relevant indications of why the child might have left. Century Training Academy Ltd activities will continue as normal unless advised otherwise by relevant authorities.

8. Incident Records

Century Training Academy Ltd must keep a full written record of any incident of a missing learner, including: the learner's name; relevant dates and times; the action taken to find the learner; whether the police or children's social care were involved; the outcome of the incident; any concerns about how the incident was handled; and a record of staff involved. A full written record will be kept on the learner's file and provided to the learner's school and, where relevant, to the local authority CME team. In undertaking the annual review of this policy, the DSL will consider any incidents that indicate problems with supervision, attendance monitoring or learner support.

Record Keeping

Records created under this document must be accurate, factual, dated and stored securely. Access must be limited to staff with a legitimate operational, safeguarding, health and safety, quality assurance or legal reason to view the information. Records must be retained in line with Century Training Academy Ltd's retention schedule and UK GDPR requirements.

Monitoring and Review

This document will be reviewed at least annually, with the next scheduled review on 20 August 2027. It will also be reviewed sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, awarding body requirements, local authority expectations, premises, provision or operating arrangements change.

Key Guidance and Linked Requirements

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (DfE), in force from 1 September 2026.
- Non-school Alternative Provision: Voluntary National Standards (DfE).
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and relevant HSE guidance.
- Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools (DfE, last updated 8 September 2025).
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Education Act 1996, section 436A (duty to identify children not receiving a suitable education), as inserted by the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Suffolk County Council: Children Missing Education (CME team: cme@suffolk.gov.uk / 01473 265224).
- Norfolk County Council: Children Missing Education.

Sign Off

Name	Stephen Black
Position	Director
Date	20 August 2026