



Children Missing Education

Guidance for schools and the Local Authority
January 2015



CONTENTS

1. Application of this guidance	3
2. National and local policy and our expectations	3
3. Concerns about a pupil's welfare or safety	5
4. When a pupil leaves – action to be taken by schools	5
5. Action to be taken by the Local Authority when a pupil is reported as 'missing education' by school	6
6. Monitoring pupils on the Local Authority CME List	8
9. Contact details.....	8
10. Appendix - Assessing a pupil's vulnerability	10

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Starters and Leavers Guidance. This can be accessed at [School Services Team](#).

1. APPLICATION OF THIS GUIDANCE

This guidance, written principally for schools and the Local Authority (LA) but also applicable to the wider children's workforce, applies to situations where:

- A pupil may leave school without their parents/carers giving details of their new school;
- The destination school given by the parent has not received the pupil;
- Parents/carers are unsure of the pupil's new school;
- The pupil has stopped attending without the school receiving any notification.

2. NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY AND EXPECTATIONS

National standards

Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 says that Local Authorities must make arrangements to identify (so far as it is possible to do so) children not receiving suitable education who:

(a) are not registered pupils at a school, and

(b) are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

In exercising their functions under this section a local education authority must have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State.

“Suitable education”, in relation to a child, means efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have.”

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, a school is expected to make reasonable enquires to find the whereabouts of a missing pupil.

The National Guidance, 'Children Missing Education', issued in 2013 states that “*All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education... Children missing education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later on in life*”. The document, “Not Present, What Future, Children Missing Education in England” (NCB 2014), called for the DfE to conduct a national review into CME that would lead to improvements in the data collected and in LA responses to CME.

Local standards

In York we believe that all pupils should receive the best possible education.

We will take steps to confirm that every York pupil has a place at a named school and that the pupil is receiving the education to which they are entitled.

Where it is suspected, believed or known that a pupil may be missing from education, we will take proportionate steps to establish the whereabouts of the pupil and the arrangements for their education.

We will work with Head Teachers and schools to ensure they are aware of their responsibilities and of the support available.

Where the LA is informed that a pupil is missing education, we will include their details on our CME list and may undertake further checks to those undertaken by the school at the point of the pupil being reported as missing education.

These additional checks will be proportionate and relevant to the known welfare risks and concerns about the pupil.

We will work to reduce the risk of pupils missing the education to which they are entitled and hence ensure they achieve their optimal potential.

Our approach in York is underpinned by the following principles:

Early identification and support will reduce for many pupils the risk of becoming CME and reduce the likelihood of future damage to their education.

Where possible, information relating to the identification and tracking of pupils who are CME, or at risk of becoming CME, should be provided by known and trusted adults, principally those in schools.

A committed and knowledgeable children's workforce ensures that a minimum of pupil become CME.

Staff within the LA such as Childrens Advice Team, Management Information and School Services, will work to support the whole children's workforce, and principally schools, to equip them with the necessary advice and information to help them minimise the number of pupils becoming CME.

3. CONCERNS ABOUT A PUPIL'S WELFARE OR SAFETY

If anybody has concerns about the welfare or safety of a pupil who is leaving, or who has left a school, their first response should be to discuss these concerns with the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding within their service, who may then decide to contact Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment at the Front Door on 01904 551900 or childrensfrontdoor@york.gov.uk. For information about assessing vulnerability look at appendix 1.

4. WHEN A PUPIL LEAVES– ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY SCHOOLS

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that schools are expected to make reasonable enquires to find the whereabouts of a missing pupil.

When a pupil leaves with notice the school will:

- Agree with parent the last day the pupil will be attending the school.
- Request updated telephone numbers, e mail and address.
- Ask if the pupil has been allocated a place at a new school and if so seek details.
- If a new school has been allocated contact the school to agree the date the pupil will be starting.
- If a new school has not been allocated ask parents to inform you when a new school has been allocated as you will need to transfer electronically the Common Transfer File (CTF). You should also contact the LA at cme@york.gov.uk with details of the pupil, new address etc
- If it cannot be established that the pupil will be attending the named / any school, you should follow CME process.

If necessary for further details re CTF refer to the local guidance, ###.

Where a pupil leaves without advance notice or their destination is unknown, the school will:

- If the pupil or family is known to Children's Social Care inform the named social worker
- Check possible whereabouts with staff
- Contact parents using last known number or e mail
- Contact any emergency contacts held for the pupil
- Make a home visit to the last known address
- Check with neighbours and any known friends

- Contact any agencies known to be involved such as school nurse, GP, IDAS, YOT, police etc.
- If the pupil is statemented or has SEN check with SEN services
- Contact the last known school of any siblings
- Ask the pupil's friends and their parents if they are aware of the pupil's whereabouts
- Check any social media sites e.g. Facebook.

If the pupil is still not located contact the Schools Adviser: Attendance and Integrated Working (cme@york.gov.uk). This will enable the LA to make further enquires, as appropriate, to try and locate the pupil.

The pupil should remain on roll (minimum of 4 weeks) and their absence should be recorded. Please note, the school must contact the Schools Adviser: Attendance and Integrated Working and agree the date that the pupil should be removed from roll before they actually remove the pupil from their roll.

On the date agreed with the Schools Adviser: Attendance and Integrated Working the school should ensure the pupil's attendance data is up to date, remove them from their roll with the correct leaving date.

Create a CTF to the destination of 'Unknown/other (XXX/XXXX)' and load it onto the S2S website. By doing this, the pupil's details will be uploaded onto a central database. If a pupil then arrives at a new school without any records from their previous school, the new school can ask their LA to retrieve the details from the database.

5 ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY WHEN A PUPIL IS REPORTED AS 'MISSING EDUCATION' BY SCHOOL

When checks undertaken by the school fail to establish the whereabouts and destination school of a missing pupil, the school will report the pupil as a 'Child Missing Education to the LA at cme@york.gov.uk

When notified that a pupil is missing education, the local authority will undertake reasonable and proportionate checks.

In all cases the Schools Adviser: Attendance and Integrated Working or the link worker for CME in the Children's Advice Team will:

- Log the referral on the Central Pupil database and record as a possible CME. (This system will be used to track and record steps taken to locate the pupil).
- Check information held on the pupil database.
- Check with the Children's Advice Team / Child Index (E-Trak), and the Children's Social Care database (RAISE) to establish if children's social care are currently involved with the child. If the child is known to Children's Social

Care then the named worker will be informed and the worker details will be recorded on the pupil database.

If the child is not known to Childrens' Social Care and there are no concerns held by the school, and following the above checks, the Schools Adviser: Attendance and Integrated Working or link worker for CME in the Childrens Advice Team will note on the pupil database that the child has left the school and will record in the notes the actions taken by the school and also record the above checks. These actions will be recorded on the pupil database and shall include the nature of the checks and by whom they were made. They will then close the case as CME on the pupil database.

Where checks have revealed possible safeguarding or welfare concerns about a CME, Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment is available to discuss these concerns and if appropriate a referral should be made. In situations where a referral is made to Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment they will then determine the appropriate steps to be taken to try and locate the child. Social Care shall record the actions they take. The child's name will remain on the CME register until Social Care makes a decision to close the case.

Where no referral is made to Children's Social Care the Schools Adviser: Attendance and Integrated Working or link worker for CME in the Children's Advice Team may conduct further checks as appropriate such as:

- If the pupil is statemented or has SEN check with SEN services.
- Make further telephone checks to all numbers provided by school.
- Make contact to any parental e mails supplied by school.
- Check if the pupil has any siblings on the Pupil database. If so, contact the siblings' last known school for information.
- Contact any other agencies with known involvement i.e. Probation, YOT, Young Peoples Services, Health Visitor/GP, IDAS, housing
- Check with council tax benefit/housing benefit
- If any service is involved request they make a home visit.
- If the pupil is from an Army family contact the Army Welfare Service.
- Contact any previous LA the pupil has lived in.
- Contact the CME designated person for another LA if there is any information to suggest that the pupil has moved to, or has contact with, another LA. (The Schools Adviser: Attendance and Integrated Working can provide contacts)

If any of the checks, or other information supplied from other sources, indicate that there are or have been concerns about a pupil's welfare or safety, this information must be shared with the Children's Social Care at the Front Door so that they can then determine the appropriate steps to be taken to try and locate the pupil.

The existence of concerns will be noted on the pupil database notes and the case closed as CME if the pupil is not located 12 weeks after being notified as CME.

6 REFERRALS MADE TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY OF PUPILS BELIEVED TO BE IN THE AUTHORITY AND NOT ON A SCHOOL ROLL OR PUPILS MOVING INTO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Occasionally the Local Authority will receive queries from other Local Authorities or agencies seeking to locate a child in York or to check they are in education. The Schools Adviser: Attendance and Integrated Working or the link worker for CME from the Children's Advice Team shall:

- Check information held on the pupil database.
- Check with the Children's Advice Team / Child Index (E-Trak), and the Children's Social Care database (RAISE) to establish if children's social care are currently involved with the child
- Log the referral on the Central pupil database and record as a possible CME
- Feedback the result of these checks to the referrer

If there is evidence to indicate the pupil is in York and there is no evidence to indicate they are in receipt of an education then any services that are working with the family should be informed. If appropriate the Schools Adviser: Attendance and Integrated Working or the link worker for CME from the Children's Advice Team shall write or contact the family to clarify how they are educating the child.

7 MONITORING PUPILS ON THE LOCAL AUTHORITY CME LIST

All individual cases will be dealt with using the above procedures. The complete CME register will be reviewed twice yearly. The complete CME register will be reviewed twice yearly in August and February. This review will be conducted by the Schools Adviser: Attendance and Integrated Working) and the link worker for CME from the Children's Advice Team. This review will look at those cases that remain open and check all appropriate and proportionate steps have been taken to locate the pupil.

The Head of Service, Children's Trust Unit / Early Intervention will sample random cases of CME to quality assure CME procedures and work.

A report will be presented annually to the council's Directorate Management Team on the CME work that has taken place in the previous year.

8. CONTACT DETAILS

For any further queries regarding this guidance, please contact either:

- Mark Smith, Schools Advisor: Attendance and Integrated Working, mark.smith@york.gov.uk, 01904 555187 for advice about CME
- cme@york.gov.uk if you wish to report a pupil as CME
- School Services, education@york.gov.uk, 01904 551554 for advice about admissions and school transfers
- Management Information Service, schoolsmis@york.gov.uk for advice about S2S and CTF
- Children's Advice Team, 01904 551900, childrensadvise@york.gov.uk for advice about Integrated Working Tools
- Children's Social Care Referral and Assessment Service on 01904 551900, childrensfrontdoor@york.gov.uk If you have a concern that a child is vulnerable or at risk of significant harm.

Assessing a Child’s Vulnerability: immediate response

Assessing vulnerability requires a combination of professional knowledge and experience of child welfare issues and knowledge of local circumstances. Considering the following questions could assist the process. If in doubt a practitioner should always consult with the designated teacher for Safeguarding or a member of the Senior Management Team or their line manager.

If the answer to any of the following questions is YES the Police and Front Door Service should be informed by the parent and or school/LA Officer dependent on who is the lead professional dealing with the matter.

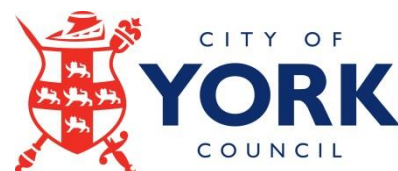
- 1 Is there good reason to believe that the child may be a victim of crime?
- 2 Does the child have, or has had, a formal child protection plan or is a Child in Need?
- 3 Is the child looked after by City of York or any other LA or is the child in a private fostering placement?
- 4 Has the child currently got a social worker?
- 5 Is there planned or current Children’s Social Care or Adult Social Care involvement? e.g. Section 47 enquiry about to start?
- 6 Is there a person present in or visiting the family with previous convictions for an offence against children or other person suspected of previously harming a child? Has there been Children’s or Adults Social Care or Adults Criminal Justice system involvement in the past?
- 7 Is there a history of domestic violence, parental mental health issue, substance misuse or sexual exploitation?

The answers to further questions could assist a judgement whether or not to inform LA Children’s Social Services and the Police:

- 1 In which age range is the child? – younger children are more at risk (0-11)
- 2 Is this very sudden and unexpected behaviour?
- 3 Have there been any past concerns about the child associating with significantly older young people or adults?
- 4 Was there any significant incidents prior to the child’s unexplained absence?
- 5 Are there health reasons to believe that the child is at risk? e.g. Does the child need essential medication or health care? Was the child noted to be depressed/self harming prior to the child’s unexplained absence?
- 6 Does the child have any special educational needs?
- 7 Has the child been a victim of bullying in or out of school?
- 8 Are there religious or cultural reason to believe that the child is at risk e.g. Rites of passage or forced marriage planned for the child, female genital mutilation?
- 9 Historical information relating to older siblings?
- 10 Has the child gone missing with their family?

- 11 Have there been past concerns about this child and family, which together with the sudden disappearance are worrying? e.g.
Is there any known history of drug or alcohol dependency within the family?
Is there any known history of domestic violence/self harming?
Are there concerns about the parent/carer's ability to protect the child from harm?
- 12 Are the family uncooperative or non engaging with services?
- 13 Has there been any change in the child/family's financial circumstances?
- 14 Is there a history of poor attendance?
Have the parents been subject to proceedings in relation to attendance?
- 15 Is there a history of mobility?
 - a. Are there immigration issues?
 - b. Children living in women's refuges
 - c. Children of homeless families perhaps living in temporary accommodation, house of multiple occupancy or bed and breakfast
 - d. Young runaways
 - e. Unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees or children of asylum seeking families
 - f. Children with a Gypsy/Traveller background
 - g. Children from transient families
- 16 Children with long term medical or emotional problems
- 17 Young carers
- 18 Teenage mothers

'What to do if you're worried a Child Is Being Abused' (DfES, 2003 and Pan London 2010) contains guidance on what actions an individual should take to safeguard a child about whom there are concerns.



Children's Services, Education & Skills