

NEO — Children Missing Education Policy

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Date	14 October 2026
Review Date	December 2026, then annually, or sooner if practice or legislation changes
Owner	Designated Safeguarding Lead (NEO) and the Nudge Education National Designated Safeguarding Lead, with the Director, NEO & Head of School
Approved by	Approved by the Director, NEO & Head of School on 14 October 2026 under authority delegated by the Proprietor (CEO of Nudge Education Ltd) on 13 October 2026; for noting at the NEO board on 3 December 2026
Version	v10.26

A fully online alternative provision for learners aged 11–18

1. Why this policy exists

A child who is not receiving a suitable education is a safeguarding concern, not an administrative one. In an online provision the usual signals — an empty desk, a parent at the gate — are absent, and a learner can drift out of education quietly. This policy sets out how NEO notices, acts and notifies so that no learner disappears from view.

NEO applies the DfE's *Children missing education* statutory guidance (8 September 2025 edition, statutory for local authorities and schools) as its own standard, and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, which treats children missing education as a potential indicator of abuse, neglect, exploitation or radicalisation. NEO is not a DfE-registered school; statutory responsibility for securing a child's education remains with the local authority where the child

lives and, where the learner is on roll elsewhere, with the home school. NEO's duty is to see early, act fast and tell the right people.

2. Definitions

A **child missing education** is a child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. For NEO's purposes this policy also covers a learner who is on NEO's register but whom NEO cannot contact or account for, and a learner whose placement ends without a confirmed destination.

3. Noticing

Every timetabled session is registered (see the **NEO — Attendance and Admission Register Policy**). The following trigger action under this policy:

- a learner expected in a session does not join and no contact can be made with the learner or family that morning;
- three consecutive timetabled sessions are missed without an accepted explanation;
- a family stops responding to NEO through every agreed channel for two working days;
- a family tells NEO the learner has moved, is going abroad, is being educated at home, or will attend another setting, and NEO cannot confirm the new arrangement;
- a placement ends and no destination has been confirmed by the commissioner or the family.

4. Acting

The Practitioner-Mentor makes contact attempts through every agreed channel on the day, records each attempt, and tells the DSL the same day if contact fails. The DSL decides the next step within one working day, which may include contact with the home school, the commissioning officer, the EHCP caseworker, or the local authority's children-missing-education service. Where there is any indication of risk to the learner, the DSL follows the **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** and makes a referral to children's social care or the police without waiting for the contact process to complete.

NEO does not make home visits. Where a welfare check at the home is needed, the DSL asks the local authority, the home school or the police to make it, and records the request.

5. Notifying

NEO notifies the local authority's children-missing-education service, and the commissioner where there is one:

- when a learner cannot be contacted for ten school days, or sooner where the DSL judges there is risk;
- when a learner is removed from NEO's admission register without a confirmed destination, on the day of removal;
- when a family states an intention to educate the child at home, so that the local authority can discharge its own duties;
- when NEO becomes aware that a learner on roll elsewhere is not attending that setting.

Notifications are made in writing, logged with the date and the officer notified, and held on the learner's safeguarding record. NEO cooperates with the local authority's reasonable enquiries and shares the information it holds under the **NEO — Data Protection, Confidentiality and Privacy Policy**, which permits sharing to safeguard a child.

6. Leaving NEO safely

No learner leaves NEO's register without a transition conversation (see the **NEO — Withdrawal Policy**) and a recorded destination. Where the destination is unknown at the leaving date, the learner is treated as potentially missing education and section 5 applies. The Learning Passport and closing summary travel with the learner to the next setting with the family's agreement.

7. Roles

Role	Responsibility
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Owens this policy; decides the response to every trigger; makes referrals; keeps the log.
Director, NEO & Head of School	Ensures registers and contact details are current; reports counts to the board.
Practitioner-Mentor	First contact on the day; records every attempt; escalates the same day.
Engagement and Operations Co-ordinator	Makes the written notifications; maintains the log; confirms destinations at leaving.
Commissioners and home schools	Lead statutory action; keep NEO informed of changes in the learner's circumstances.

8. Related documents

- DfE, *Children missing education* statutory guidance (8 September 2025)
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026*, Part one and Annex B
- **NEO — Attendance and Admission Register Policy**
- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** with NEO Online Addendum
- **NEO — Withdrawal Policy**