

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Lives Select Commission – 17 March 2026

Report Title

Children not accessing their full educational entitlement at school

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Executive Director Approving Submission of the Report

Nicola Curley, Executive Director of Children and Young People's Services

Report Author(s)

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Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

The report and associated appendices provide information and assurance regarding activity in relation to Children Not in School in Rotherham to enable the Commission to receive an update regarding this area of work. The Elective Home Education, and Exclusions dashboard provide a breakdown of the characteristics of the respective cohorts to enable scrutiny by the Commission.

Recommendations

1. That the content of this report be noted

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Exclusions Dashboard 2024-25
Appendix 2 Elective Home Education Dashboard 2024-25

Background Papers

[Elective home education: departmental guidance for local authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Human Rights Act 1998](#)

[Education Act 1996](#)

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Children not accessing their full educational entitlement at school

1. Background

- 1.1 Providing appropriate oversight and support in relation to Children Not in School remains a key area of focus for Council teams. Many groups of children sit within this remit; those who are electively home educated where parents have taken responsibility for the provision of education otherwise, those who are Children Missing Education and those on a school roll but not in receipt of their full educational entitlement.
- 1.2 The Education Act 1996 places a duty on every parent of a child of compulsory school age to ensure that he/she receives an efficient, full-time education, suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and any special educational needs that he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Parents have the legal right to remove their child(ren) from a school roll and provide their education. The Education Act 1996 and non-statutory guidance EHE Departmental guidance for local authorities (2019) places a duty on the Council to ensure that children who are home educated are in receipt of a suitable and efficient full-time education and act if this is not the case.
- 1.3 The Council has statutory duties in relation to Children Missing Education as set out in [Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK](#), this includes children out of school due to exclusion, illness or other reasons. Duties in relation to School Attendance are outlined in [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#)

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 This report seeks to update and provide assurance to the commission on processes for children who do not access a school setting on a full-time basis. This includes children in the following groups:
 - In receipt of local authority commissioned provision (Section 19 provision - provision set out in Section 19 of the 1996 Education Act) as they are medically unable to attend school, have been permanently excluded from school or have an Education Health Care Plan and are Educated Otherwise than at School,
 - children experiencing suspension,
 - in receipt of part time school provision,
 - accessing school commissioned alternative provision,
 - experiencing poor school attendance,
 - who are known to be electively home educated,
 - Children Missing Education.
- 2.2 Internally, assurance regarding children in groups specified above is provided through service and CYPS performance clinics and through the Children Not in School Governance Group. This is a multi-agency group that

meets termly with the remit of scrutinising process and policy as well as identifying key actions to ensure support is timely and appropriate.

2.3 External oversight is provided through both SEND and ILACS inspection, where there is a key focus on the groups of children identified at 2.1.

2.4 Section 19 provision

2.4.1 The local authority must be informed without delay of all school exclusions regardless of the length of the exclusion. In line with statutory duty provision is made on day six at Aspire Pupil Referral Unit for every Rotherham resident of statutory school age who is permanently excluded. Where appropriate following a first permanent exclusion a placement is agreed in an alternative mainstream school through Rotherham's Fair Access Protocol.

2.4.2 Where children receive a suspension from school the duty to provide education from day six sits with the school. Support is offered from the Local Authority Exclusion and/ or Outreach team on request, or where children are identified by teams as receiving repeat suspensions.

2.4.3 Consultation with school leaders was undertaken in 2023-24 with the intention of reviewing the Fair Access Protocol and strengthening local inclusion systems. There was a 10.6% reduction in permanent exclusions from schools in the borough in 2024-25 when compared with the previous academic year. This reduction is significant and is testament to the commitment of school leaders in working collaboratively to ensure exclusion is used proportionately within Rotherham.

2.4.4 Further information in relation to exclusions and suspensions is included in *Appendix 1: Exclusions Dashboard*.

2.4.5 When the Local Authority receives a notification that a child is unable to attend school due to illness, provision of medical tuition is considered. In 2024-25, 53 pupils were supported throughout the academic year by medical tuition. This is through an offer tailored to the needs of the young person and kept under regular review by a named Officer. 13 (25%) of these pupils reintegrated to their 'home' school during the academic year following a period of medical tuition. The number of pupils supported by medical tuition is rising year on year in Rotherham.

	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22
No of pupils	53	32	29	18

2.4.6 A very small number of children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan accesses EOTAS (Education Otherwise Than At School) provision where this is named in their plan. These young people have a highly bespoke education offer that is tailored to their needs, monitored by a dedicated Officer, that is regularly reviewed in line with their plan.

2.5 Children on a school roll who are not accessing full time school-based provision

- 2.5.1 The Council requests that schools complete a return of all pupils being offered part time provision in school or school commissioned alternative provision. These returns are monitored by the Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Alternative Provision and advice and guidance offered to schools where needed. It is expected that where a pupil is offered a part time timetable that this is in line with parental agreement and is part of a short-term intervention to support them back to full time education.
- 2.5.2 In 2024-25, 499 pupils were reported by schools to be in receipt of a part time offer at some point during the school year.
- 2.5.3 School attendance continues to be an area of focus in Rotherham, with a clear shared expectation that parents ensure their child's attendance at school on a regular basis. School attendance in 2024-25 academic year rose by 0.7% across all phases compared to the previous academic year. This improvement represents significant progress in ensuring pupils are present in school and benefiting from the education they are entitled to.
- 2.5.4 Rotherham Primary attendance for the academic year was 94.6%, 0.2% below national, whilst Secondary attendance was 90.9%, 0.7% below national. Persistent absence decreased by 2.2% in both phases compared to 2023-24.
- 2.5.5 The School Attendance Team continue to offer support to schools through a graduated targeting support offer, the continued use of data to drive interventions and the recent agreement of three attendance mentor posts across the borough to support attendance for children who may be facing the greatest challenges in attending school.

2.6 Elective Home Education (EHE) and Children Missing Education (CME)

- 2.6.1 Nationally, numbers of children in EHE continues to rise, [Elective home education, Autumn term 2024/25 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#) The rate of children who are EHE in Rotherham has previously been just below the national rate but is now in line with both regional and national in the last published data set (2024/25 Autumn Term).

	2024/25 Autumn term	2023/24 Summer term	2023/24 Spring term	2023/24 Autumn term
England	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	1.1%
Yorkshire and The Humber	1.4%	1.3%	1.2%	1.0%
Rotherham	1.4%	1.4%	1.2%	1.0%

- 2.6.2 The Council's EHE team continues to offer a home visit to all home educators as part of standard working practice and proactively engages with

parents and carers who are considering home education. In 2024-25, there were 219 instances where contact with the team resulted in children remaining on a school roll.

- 2.6.3 Partnership working in respect of EHE in Rotherham remains strong, with the majority of parents working collaboratively with the Council to provide assurance that their child is in receipt of suitable education. Where assurance is not provided and children are believed to be missing from education then a formal process is followed to return them to suitable full-time education.
- 2.6.4 The Rotherham Elective Home Education Policy was reviewed and a revised Policy agreed by Cabinet in October 2025. This is intended to be easier to navigate and provide relevant information about roles and responsibilities to parents and carers considering home education.
- 2.6.5 *Appendix 2: Elective Home Education Dashboard* provides further information in respect of EHE in Rotherham during 2024-25 academic year.
- 2.6.6 Duties in relation to Children Missing Education continue to be discharged in line with statutory guidance and Rotherham's Policy. 613 referrals were received by the CME Officer for children who were known to be leaving school roll due to a house move within or out of Rotherham or who were without a school place having moved into Rotherham. These children are robustly tracked in and out of the borough and onto school roll, with 563 instances being closed by the end of the academic year and the remainder being tracked into 2025-26.
- 2.7 Children not in School remain a key area of local and national focus. Rotherham policy and process is regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that we do everything possible to ensure that children access their full-time educational entitlement, supporting them in achieving good outcomes and preparing them for adulthood.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 3.1 There are no options to consider, discharge of duties in respect of children not accessing their full-time educational entitlement at school remain statutory Local Authority functions, it is therefore recommended that members note the content of the report.

4. Consultation on proposal

- 4.1 There is no proposal to consider, this report is for update only. Where changes to Policy or process are being considered consultation takes place to inform this.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 5.1 There is no decision to implement, this report is for update only.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 There are no direct Legal implications.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no HR implications contain within the report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 The report outlines how the Council will continue to discharge statutory duty to ensure that all children receive the education to which they are entitled.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 The functions reported upon support the right to education, as set out in the Human Rights Act and support the Public Sector Equality Duty.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 There are no implications contained within the report

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 There are no implications contained within the report.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 There is a risk to staffing capacity if numbers of children who are not in school continue to rise. This will be closely monitored and planned for accordingly.

13.2 There is potential risk to process and local policy, should any changes in Government policy be announced. As yet, there is no definitive timeline for these. Once this is known, local policy will be reviewed accordingly.

Accountable Officer(s)

Sarah Whitby, Head of Service Access to Education

Rebecca Braitwait, EHE and CME Co-ordinator

Kelly Robinson, Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Alternative Provision

Kate Pollard, School Attendance Co-ordinator

Julie Dawson, Principal Officer Exclusions

Approvals obtained on behalf of:

		Date
The Executive Director with responsibility for this report	Nicola Curley, Executive Director of Children and Young People's Services	17/02/26
Consultation undertaken with the relevant Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People - Councillor Cusworth	05/03/26

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