

Date:

Wednesday 17 December 2025 at 5.00 pm

Venue:

Council Chamber, Dunedin House, Columbia Drive, Thornaby, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 6BJ

Cllr Carol Clark (Chair)

Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Jack Miller, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Emily Tate, Cllr Sally Ann Watson and Cllr Katie Weston

Agenda

1. **Evacuation Procedure** (Pages 7 - 10)

2. **Apologies for Absence**

3. **Declarations of Interest**

4. **Minutes** (Pages 11 - 14)

To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 12 November 2025.

5. **Monitoring - Scrutiny Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment**
(Pages 15 - 26)

6. **Scrutiny Review of Children Not in School** (Pages 27 - 44)

To receive further evidence in respect of Children Not in School under the categories of Home and Hospital, Electively Home Educated and Children Missing from Education.

Relevant policy documents attached.

7. **Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme** (Pages 45 - 46)

Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please.

Contact: Judy Trainer, Democratic Services Manager on email judy.trainer@stockton.gov.uk

Key – Declarable interests are :-

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance



Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. 'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2 – Other Registrable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

a) any unpaid directorships

b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority

c) any body

(i) exercising functions of a public nature

(ii) directed to charitable purposes or

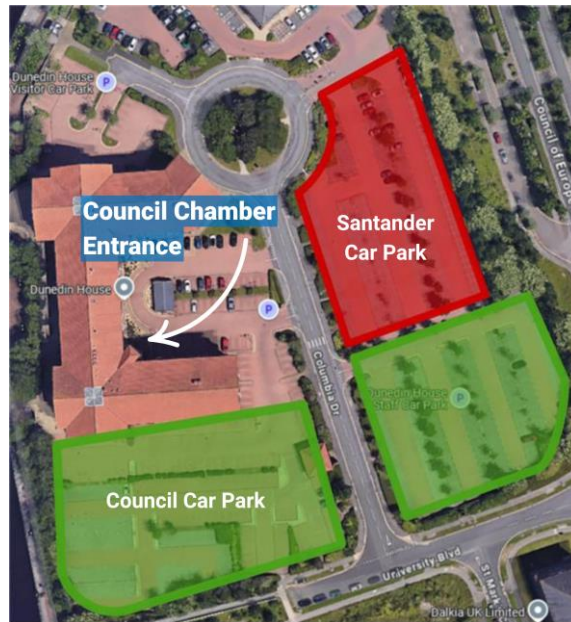
(iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

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Council Chamber, Dunedin House Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping

Entry

Entry to the Council Chamber is via the Council Chamber Entrance, indicated on the map below.



In the event of an emergency alarm activation, everyone should immediately start to leave their workspace by the nearest available signed Exit route.

The emergency exits are located via the doors on either side of the raised seating area at the front of the Council Chamber.

Fires, explosions, and bomb threats are among the occurrences that may require the emergency evacuation of Dunedin House. Continuous sounding and flashing of the Fire Alarm is the signal to evacuate the building or upon instruction from a Fire Warden or a Manager.

The Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point is in the overflow car park located across the road from Dunedin House.

The allocated assembly point for the Council Chamber is: D2

Map of the Emergency Evacuation Assembly Point - the overflow car park:



All occupants must respond to the alarm signal by immediately initiating the evacuation procedure.

When the Alarm sounds:

1. **stop all activities immediately.** Even if you believe it is a false alarm or practice drill, you MUST follow procedures to evacuate the building fully.
2. **follow directional EXIT signs** to evacuate via the nearest safe exit in a calm and orderly manner.
 - do not stop to collect your belongings
 - close all doors as you leave
3. **steer clear of hazards.** If evacuation becomes difficult via a chosen route because of smoke, flames or a blockage, re-enter the Chamber (if safe to do so). Continue the evacuation via the nearest safe exit route.
4. **proceed to the Evacuation Assembly Point.** Move away from the building. Once you have exited the building, proceed to the main Evacuation Assembly Point immediately - located in the **East Overflow Car Park**.
 - do not assemble directly outside the building or on any main roadway, to ensure access for Emergency Services.

5. await further instructions.

- **do not re-enter the building under any circumstances without an “all clear”** which should only be given by the Incident Control Officer/Chief Fire Warden, Fire Warden or Manager.
- do not leave the area without permission.
- ensure all colleagues and visitors are accounted for. Notify a Fire Warden or Manager immediately if you have any concerns

Toilets

Toilets are located immediately outside the Council Chamber, accessed via the door at the back of the Chamber.

Water Cooler

A water cooler is available at the rear of the Council Chamber.

Microphones

During the meeting, members of the Committee, and officers in attendance, will have access to a microphone. Please use the microphones, when invited to speak by the Chair, to ensure you can be heard by the Committee and those in attendance at the meeting.

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Children and Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children and Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday 12th November 2025.

Present: Cllr Carol Clark (Chair), Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice-Chair), Cllr Robert Cook, Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr Jack Miller, Cllr Emily Tate, Cllr Sally Ann Watson and Cllr Katie Weston

Officers: Majella McCarthy, Vanessa Housley, Elisha Dyball, Sharon Stevens, Claire Tiffany, Judy Trainer and Junita Agyapong

Also in attendance: None

Apologies: Cllr David Reynard

CYP/26/25 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CYP/27/25 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interests recorded.

CYP/28/25 Minutes

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CYP/29/25 Scrutiny Review of Additionally Resourced SEND Provision -Feedback from School Visits

Select Committee Members had visited the following schools with ARP provision:

- St John the Baptist Primary
- Billingham South Primary
- North Shore Academy
- Bishopsgarth Academy

Select Committee Members observed the following at the schools visited:

- A strong emphasis on inclusion which benefited the children with SEND but also the other children at the school.
- All children were included on school trips irrespective of disability.
- Efforts were made to integrate the SEND children as far as possible in mainstream activities and teaching
- There was a strong praise culture in the schools visited and high expectations
- Steps were taken to removing barriers to learning and there was a calm atmosphere at all the schools visited
- A child centred approach was in place with children grouped by ability not age
- At primary there was a lot of sensory activity

- Bishopsgarth Academy employed primary phase teachers with particular expertise to support SEND children
- Billingham South Primary and North Shore Academy had satellite provision for Special Schools

The Scrutiny Officer advised that the Government's SEND White Paper expected to be released in autumn 2025 was now likely to be released in the New Year. The Select Committee's review would now be paused to understand the implications of the White Paper with work resuming in the New Year.

AGREED that the information be noted.

CYP/30/25 Scrutiny Review of Children Not in School

The Select Committee received an introductory presentation which covered the categories of Children not in School:

- School Absence
- Pupils accessing part time education - Definition – The amount of education expected that a pupil accesses each week is usually based on 25 hours. There is no legal definition in England of exact hours for each age group
- Pupils accessing non-school alternative provision (NSAP) - Definition - Alternative provision (AP) is education outside school, arranged by local authorities or schools, for pupils who do not attend mainstream school for reasons such as school exclusion, behaviour issues, school refusal, or short- or long-term illness
- Pupils accessing Home and Hospital Tuition - Definition - where a child cannot attend school because of a physical or mental health need, and cannot access suitable full-time education, the local authority is responsible for arranging suitable alternative provision
- Pupils who are Electively Home Educated (EHE) - Definition - Elective home education is a term used to describe a choice by parents to provide education for their children at home or in some other way they desire, instead of sending them to school full-time
- Pupils who are Children Missing Education (CME) - Definition - CME are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school
- Children who receive Education Other than at school (EOTAS) - Definition - Education other than at school means the education or special educational provision of children or young people outside of a formal educational setting
- Pupils who have moved into the Borough and are awaiting a school place

Key issues highlighted and discussed were as follows:

- The service was working more closely with parents of elective home educated children to build relationships
- Where a child was home educated, they could return to state provision whenever they wished
- Improvement in attendance at schools with ARP provision would be assessed after the first term of operation. It was known that attendance was higher at special schools
- The legacy of Covid was still having an impact on attendance at school. Absence due to mental health was also increasing

- Examples of non-school alternative provision included Billingham Boxing Club and Tutor Trend
- Children missing education was recorded for absences of 3 weeks or more; the absence was quite often due to house moves
- Where a child was not English speaking, they would be educated in main stream schools with appropriate support
- For home and hospital tuition, the service would respond as soon as they received notification; a child could be referred after missing 15 school days. There must also be medical evidence that the pupils is too unwell to attend school from a suitably qualified medical professional
- Absence was highest in KS4

AGREED that the information be noted.

CYP/31/25 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme

AGREED that the work programme be noted.

Chair:

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Children and Young People Select Committee

17 December 2025

MONITORING OF RECOMMENDATIONS – SCRUTINY REVIEW OF NARROWING THE GAP IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Summary

Members are asked to consider progress updates in relation to the Appreciative Inquiry into Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment.

Detail

1. The Committee's final report of the Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment was considered by Cabinet in October 2024 who accepted all the recommendations.
2. The benefit of the AI approach has been in the awareness raising of the issues. It has also brought all stakeholders together at events and secured support for agreed objectives and future action.
3. The review culminated in a report setting out 17 recommendations, as follows:

That Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council works collaboratively with partners and key stakeholders to deliver the following shared objectives:

1. Improve attendance

Support schools to improve attendance:

- Encourage school leaders' use of the Attendance Self Evaluation Toolkit to identify what is working well, and areas which could be developed
- Promote an inclusive and relevant curriculum - where a young person wants to attend
- Work with the Team Around the School Service.
- Ensure that schools are equipped to deal with health issues.
- Identify individual barriers to attendance to better target support and intervention with specific reference to young carers

2. Forge positive relationships

Ensure that school culture proactively forges positive relationships between pupils, staff and parent/ carers:

- Promote respectful behaviours from all partners including teachers.
- Involve parents in school life.
- Extend opportunities for enhanced transition.

3. Improve communication

Design, deliver and support parent/carers communication strategies:

- Use new technologies and apps.

- Implement communication strategies early ensuring that good communication is embedded across the school community.
- Consider single points of contact and how best to communicate (not relying on technology alone).
- Offer parent/ carer engagement training for all staff.

4. Identify and support young carers

- Raise awareness of young carer identification and support for pupils.
- Extend the range of opportunities for young carers to link with others socially.

5. Managing emotions

Strengthen environment and opportunities for pupils to manage emotions:

- Engage with the Healthy Schools Programme and Healthy Settings Programme
- Design and delivery of courses to meet pupil need and support parents, with specific reference to:
 - managing behaviour effectively.
 - supporting mental health and wellbeing – especially to de-escalate heightened behaviour or to reduce stress levels.
 - positive parenting skills.
- Strengthen the use of pupil voice to support development of school environments which better support them to manage their emotions.

6. Refine teaching strategies

Further refine teaching strategies to improve lesson enjoyment, encourage speaking and listening and strengthen understanding also ensuring that teaching is tailored to the needs of the individual child.

7. Developing speaking and listening skills

- Ensure the curriculum and school clubs provide opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills, for example through debating clubs.
- Raise awareness of regional and national opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills

8. Extend enrichment offer

Strengthen and extend curriculum enrichment offer which better matches pupils needs and interests:

- Extend enrichment to include kick-boxing; boxing; coding; cooking clubs; sports clubs and story.
- Extend and promote the Tees Active Offer to include First Aid, paddle boards (team building) and extend offer within school holidays.
- Engage with the Healthy Schools Programme and Healthy Settings Programme

9. Celebrate achievement

Extend the range of opportunities to celebrate achievement including recognition for out of school activities and engagement with local, regional and national awards and competitions.

10. Enhance curriculum development

Work with partners and labour markets, making more explicit links to future employment.

- Innovate a local curriculum.

11. Strengthen understanding of career pathways

Clarify pathways to careers early in school life:

- Design and delivery of courses to clarify current career pathways for pupils and parents, including vocational careers and options other than traditional routes.
- Employment & Training Hub to link with schools to notify parents of apprenticeships events.
- Promote aspirational/motivational approaches.
- Strengthen links between schools/parents/careers advisor.
- Share best practice regarding "careers" evenings/ events in primary and secondary schools.
- Invite parents into school who have unusual careers.
- Educate parents on opportunities post 16.

12. Strengthen transition arrangements

Ensure that transition arrangements better fits bespoke pupil needs, with specific reference to vulnerable pupils:

- Ensure plans are put in place well in advance of any transition.
- Consider transition to post-16 and post-18/19 as well as primary and secondary and school readiness.
- Consider transition between year groups as appropriate.

13. Enhance skills to respond to special needs

Increase range of opportunities to enhance skills in mainstream schools to respond to Special Educational Needs (SEN), Child Protection Plans (CPP) and Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA):

- Share best practice of integrating SEN pupils into mainstream schools.
- Promote vocational opportunities.

14. Review behaviour policies

Review behaviour policies to ensure that they are appropriate and proportionate and that inclusion policies align with behaviour policies:

- What happens when a young person is removed from the classroom. Where do they go? What teaching takes place?

15. Embed and extend pastoral support

Embed and extend pastoral support in schools targeted to need.

- Engage with the Healthy Schools Programme and Healthy Settings Programme.

16. Strengthen support for parent/carers to develop language and reading skills

Design and deliver courses and activities to develop reading and language skills.

- Promote Functional English Courses.
- Invite parents/ carers to support reading groups at primary school.
- Promote reading through free Enrichment/after school clubs.
- Ensure parents understand the importance of reading.
- Use school social media to help parents/carers learn
- Ensure materials are easy read/jargon free to involve parent/carers.
- Key messages being shared from antenatal contact.
- Work with Read Easy Charity - helping people learn to read.

17. Review cost of living responses to diminish impact

Review Cost of Living responses to diminish its impact, with specific reference to period poverty, food poverty and school uniform:

- Work with Child Poverty Network.
 - Work with schools to better promote/communicate Cost of Living interventions.
 - Encourage all schools to 'Poverty Proof the School Day'.
4. Given the breadth of the work, a recommendation lead has been identified for each objective. Now that action plans have been submitted in respect of each recommendation, progress updates will be presented focusing on progress and impact.
5. At the December 2025 meeting, progress updates will be presented in respect of recommendations 6, 7, 10 and 13.

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PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment

SCRUTINY MONITORING – PROGRESS UPDATE	
Review:	Scrutiny Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment
Recommendation Lead:	Gill McCleave

Updates on the progress of actions in relation to agreed recommendations from previous scrutiny reviews are required approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan. Progress updates must be detailed, evidencing what has taken place regarding each recommendation – a grade assessing progress should then be given (see end of document for grading explanation). Any evidence on the impact of the actions undertaken should also be recorded for each recommendation.

Recommendation 6:	Refine teaching strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Further refine teaching strategies to improve lesson enjoyment, encourage speaking and ➤ listening and strengthen understanding also ensuring that teaching is tailored to the needs of ➤ the individual child.
Recommendation 7:	Developing speaking and listening skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure the curriculum and school clubs provide opportunities to develop speaking ➤ and listening skills, for example through debating clubs. ➤ Raise awareness of regional and national opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills
Responsibility	Gill McCleave
Date: 12 November 2025	November 2025
Agreed Action:	Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify existing LA training and support for teachers, with particular regard to speaking & listening and adaptive teaching. • Use data to identify schools (maintained and academy) where the gap in educational achievement is already narrower than the LA average. Identify what makes a difference in terms of teaching strategies. • Gather information on schools/MATs that are already working on developing speaking and listening/oracy in the classroom and/or through clubs. • As it becomes available, integrate information about new national curriculum proposals into future planning. Communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact school improvement leads from the MATs, as part of the research actions identified above, to ensure that they are aware of the aims of the plan and are able to contribute to sharing of good practice, targeting schools, etc. • Share aims of the plan through relevant meetings, particularly Education Matters (primary leaders), Primary English/Maths Subject Leaders Network, Secondary Heads Group and School Improvement

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PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment

	<p>Leaders Network. Seek engagement in developing next steps & promote regional and national opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt communication strategy to ensure that training and support available through the LA, with a focus on adaptive teaching, speaking & listening, is effectively promoted – and with a particular focus on targeted schools. <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Our Children, Our Future' conference – will include input on the importance of speaking & listening, drawing on existing work as part of the 'Stockton-on-Tees Talks' programme Half-termly training and networking meeting for leaders from targeted schools. Launch of revised training and support programme for 25-26 LA debate competition for schools – details to be decided following research and communication activities LA public speaking/poetry by heart festival – details to be decided following research and communication activities. Conference for autumn 2025 – oracy focus
Agreed Success Measure:	<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research will secure a clear baseline about what is already available across of services and what gaps there may be. Information is used to plan future training and support, aligned to need. Data will show which schools have been successful in narrowing the gap for educational achievement. Visits/discussions with school leaders will identify the strategies that have been most successful in the classroom – and any particular leadership approaches which have been used to secure the pedagogy. The information gathered will be used to develop further strategic plans to promote sharing of good practice Advice and guidance to schools will be up to date, reflecting national requirements as well as local priorities. <p>Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved communication with academies and a more joined up approach to improving the overall quality of education across Stockton – with a particular focus on narrowing the gap in educational achievement. Widespread awareness of the importance of speaking & listening/oracy as part of a strategy in narrowing the gap. Schools engage with planned events. Schools have timely information about the advice, training and support available to them. Participation in training increases. <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendees have increased awareness of what is available to support children and young people to develop their communication skills – through the programme and more widely through Speech & Language UK. Leaders feel empowered and supported to implement change and provide support/challenge to colleagues. Shared evidence of impact. Training programme is easy to access. Training programme reflects the priorities identified and will support the implementation of the new national curriculum.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils from participating schools have opportunities to participate in debate with others – in a non-competitive environment as well as the competition. Raised profile of debate. Pupils from target schools have the opportunity to participate in a range of speaking activities. Increased confidence and enjoyment reported by participating pupils. Opportunities for local schools to showcase good practice. Input from national organisations such as Voice 21, National Literacy Trust, etc.
Evidence of Progress: (12 November 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and data analysis undertaken as planned, although time available limited the amount of opportunity to visit schools that already had a gap between attainment for disadvantaged (DS) and non-disadvantaged (NDS) pupils that was smaller than average. Have maintained emphasis on key recommendations throughout engagement with schools and school improvement leads from MATs, however very limited engagement with some MATs Primary Oracy Network is now well established, but it has not been possible for the Secondary Oracy Network to start CPD programme continues to evolve, and will respond to changes in the National Curriculum and Ofsted inspection framework.
Assessment of Progress: (include explanation if required) (12 November 2025)	<p>2: On track</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Oracy Network has been fairly successful. 30 individual schools have attended at least one meeting, plus members of the central team of 4 MATs together representing 17 schools in Stockton. Data analysis comparing data from 2024 and 2025 shows that on a school level the DS/NDS gap varies widely from year to year – which is likely due to factors such as attendance, SEND needs, etc., rather than quality of teaching. For example, in one large school the gap was - 53.6% in 2024 and +6.6% in 2025. Of 15 schools identified on 2024 data as having a gap smaller than the national average, only 4 are in this position in 2025. Others have all widened, or cohorts are too small to be statistically significant.
Evidence of Impact: (12 November 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oracy is being prioritised in more schools, though still at quite an early stage of development. Several schools are developing policies and structuring curriculum plans to include a focus on supporting oracy development As of 2.12.25, 12 schools are booked to take part in the first 'Big Event' – a Poetry Slam, to be held on 28th January. Schools are increasingly sharing their own case studies as part of the network meetings. This encourages sharing of good practice and resources, as well as highlighting some real impact for individual schools (e.g. oracy to support learning in maths, social and emotional benefits of talk, development of debate skills, changing the reading curriculum to strengthen opportunities for discussion, etc.) Although outcomes for disadvantaged pupils have improved in reading and are broadly the same as the previous year in maths, outcomes have dipped in writing. As a result, overall, the gap at the end of KS2 remains wider than the national average increasing from 22% to 24%.

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Recommendation 10:	Enhance curriculum development Work with partners and labour markets, making more explicit links to future employment. ➤ Innovate a local curriculum.
Responsibility	Gill McCleave
Date: 12 November 2025	Autumn 2025
Agreed Action:	Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify strengths and weaknesses in the current curriculum offer, with a particular focus on KS4 and KS5 (link to recommendation 11) and NEET information Link with a number of schools to identify where curriculum planning links to employment opportunities Where this is evident, explore how this supports students aspirations Analyse NEET figures across schools to determine whether there is any link to curriculum or CEIAG offer Clarify the local labour market – projecting 5 to 10 years ahead. Identify likely areas of growth and knowledge/skills needed. As it becomes available, integrate information about new national curriculum proposals into future planning. Communication: Develop a strategy to promote information about the local labour market within the education sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with curriculum leaders and careers leads from secondary schools and colleges to share research findings and AI recommendations. Focus on identifying strategies for moving forward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can we complement your curriculum with the local labour market? How can we develop a local/bespoke innovative curriculum offer? Events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Link with recommendation 7) Develop bespoke oracy programme to support curriculum links to future employment Pilot project with 2/3 schools & colleges to develop an integrated career/curriculum programme – aimed at ensuring more explicit links between education and future careers. Pilot new curriculum events such as Dragons' Den events – focus is on core students introduction to the world of work.
Agreed Success Measure:	Research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research will secure a clearer overview about what is available in the local area schools and colleges and how this links to future employment Linked with the action above, research will guide subsequent focus areas for development and curriculum links. Advice and guidance to schools will be up to date, reflecting national requirements as well as local priorities.

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	<p>Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation from schools/colleges serving the most deprived communities in Stockton. • Identified pathway forward. <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive uptake and feedback from schools participating in the oracy programme. • Positive feedback from schools and CYP involved in the pilot project. • Students can articulate a clearer view of what they need/want to do to achieve career goals.
Evidence of Progress: (12 November 2025)	<p>Much of the planning in this area has been superseded by the Post-16 partnership work.</p> <p>Delivery of the Post 16 Partnership strategy has been refined into four priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers with Business and Industry • Communications and Marketing • Excellence for All • Transition <p>Each priority is aligned to a working group, led by a Post 16/ SBC senior leader. The Careers Working Group is led by the SBC Team Manager for Careers. The Careers Working Group has initiated Careers Network meetings for all secondary and Post Providers, as well as colleagues from our Economic Development team based in the Employment Hub. As a result these networks draw on local, regional and national research to extend Careers Leaders awareness of wide ranging opportunities in Stockton's local labour markets and enhance further curriculum opportunities.</p> <p>Three Skills for Success Pilots Programmes have been designed and delivered which aimed to inspire secondary-aged students who were beginning to disengage from education. Embedded in these programmes were employability skills including a range of oracy skills including presentations and social skills for team building.</p>
Assessment of Progress: (include explanation if required) (12 November 2025)	<p>2: On track</p> <p>A range of positive developments have been made, with specific reference to the Careers Leaders Network and Skills for Success Programme.</p> <p>The voice of the pupils and staff has informed some highly positive evaluations and yielded national recognition from the DfE RISE Bid.</p> <p>We look forward to building on these strengths to enhance and extend these offers further for a wider range of stakeholders.</p>
Evidence of Impact: (12 November 2025)	<p>Initial attendance at the Careers Leaders Network included senior leaders from four of our thirteen secondary schools as well as colleagues from our Employment Hub, local business and industry . This has now increased to eight secondary schools, with all schools including the three special schools and the three private schools in the Borough stating they wish to be involved in the Network. All schools are committed to working collaboratively on the five priorities for the Network: Develop a directory of businesses; develop off-the-shelf resources to embed Careers in the curriculum; develop a Parents' Guide to Careers; explore and develop robust plans for KS3 work experience activities; explore and develop robust plans for KS4 work experience placements.</p>

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	<p>Attendees reported that they were more aware of local business and industry opportunities and were clearer about how school curriculums could be enhanced to reflect this.</p> <p>Skills for Success pilots evidenced strong impact on a wide range of measures including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance/ punctuality • Behaviour • Engagement • Aspiration • Self-esteem • Confidence • Academic outcomes. <p>As a result of such strong progress from baselines measures, we have successfully secured a £31K bid from the DfE to develop this programme further via the DfE RISE programme.</p>
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Recommendation 13:	<p>Enhance skills to respond to special needs</p> <p>Increase range of opportunities to enhance skills in mainstream schools to respond to Special Educational Needs (SEN), Child Protection Plans (CPP) and Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Share best practice of integrating SEN pupils into mainstream schools. ➤ Promote vocational opportunities.
Responsibility	Gill McCleave
Date: 12 November 2025	November 2025
Agreed Action:	<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on the research already conducted as part of the appreciative enquiry to identify what schools feel they need to enhance the skills of staff in these areas. • Build on the research already conducted as part of the appreciative enquiry to identify patterns of concern through SENDIASS contacts. • Identify existing LA training and support for teachers, with particular regard to SEN, CPP and EBSA. Identify any evidence of impact, including uptake. • Review school/MAT participation in available training against other available data (attendance, suspensions/exclusions, performance) • Identify the vocational opportunities already available to pupils in KS3 – KS5 <p>Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adapt communication strategy to ensure that training and support available through the LA, with a focus on SEN, CPP and EBSA is effectively promoted – and with a particular focus on targeted schools. • Signpost schools with a low uptake of existing training and concerns identified in the data to specific training. • Share available training and support with School Improvement Leads from MATs, as well as with SENCOs, through regular network meetings.

APPENDIX 1

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share key messages from SENCo briefings with Headteachers/Principals <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Our Children, Our Future' conference – will include input on the link between mental health and disadvantage, providing some links to Young Minds Change the format of SENCo briefing so that there are increased opportunities for sharing expertise across schools
Agreed Success Measure:	<p>Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools' needs reflected in future training/support offer Clear overview of the nature and content of training available to schools from a range of services. <p>Communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools have timely information about the advice, training and support available to them. Participation in training increases. Evidence of impact increases. Improved strategic support for SENCos <p>Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendees have increased awareness of what is available to support children and young people with SEND and/or ACEs, and the links with disadvantage. SENCos are better informed about what is working well and are able to network and share more effectively.
Evidence of Progress: (12 November 2025)	<p>Training programme in place – funded by DBV. Marketing improved. Format of SENCo briefing has been improved to promote discussion and there has been a move towards working in clusters. More regular feedback to HT (who attend Education Matters)</p>
Assessment of Progress: (include explanation if required) (12 November 2025)	<p>2: On track A wide-ranging programme of continuing professional development (CPD) was offered to all staff in all schools and early years settings across Stockton on Tees. Delivered at no cost to participants, this training was made possible through grant funding received via the Delivering Better Value (DBV) programme. From January 2025, when marketing of the programme was improved, there has been generally good and certainly increased uptake of the CPD available.</p>
Evidence of Impact: (12 November 2025)	<p>In total, 469 people have attended training delivered through the programme. Feedback on CPD has been generally positive but there are a number of key areas where the programme needs to be developed more fully. Sustainability also needs to be more fully considered when the DBV funding is no longer available.</p>

Assessment of Progress Gradings:	1 Fully Achieved	2 On-Track	3 Slipped	4 Not Achieved
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Elective Home Education Policy

Reviewed and updated September 2023

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Introduction

This document sets out the current legal position regarding elective home education and outlines the council's policy and procedures to ensure every child in Stockton-on-Tees engages in a suitable full-time education in a safe and appropriate setting.

The term Elective Home Education (EHE) describes a child's educational provision outside of the school system in cases where parents/carers have made the decision to take full responsibility for the education of their child as an alternative to sending the child to school. Elective Home Education is different from and should not be confused with home tuition which is provided by the school where the child is registered as a pupil.

There are a variety of reasons why a parent may decide to home educate their child. Such a decision should be carefully considered and not made as a reaction to an unresolved difficulty or disagreement between the parent, child, and the school. Parents should be aware that in making the decision to home educate their child they will be responsible for all costs associated with educational provision.

Whilst education is compulsory, attending school to receive an education is not. Whilst parental preference is respected, it is the council's belief that education in a school provides the greatest scope for children to access the fullest range of opportunities and receive a good standard of education.

The Council's Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Caseworkers will endeavour to establish a positive working relationship with parents/carers and children who are educated at home. It is the council's view that a positive relationship where all parties work together best serves the interests of the child and parent/carer.

Points for Parents / Carers to Consider Prior to Removing their Child from Roll

The decision to home educate should not be taken lightly. It can be very rewarding to educate your child at home but at the same time it requires a serious time commitment, patience, and the capacity to provide appropriate motivation, resources, and equipment.

Providing Education - Parents will need to decide whether they have the skills and ability to educate their child or whether they will need to employ a tutor/teacher. Parents should consider the environment where the child's education will take place. The learning environment should be safe, free from hazards and conducive to supporting learning and progression.

Finance - As no financial assistance is provided, parents need to consider the expense associated with teaching resources, access to internet, learning materials and examination fees.

Curriculum – Although there is no statutory requirement for home educated pupils to follow the national curriculum, parents are advised to consider the implications of not doing so, should they wish their child to gain GCSE or other formal qualifications or return to school later.

Socialisation - Parents may also wish to consider how they will support their child to maintain friendships and continue to socialise with peers while being educated at home.

Educational Provision

Parents who elect to home educate are required to provide an efficient, full-time education suitable to the age, ability, and aptitude of the child. Parents/carers should ensure they are able to provide a good standard of education for their child from the onset having made preparations with that aim in view.

Parents/carers do not have to follow the national curriculum but should consider doing so as far is possible; this will also support a child home educated for a limited period to successfully reintegrate on return to school. Children who are educated at home do not have to mirror the school system in terms of timetables and term

times. As a guide children attend school 5 days each week averaging around 25 hours for 39 weeks in an academic year. Any parent who elects to home educate and would like their child to undertake public examinations must make their own arrangements to do so; the council does not provide such funding for children who are home educated.

In cases where the Local Authority are unable to determine that an efficient, full-time, suitable education is in place, including a situation where there is no information available at all, these children will be registered with the local authority as Children Missing Education.

The Law Relating to Elective Home Education

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that it is the duty of “the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to meet any special educational needs he or she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”

Although the law does not define “efficient” or “full-time,” a ruling in 1981 defined a suitable education as one which *‘prepares children for life in a modern civilised society’* and an efficient education as one which *‘achieves what it sets out to achieve’*. (The case of Harrison & Harrison v Stephenson, Worcester Crown Court 1981). As a guide regarding the amount of time that should be dedicated to a child’s education, children spend between 21 and 25 hours per week in school for 39 weeks of the year.

There is no legal definition of a ‘suitable education’ though case law defines a suitable education as one which: *‘Primarily equips a child for life within the community of which he is a member, rather than the way of life in the country as a whole, as long as it does not foreclose the child’s options in later years to adopt some other form of life if he wishes to do so’* (Phillips and Brown 1980). If after investigation the council has reason to believe that a child is not receiving a suitable education, then the process for initiating a School Attendance Order which will direct a child’s name onto a school roll will commence. The council endeavours to work co-operatively with parents to ensure that where a suitable education is found not to be in place parents will be supported to identify an appropriate school into which to admit their child and therefore avoid the necessity for a School Attendance Order.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on councils to identify children in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. The duty applies in relation to any child of compulsory school age that is not on a school roll and who is not receiving a suitable education otherwise than that school.

The council also has duties under sections 437-443 of the Education Act 1996 *“If it appears to a local education authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they shall serve notice in writing on the parent requiring him/her to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education”*.

Safeguarding

The council takes the responsibility for safeguarding children seriously and is responsible for taking steps to identify children who are at risk of missing education. Where it is not clear that a child is in receipt of an education the local authority Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team will make enquiries to ensure that the child is in receipt of an education. The Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team will initially contact the parents/carers to build a positive working relationship with the family, and to ensure that the child is participating in their learning and suitable educational provision is in place.

The council, as part of its safeguarding responsibilities, works with schools and other agencies to ensure ‘off rolling’ practices are not taking place. Where the number of children removed from a school roll to be home educated increases the council Inclusion and Vulnerable Learners Team will explore the circumstances surrounding the pupil’s removal from roll, providing robust challenge to schools in any circumstance where “off rolling” appears to be the case. The **(Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended) DfE 2016 Children Missing Education Statutory guidance** detail the only circumstances in which a pupil can legally be removed from the roll of a school; removal for any reason other than that stated in these regulations is illegal.

DfE advice to councils is that where the “off rolling” of pupils from a school is a concern they should consider reporting the information to Ofsted to inform the school’s future Ofsted inspection.

Stockton Council operate a voluntary registration scheme; the Inclusion and Vulnerable Learners Team hold a register of children who are electively home educated in the area. Parents/carers of children who are home educated and have never entered the school system are encouraged to voluntarily register their child with the council for support and information sharing purposes and to access advice and support that may include new initiatives to support children and families.

Special Educational Needs

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 allows for parents/carers of children with Special Educational Needs to home educate their child.

If the child has an Education and Health Care Plan **and** is registered at a Special School, the parent/carer must make an application requesting permission to remove the child’s name from the school roll. The council SEND and Inclusion Service will consider the request at the routine weekly EHCP Panel multi agency meeting. It may be necessary to arrange an EHCP review meeting to which the parent and child will be invited to satisfy the SEND and Inclusion Service that the child’s education will not suffer as a result of the removal from roll. It is important that the parent/carer attends the meeting with a clear outline and evidence as to how home education will take place taking into consideration the child’s special educational needs as detailed on the EHCP. The parent/carer will be expected to deliver the provision detailed in section F of the EHCP. The SEND and Inclusion Service will decide based on all available information and provide the parent/carer with the outcome of the decision within 5 days from the date of the meeting. It is intended that this process is neither lengthy nor complex. If the parent/carer does not agree with the decision, then the parent has a right to appeal. Appeals should be submitted in writing to the SEND and Inclusion Service.

In cases where a child has an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) regardless of whether the child previously attended a special school or not the Local Authority is required to review a child’s EHCP on an annual basis or sooner if requested. Stockton Borough Council holds six monthly EHCP reviews for children with an EHCP who are EHE. The parent and the child will be invited to attend an annual review. Although parents are under no obligation to attend, we believe that it is in the child’s best interests to work in partnership with the SEND and Inclusion Service and Inclusion and Vulnerable Learners Caseworker as the voices of the parent and pupil are instrumental in the review.

Withdrawal from School to Home Educate

Often a parent/carer’s first point of contact regarding the decision to home educate will be with a member of school staff. A parent may inform the child’s school that they wish to withdraw the child from the school roll, and it is important that this decision is well-informed rather than in response to a disagreement or unresolved difficulty with school. It is therefore strongly advised that school staff establish the reason for the parent’s decision and make every effort to discuss and agree any appropriate support or intervention that will enable the child to remain on the school roll. Support may be offered, for example, via a referral to Help and Support services, One Point application, or referral to an external agency for advice and support. It is advisable to signpost the parent to the attached leaflet for parents so they can make an informed decision.

If parent/carers inform school they are considering home education, it is essential that school and parents are fully apprised of the expectations and implications of home educating before committing to making this important decision. Parents should be given contact details for and advised to seek advice from the council’s Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team before formally requesting the school to remove the child from the school roll.

Despite the intervention offered, should the parent/carer feel that the decision to home educate is still the right one they should be advised to put this intention in writing to the head teacher/principal, requesting the child’s name be removed from the school roll. On receipt of this letter the head teacher/principal has a duty to remove the child’s name from the school roll. Once the child is removed from the roll of the school the parent takes full

and immediate responsibility for the child's education as the pupil will no longer be a pupil of the school or part of the school system.

In cases where concerns or unresolved difficulties exist, we would encourage the head teacher/principal to consult with the Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team and consider retaining the child's place at the school until an initial plan and/or contact with the family is established.

Immediately after the child's name is deleted from a school roll for the purposes of Elective Home Education the school **must** inform the council via a notification form (appendix i) to Stockton Council Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team. **(Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended) DfE 2016 Children Missing Education Statutory guidance.** This notification should include a copy of the written notification from the parent, an up-to-date attendance record for the child, information on the child's most recent academic progress/levels and any other relevant information on the family e.g., other services involved. The notification form should detail **all** support offered to the pupil to resolve the issues that have resulted in the parent deciding to remove the child from the school roll.

On receipt of this information the Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team will action the notification within ten school days and will complete a check of records with the teams within Children's Education and Social Care to establish whether there is any current involvement from other teams and agencies. The parent will be contacted in writing, acknowledging their decision to electively home educate. An information pack will be provided with useful sources of information and resources along with the local authority Elective Home Education Policy.

Following the initial written correspondence, a visit will be made to the family to review the educational provision in place within 12 weeks at which point the Locality Team Caseworker will determine if the child is in receipt of a suitable and fulltime education or otherwise.

Should the parents agree to a member of the Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team visiting the home a member of the Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team will complete a report detailing the scope and content of the home education. Parents will be asked to provide evidence of the work completed and that provision is full time. The views of the child as to how they feel about being home educated will be sought and recorded.

Parents will be advised that they may seek to return their child to school at any time, and that a return to school will be in accordance with the council's School Admissions Policy.

Providing that there are no concerns raised at the home visit/contact, a member of the Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team will make arrangements to visit the family on an annual basis.

If concerns are evident that there is a risk to the child not receiving a full time and appropriate education, the Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team will arrange a further meeting with the family to gain evidence of a suitable full-time education within 6 weeks. During subsequent monitoring visits a member of the Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team will endeavour to ensure that the child is seen and that their views and feelings are recorded. The Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team will ask to see samples of work to enable a decision to be made as to whether the education meets legal requirements.

In cases where a parent refuses access to the home address, arrangements will be made to meet at another venue or, if this is not felt suitable by the parent/carer, the parent will be asked to provide a report detailing the content and scope of the child's education detailing their progression and including samples of the work completed. There may be a variety of reasons why the information or evidence provided has not been deemed suitable. The guidance, amongst other examples, says that "there is no or very limited examples of work submitted" and that "There is no or very limited detail of how the child's progress is being monitored or examples of work to demonstrate relevant progression." Similarly, arrangements will be made for examples of work undertaken by the child to be submitted to the council at regular intervals. If the Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team has at any point any concerns regarding the safety or wellbeing of the child, this will be followed up in adherence with Tees Safeguarding Children's Boards' Procedures.

Should the Local Authority have reason to believe that the parent is not providing an efficient, full-time education appropriate to the child's age, ability, and aptitude then the parent will be given initial advice and guidance regarding steps the parent should take to improve the provision. This will be done via a home visit/report from the Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team member. Statements of intent or pedagogical

approaches although helpful will not be acceptable as forms of evidence of educational provision. If upon review the advice has not been actioned satisfactorily and concerns remain, the child will be recorded as a child missing education and the parents will be issued with a notice to satisfy the Local Authority within a period of 15 days that their child is in receipt of a suitable, full time and age-appropriate education.

Should parents fail to do so they will be formally warned of Stockton Borough Council's intention to issue a School Attendance Order in accordance with sections 437- 443 of the Education Act 1996. The School Attendance Order will direct the parents to enrol the child at a school named by the council and ensure regular daily attendance from the date specified as will be stated in the order.

Should the council have reason to believe that the child is no longer living at the given address, steps will be taken to seek a forwarding address. If this information is not established a notification will be made to the Inclusion & Vulnerable Learners Team and the Children Missing Education procedures will commence.

A parent who is educating their child at home can apply to ask the council to carry out a statutory assessment or reassessment of their child's special educational needs and the council must consider this request within the same statutory timescales and process as any other request received.

Where the council is satisfied that the parent is providing an appropriate education at home for their child with an Education Health and Care Plan, the plan will be reviewed every 6 months by the council until such time that it is decided that maintenance of the plan is no longer required.

Parents who choose to educate their children at home assume full financial responsibility for all costs relating to their education, including any examination fees.

Complaints

Should be made in writing and forwarded to foiandcomplaints@stockton.gov.uk and will be actioned within ten working days.

Freedom of Information

Freedom of information requests should be sent to foiandcomplaints@stockton.gov.uk. For further information please go to: <https://www.stockton.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/schools/school-attendance/>

For further information please contact: attendance.vlt@stockton.gov.uk or via telephone 01642 528732

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Policy for Children Missing Education including Children at Risk of Missing Education

This local authority policy applies to all schools including maintained schools, academies, free schools and independent schools.

1. Introduction

This document is intended to inform all Children, Education and Social Care services; schools, including academies, free schools and independent schools; governing bodies; police; and other partner agencies including community safety; health & housing groups; about the procedures to be followed in order to prevent children from going 'missing from education' and to ensure missing children and young people are located and re-engaged in education as quickly as possible.

The Education (Pupil registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016 came into force on 1st September 2016, amending the 2006 regulations. These changes have been introduced due to the Chief Inspector's advice following Local Authority inspections in 2015 that gave rise to serious safeguarding concerns and a high risk of exploitation and radicalisation as a result of poor communication and coordination relating to 'off rolling' pupils. A lack of legal duty on schools to establish and record destinations for pupils removed from the school admission register impacted on the Local Authorities clear link with safeguarding duties.

The secretary of State is clear that Missing Education is one of the most significant risk factors for poor outcomes later in life. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children Missing Education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving; of being victims of trafficking; sexual exploitation; forced marriage; radicalisation, and of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later on in life.

Stockton-on-Tees local authority has robust procedures and policies in place to enable the Council to meet its statutory duty in relation to these children. The Attendance Co-ordinator (CME) is the named person for the Local Authority to whom schools, other agencies, and other local authorities can make Children Missing Education (CME) referrals.

Arrangements are in place between local, regional and national CME Officers, to communicate details of children and young people referred as CME and identify, track, monitor and locate these pupils working in collaboration with schools and other agencies.

This document sets out how Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council fulfils its statutory function in relation to Children Missing Education and the 2 main regulation changes "Off Rolling" a pupil and "Admitting" a pupil" in collaboration with all schools in Stockton-on-Tees.

Raising awareness to both statutory and voluntary organisations including all schools including academies, free and independent schools of their statutory responsibility to refer any child or young person to the local authority CME Officer that they identify or are in contact with who may be missing or at risk of missing their education;

Working in partnership with all schools regardless of type to ensure all pupils "off rolled" are reported to the Local Authority

- Ensuring that all pupils admitted on to a school roll are reported to the Local Authority within 5 days of being admitted.
-
- Ensuring that children and young people at risk of missing education are identified and appropriate actions are taken promptly to re-engage them;
- Ensuring that where appropriate, a cohesive multi-agency approach, is in place to support children and young people who are missing, or who are at risk of missing their education;

- Maintaining an up-to-date database of children and young people referred as Children Missing Education, to track and record their movement in conjunction with the referrer.
- Ensuring a system is in place to fulfil the statutory requirement of ensuring all in year admissions are reported to the Local Authority within 5 days of admittance on to a school roll.
- Ensuring a system is in place to monitor the removal of children from a school roll to comply with statutory guidance.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council aims to ensure all that children and young people access their full educational entitlement by:

- Requiring maintained schools and academies to notify the local authority of any pupil on their roll who is receiving their education other than the usual way (i.e. other than full time school based provision) and stating the reasons and duration of the alternative provision. This includes children and young people accessing education via hospital provision; alternative vocational provision or another educational establishment.
- Requiring maintained schools and academies to notify the local authority of any pupil on their roll who they have initiated a part time or reduced timetable for and giving the reasons and length of this. For example this would include pupils who have a reduced timetable due to behaviour, attendance or medical reasons.

2. Legislative Requirements

There are various statutory duties placed upon Local Authorities and parents (supplemented by guidance) relating to the provision of education and safeguarding the welfare of children and which are relevant to children missing education.

The principal provisions are as follows:

Children Act 1989, Section 17 states that there must be an adequate provision of services for those children and young people identified as in need. 'In need' is not tightly identified in the legislation but there is a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 'in need'.

Education Act 1996, Section 14(1) provides that a local authority must make sure there are sufficient schools for providing all pupils with the opportunity of an appropriate education in their area.

Section 7 provides that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Section 437 (1) provides that if it appears to a local authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either, by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they must serve a notice in writing on the parent ("a school attendance order") requiring the parent/carer to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education.

Section 19 (1) requires every local authority to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise for those children of compulsory school age who by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.

Section 19(4A) provides: "In determining what arrangements to make under subsection (1) in the case of any child or pupil, a local authority shall have timely regard to guidance given by the Secretary of State".

Section 63 amends Schedule 5 of the Tax Credit Act, meaning that the Inland Revenue now has lawful authority to provide local authorities with the limited amount of information relating to children and their whereabouts. This information can only be requested where it is needed in order for the local authority to fulfil their statutory responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Such enquiries will generally be made under s47 of the Children Act 1989.

Section 436A requires local authorities to make arrangements that enable them to establish the identities of children in their area, of compulsory school age, who are not registered pupils at a school, and who are not receiving suitable education, otherwise than at a school.

Includes provisions relating to the safeguarding and promotion of welfare of children, including:

- A duty upon each children's services authority to promote cooperation between it and various other bodies to improve the well-being of children so far as relating to (amongst other things) education and training;
- A duty upon various bodies (including children's services authorities) to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- Provision for the Secretary of State to put into place information databases for the purposes of arrangements under s. 175 of the Education Act 2002, for children's services and other bodies to promote and have regard to the safeguarding of children, and for the purpose of an information sharing framework.

The Children Act 2004

Includes various provisions relating to the safeguarding and promotion of the welfare of children and young people. Stockton-on-Tees Local Authority (LA) set up systems and protocols early in 2005 and identified a designated officer to undertake the associated duties.

Education Act 2002 (enacted 2004)

S. 175 imposes a duty upon local authorities and school to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. It clarifies specific roles and responsibilities of individuals within local authorities and schools and provides information and links to further advice and guidance. For these purposes, "functions" includes the powers and duties of local authorities and governing bodies. The same duty is put on Independent schools by regulations made under **S. 157**.

Identifying children not receiving a suitable education is a key part of discharging the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a new statutory duty for local authorities to identify children who are not receiving a suitable education. This duty does not apply to children and young people of compulsory school age who are on the roll of a school but are failing to attend. These children and families will be supported through well-established attendance procedures including prompt referral to the Attendance and Exclusion Team.

Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, introduced a duty on schools to inform the Local Authority of the deletion of school aged pupils from the attendance register. If a pupil is missing for 10 consecutive days, the absence is unauthorised, and no contact has been made with the

family to ascertain the reason for absence despite repeated attempts by the school; the school must inform the local authority; this is a statutory duty. After 10 days of unauthorised absence immediately following a period of extended leave of absence or 4 weeks of unauthorised absence where both the school and the local authority have made reasonable enquiries and failed to locate the pupil the school can remove the pupil from roll. This regulation also sets out the other circumstances upon which a school may remove a child from the roll.

A child must never be removed from roll simply because they are not attending. The absence must be unauthorised and despite investigation by the school the absence remains unexplained.

The Education (Pupil registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016.

3. Children Missing Education – some definitions.

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education. The list below (which is not exhaustive) presents some of the risk factors associated with CME:

Children and young people leaving the area without a known destination school. Should a pupil residing in the Stockton-on-Tees area leave the school where they are on roll without notification received about their destination the school should make all reasonable efforts to locate the pupil. When school have exhausted all avenues of enquiry and failed to locate the pupil he or she should be classed as missing, and a referral made to the locality Team at the earliest opportunity.

If the child is subject to a protection plan or should any member of staff or professional working with the family have concerns about the safety or wellbeing of the child, it is the professional's duty to report this to Social Care via the completion of a SAFER referral without delay. Where the child or young person is believed to be at risk of immediate harm contact should be made by the professional who hold these concerns and/or information shared with Cleveland Police who will determine if the child or young person is categorised as 'absent' or 'missing'

Absent is defined as – not at a place they are expected or required to be

Missing is defined as – not at a place they are expected to be, but the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests they may be subject of a crime or at risk of harm to themselves or others.

Children and young people who have failed to return from a holiday on the expected return date. In line with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2013 leave of absence during term time will be given at the discretion of the Head teacher and only in exceptional circumstances. Where a period of leave has been agreed by the Head teacher a return date must also be agreed with the parent/carer. Should the child fail to return to school on the agreed date without reasonable explanation school should investigate the absence in line with their school attendance procedures and where this is unsuccessful a referral to the Locality Team for CME procedures should be initiated.

Children who move into the LA without an identified school place - this includes children and young people who are unable to obtain a place at their parents' preferred school or schools, due to a shortage of spaces at the specific school(s) requested.

Children and young people can be considered vulnerable for a variety of reasons and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council supports Early Help, underpinned by the Early Help Assessment where necessary to ensure an effective multi agency response to both family and individual child needs. Some children considered at risk of missing or missing their education such as children and young people whose families frequently move house, children and young people in families fleeing domestic violence or experiencing family breakdown, teenage parents or pregnant teenagers, children and young people affected by

substance and/or alcohol abuse, children and young people who are young carers (these suggestions are not exhaustive) may be suitably supported via the correct and timely intervention of Early Help.

Referrals and information regarding any pupil at risk of or missing education can be made by any professional or person within or outside the local authority and should be passed to the Locality Team at an early stage.

The categories below represent some of the risk factors associated with Children Missing Education. Whilst these pupils will be maintained on a school roll, children who are subject to one of more of the factors below may be at risk of becoming CME.

Pupils at risk of harm, neglect including missing children/runaways - Children and young people who go missing or run away from home or from care may be in serious danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation as well as missing their education. Where this is suspected or known schools and agencies should follow the Stockton Local Safeguarding Children's Board (SLSCB) procedures. If there is reason to suspect that a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the police should also be involved. Statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2014) and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013)' are available on the Department for Education's website and are the key documents that must be followed by schools in such cases. In Stockton-on-Tees, proactive multi agency partnerships are in place such as the Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked Group (VEMT) to ensure cohesive multi agency work.

Children who cease to attend a school/ educational provision – there are many reasons why a child or young person stops attending their education. It could be because the parent chooses to home educate their child or there are complex reasons surrounding the child's non-attendance. In any event the school or academy where the child is on roll should make an early referral to appropriate agencies to support a re-engagement in attendance. Where the parent has chosen to home educate established LA elective home education procedures will be followed. Where the absence is unauthorised the parent is deemed to be committing an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and a referral to the Attendance Team for statutory intervention should be considered.

Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Families -Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly, and their children can be at an increased risk of missing education. In Stockton-on-Tees a key duty of a Specialist Community Liaison Officer is working with GRT families and other vulnerable groups such as Asylum Seekers, and children where English is an additional language to encourage and support engagement in education. Re-establishing it where it has been ended and encouraging families to keep children in school particularly during the transition from primary to secondary phase.

Families of Armed Forces - Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently, both in the UK and overseas, and often at short notice. Schools should be aware of this and have systems in place as with all parents for the ease of sharing such information. Where schools are concerned they have not received information on the destination of the child despite their own enquiries they should seek and early referral to the Attendance Co-Ordinator (CME).

Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System - Children and young people who have offended, or who are at risk of doing so, are also at risk of disengaging from education. Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council regularly monitors the educational provision and engagement of young people in that educational provision through a multi-agency meeting led by the Youth Offending team.

Looked after children and young people, and those placed on the Child Protection register – attendance figures for children and young people in care are collated and monitored on a weekly basis and reported to social care colleagues on a monthly basis; the information is then disseminated to social work teams. There is rigorous monitoring of children and young people in care through the virtual school, whose management team ensures that schools, social workers and relevant agencies work together to ensure the best possible outcome for such children and young people. The virtual school, and its partners,

ensures that within 20 days of becoming a child or young person in care, appropriate educational provision is provided (if this is not already in place).

Children and young people whose families experience a period of homelessness. Parents of children and young people who are on a school roll within Stockton-on-Tees LA are able to access support through 'Crisis Transport' (see section 7). Financial support to provide assistance with travel to the school where the child is registered will be available, depending on personal circumstances, for a short period of time not exceeding 3 school weeks to enable pupils to maintain their attendance and education at their registered school, thereby avoiding any unnecessary disruption to their education.

Children and young people who have been excluded, whether this is permanent; fixed-term; or due to having been sent home 'unofficially'. Pupil suspension and exclusion is monitored by the Placements and Governance team and any cases of unofficial or repeat exclusion challenged and discussed with schools.

Children and young people receiving education other than in the usual way due to long-term medical or emotional problems; behaviour and attendance reasons (these examples are not exhaustive). These children and young people are on the school roll, but it is deemed and agreed appropriate for them to attend alternative provision and/or on a reduced timetable basis. School should have in place robust monitoring and registration systems for those children who are accessing an alternative curriculum away from the school site so that absence can be followed up in line with the school attendance policy. Schools must notify the local authority of any child who is accessing a part time timetable or an alternative curriculum via completion of the relevant forms. It is expected that this notification will be received no later than 5 school days after arrangements have been put in place and agreed with the parent. Schools should also notify the local authority of the reason, duration and review date of these arrangements. It is important to remember that all children are entitled to 25 hours per week education. Any variation from this must therefore be justified and time limited. This information will be shared within SEND and Inclusion via performance clinics where the information will be regularly reviewed, and the documentation and notification forms submitted by schools. Where concerns arise challenge and support to schools may be necessary and this will be initiated by the appropriate team.

Parent and or pupil dissatisfaction with a school, which results in the parent withdrawing the child or young person from the school, or being 'asked to withdraw the child or young person'. The local authority has in place robust procedures for the monitoring of elective home education however before this decision is made every effort will be made by the Locality Team to ensure that disagreements with schools and parents can be resolved satisfactorily and the child or young person return to school provision. Where it is apparent that the school have requested that the child be withdrawn from roll by the parent this will be discussed and challenged.

Children and young people whose elective home education is unsatisfactory. All children and young people, whose parents/carers have elected to home educate, are contacted by the Caseworker (EHE) to ensure that a suitable education is being provided. The Locality Team holds details of all children and young people notified to the local authority as currently receiving elective home education. Should parents fail to satisfy the Local Authority that their child is receiving a full time and suitable education then School Attendance Order procedures will be followed. Should it become evident that the child is not resident at the home address and a forwarding address is not established within 10 working days then a referral to the Locality Team should be made for Children Missing Education procedures to be initiated.

Asylum seekers or refugees including unaccompanied young people who are seeking asylum. The School Admissions Team, working closely with the Locality team and within the ins year transfer protocol seek to ensure that children of school age are placed in a school as soon as possible.

Children who may be subject to forced marriage or female genital mutilation (FGM)

Legislation has been in place for a number of years in respect of female genital mutilation (FGM) the latest, the Female Genital mutilation Act was implemented in 2004 which carries a maximum custodial term of 14 years for anyone found to be involved with or responsible for carryout FGM. The Anti-Social Behaviour,

Crime and Policing Act June 2014 made the offence of forced marriage a criminal act. Head teachers, school staff and other agencies working with families must have an awareness that a plan to instigate FGM or forced marriage may first be indicated by an extended period of absence request from school. Should the Head teacher, or any professional working with the family hold any concerns regarding the possibility of a child being subject to forced marriage or FGM a SAFER referral must be made without delay.

4. Duties of schools

All schools, including academies and free schools, must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. All schools have a duty to inform their Attendance Team Officer of the details of pupils for whom they have recorded ten days' unauthorised absence and despite school investigation no contact has been established with the family. Schools must also notify the local authority if a pupil is to be deleted from the admission register in circumstances as outlined within the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

Pupils who remain on a school roll are not necessarily missing education, but schools should monitor attendance and any alternative arrangements that are in place for specific pupils. Schools should also notify the local authority of any pupils accessing part-time or alternative timetables; the reasons for this arrangement; and the length of time it is expected to continue. It is also important that schools make their Locality caseworker aware of any irregular attendance patterns.

Schools have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their pupils.

Schools must also arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed-term exclusion.

5. Duties and powers of the Local Authority

The duties and powers that can be utilised by the Local Authority to support their work with children and young people either missing or at risk of missing education include:

- Providing suitable full-time education to permanently excluded pupils from the sixth school day of exclusion;
- Safeguarding children's welfare, and their duty to cooperate with other agencies in ensuring children's safety;
- Issuing warnings and School Attendance Orders (SAOs) to parents who fail to satisfy the LA that their child is receiving suitable education, and in the opinion of the Local Authority it is appropriate that the child should attend school;
- Prosecuting parents that do not comply with an SAO;
- Prosecuting or fining parents who fail to ensure their school-registered child attends school regularly;
- Applying to court for an Education Supervision Order for a child;
- Monitoring children and young people that are receiving their education other than in the usual way including those who have a reduced timetable in place.

Any child or young person referred to the LA as missing education will be logged on a CME database.

Cross boundary procedures are in place to ensure a consistent approach for all pupils who are missing or at risk of missing education. This is strengthened further by the regular North East Children Missing Education Forum and North East Attendance Leaders Network meetings.

The School Admissions team operates a robust system to coordinate the admission of reception-aged children and of pupils transferring from Year 6 to Year 7. They also process requests for in-year transfers between schools, which unless the transfer is the result of a house move should be dealt with as a Managed Move between schools where appropriate in the first instance. The transfer procedure in place has been agreed by schools and support services. Details of the transfer procedure are also available to parents.

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**Children and Young People Select Committee
Work Programme – 2025-2026**

Date	Item	Attending
16 April 2025	Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment – Monitoring Scrutiny Review of HAF Final Report	Haleem Ghafoor Vanessa Housley Mandie Rowlands
11 June 2025	Scrutiny Review of HAF – Action Plan Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment – Monitoring Additionally Resourced SEND Provision – Scope and Project Plan	Mandie Rowlands Councillor Clare Besford Mandie Rowlands Kellie Wigley Vanessa Housley Elisha Dyball
16 July 2025	Additionally Resourced SEND Provision – Evidence	Elisha Dyball Stockton Parent Carer Forum North East and Cumbria ICB
17 September 2025	Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment – Monitoring Scrutiny Review of HAF – Action Plan Update Additionally Resourced SEND Provision – Evidence	Mandie Rowlands Craig Taylor Vanessa Housley Mandie Rowlands Elisha Dyball Schools
15 October 2025	Cancelled	
12 November 2025	Additionally Resourced SEND Provision – Feedback from School Visits Review of Children Not in School – Scope and Project Plan and introductory presentations	Elisha Dyball Vanessa Housley Elisha Dyball Sharon Stevens Claire Tiffany
17 December 2025	Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment – Monitoring Review of Children Not in School – Evidence	Gill McCleave Vanessa Housley Vanessa Housley Elisha Dyball
14 January 2026	Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment – Monitoring	Claire Tiffany Sharon Stevens Vanessa Housley

	Review of Children Not in School – Draft Recommendations	Vanessa Housley Elisha Dyball
11 February 2026	Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment – Monitoring Review of Children Not in School – Final Report	Mandie Rowlands Vanessa Housley Vanessa Housley Elisha Dyball
11 March 2026	Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment – Monitoring	Haleem Ghafoor Vanessa Housley

Items to be scheduled each year

Children and Young People Performance Reports
Overview of Children and Young People's Services and Annual Safeguarding Report

Progress Updates

Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Relationships TBC
Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment - Ongoing