



Child Missing in Education Policy

This policy is in conjunction with Wakefield LA - CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION Guidance for Schools, Providers and Professionals. (September 2020).

1. Introduction

Normanton Common Primary Academy believes that 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, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

The purpose of this policy is to clarify the responsibilities of the school in relation to CME. In addition, the school will work with the EWO and Wakefield Local Authority (LA) to provide support to assist them in meeting their statutory duty in respect of CME.

This policy refers to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2018

DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2020

DfE 'Children missing education' 2016

The Education Act 1996 (section 7, 8, 14 and 19)

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 4 and 38)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016

The Academy Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2012)

The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2014

2. Definition

For the purpose of this policy, a CME is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by an LA, and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition also includes children who are receiving an education, but one that is not suitable; this could include children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

3. Why children miss education

The most common reasons for children missing education include the following:

- Failure to start appropriate provision and never enter the system;
- Inappropriate removal from roll
- Failure to find educational provision following a move to a new location.

4. Children at particular risk of missing education

As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, the LA EWO will make a judgement on a case-by-case basis. The following list indicates pupils who are most at risk of missing education:

Pupils at risk of harm or neglect – Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected, the school will follow local child protection procedures. However, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children's social care (and the police if appropriate). Local authority officers responsible for CME should check that a referral has been made and, if not, they should alert children's social care. The Department's statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education: for schools and colleges, provides further advice for schools and colleges on safeguarding children.

Children of gypsy, roma and traveller (GRT) families – Research has shown that many children from these families can become disengaged from education, particularly during the secondary school phase. It is therefore important that schools inform the local authority when a GRT pupil leaves the school without identifying a new destination school, particularly in the transition from primary to secondary so that they can attempt to facilitate continuity of the child's education. Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly and their children can be at increased risk of missing education. The named CME officer within the local authority, can advise schools on the best strategies for ensuring the minimum disruption to GRT pupils' education, for example dual registration with other schools or the provision of electronic or distance learning packages where these are available.

Children of service personnel - Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in the UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MoD Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) on 01980 618244 for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.

Missing children/runaways - Children who go missing or run away from home or care may be in serious danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation or abduction as well as missing education.

Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System - Children who have offended or are at risk of doing so are also at risk of disengaging from education. Local authority Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are responsible for supervising those young people (aged 8 to 18). YOTs should work with the LA CME officer to ensure that children are receiving, or return to, appropriate full-time education.

Children who cease to attend a school - There are many reasons why a child stops attending a school. It could be because the parent chooses to home educate their child. However, where the reason for a child who has stopped attending a school is **not** known, the local authority should investigate the case and satisfy itself that the child is receiving suitable education.

Children of Migrant families - Children of new migrant families may not have yet settled into a fixed address or may have arrived into a local authority area without the authority becoming aware, therefore increasing the risk of the child missing education.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The School

The school will enter pupils on the admissions register (school roll) at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the school, or the day that the school has been notified that the pupil will attend the school.

In the event that a pupil fails to attend the school on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence and will notify the LA admissions department at the earliest opportunity.

The school will keep an up-to-date admission register, encouraging parents/carers to inform them of any changes. (This will include having at least two contact numbers per child).

The school will monitor pupils' attendance through the daily register.

The school will follow LA procedures in relation to pupils who are regularly absent from the school.

The school will notify the LA if any pupil is to be deleted from the admission register in the circumstance outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016).

The school will, in line with LA policy and procedures, notify the LA CME Officer when a child is missing from education.

5.2 The Local Authority

LA's have a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. This duty only relates to children of compulsory school age.

The LA should consult the parents of the child when establishing whether the child is receiving suitable education. Those children identified as not receiving a suitable education should be returned to full time education either at a school or in alternative provision. Prompt action and early intervention are crucial in discharging this duty effectively and in ensuring that children are safe and receiving suitable education.

The school will work with LA to enable them to meet their statutory duty in relation to children missing education.

5.3 Parents/carers

Parents/cares have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education. Some parents may elect to educate their children at home and may withdraw them from school at any time, unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order.

Parents/carers who elect to home educate their child, must inform the school in writing of the decision. A copy of the letter will be sent to the LA and the school will delete the child's name from the Admission Register. If the school has any safeguarding concerns, these will be reported through a referral to Social Care Direct.

6. Admissions register

The school will ensure that the Admissions Register is kept up-to-date at all times and will encourage parents/carers to notify the school of any changes as they occur, such as via email or newsletters. The school will, on an annual basis ensure that parents/carers are given the opportunity to review the information they hold on their child and encourage them to do so more regularly if chances have occurred. The school will always hold two sets of contact details for each child.

Pupils will be recorded on the Admissions Register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the school, or the day that the school has been notified, as the date that the pupil will attend the school.

Once a pupil has been recorded on the Admissions Register, the school will notify the LA within five days, and will supply the LA with all of the details contained on the Admissions Register for the new pupil.

Where a parent/carer notifies the school that a pupil will live at another address, the school will record the following information on Integris:

- The full name of the parent/carer with whom the pupil will live;
- The new address;
- The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent/carer notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school, or will be attending a different school in future, the school will record the following information on the Admissions Register:

- The name of the new school;
- The date when the pupil first attended, or is due to attend, that school.

7. Steps to be followed if a child goes missing from school

Child missing at morning registration or not attending school

If a child is absent from school parents and carers are required to contact the school office with reason for their absence. This should be repeated for each day that the child is absent. If contact has not been made, the school will attempt contact a parents or carers to ascertain the reason for absence. Where there are any concerns that the child may be at risk the School's safeguarding procedure will be followed.

If contact cannot be made with the parent or carer, this will be attempted again. If contact can still not be made, the Trust EWO will be asked to attend a home visit. If further concerns arise following this, a police welfare check may be instigated by school.

When a child remains absent 10 school days after an authorised period of leave or after 20 days of unauthorised leave, the school will contact the local authority regarding making reasonable enquiries regarding the pupil's whereabouts. The local authority will also be notified if a pupil fails to attend school regularly or is absent without leave for more than 10 school days (continuous).

When a pupil has left to join another school, contact will be made with that school to confirm that the pupil has indeed been admitted onto their pupil roll. If the pupil has not joined that school then clarification will be sought to identify where that child is now being educated. If necessary this child may be reported as 'Missing in Education.'

8. Working with others

The school uses a secure internet system to allow the transfer of pupil information when a child leaves an education setting.

9. Safeguarding

For the purpose of this policy, “reasonable enquiries” are defined as limited, investigative powers that the school may action to determine a child’s whereabouts and whether they may be in danger.

In line with the Children Act 2004, the school will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the EWO conducting discussions with relatives to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm, if they are absent without notification from parents.

The DSL will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to children’s social care or police.

Where the whereabouts and safety of a child is unknown, the school, in conjunction with the EWO and LA, may carry out the following actions:

- Contact the parent/carer, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Check local databases
- Follow local information sharing arrangements, and making enquiries via other local databases and agencies where possible
- Check with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force
- Check with agencies known to be involved with the family
- Check with the LA and school from which the pupil moved originally
- Check with the LA where the pupil lives, if this is different to where the school is located
- Check with the Ministry of Defence Children’s Education Advisory Service in the case of children of Service Personnel
- Conduct home visits via an appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessments, and making enquiries with neighbours or relatives, if appropriate

NB. This list is not exhaustive – the school, EWO and LA will use their judgement towards what reasonable enquiries are appropriate, once all the facts of the case have been considered.

10. Common Transfer Files (CTF) to transfer pupil information

School will send CTF’s when a pupil leaves to attend another school.

If a pupil arrives at the school and the previous school is unknown, the school will contact the LA who will be able to search the school2school database.

In exceptional circumstances, the standard rules for sending and receiving a CTF for a pupil might not apply. Each case will be judged on its merits in consultation with relevant parties.

Circumstances when it is not considered appropriate to pass on details via a CTF may include a family escaping a violent partner; if the family is in a witness protection programme; or where there are concerns that the child is at risk of forced marriage.

11. Useful Links and Further Sources of Information

Children Missing From Education | Together for Children

Keeping children safe in education: for schools and colleges

Working together to safeguard children 2018

Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities

Elective home education: guidelines for local authorities

Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England

Behaviour and discipline in schools: guidance for headteachers and staff

Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: advice for practitioners

Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked: practice guidance