

Children Missing in Education Policy



Policy

Reviewed: September 2022
To be reviewed: September 2025

St. John's C.E. (C) Primary School Children Missing in Education Policy

Introduction:

St John's Primary School is concerned about any child missing education, not only in the way that it impacts on the individual's potential achievement but also in relation to their safety and welfare. The purpose of the CME Policy is to ensure that children and young people missing in education are re-engaged in an appropriate education provision in the shortest possible time with lasting success. We must ensure that 'no child slips through the net'.

Legal Context:

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed a new duty on all local authorities in England and Wales for them to make arrangements to identify CME in their area. The duty applies to all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and are not receiving a suitable education.

Purpose of the CME Policy:

The purpose of the CME Policy is to establish a set of principles which all schools, services and partner organisations can sign up to in order to ensure children and young people living in Kirklees are safely on roll of a school, placed on alternative educational programmes or electively home educated at the request of parents. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Children Missing Education: Statutory guidance for local authorities' (Sept 2016) and existing safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.

Aim of the Policy:

- To assist the local authority and partner agencies in identifying CME.
- Raise awareness of the notification process.
- Explain how children will be tracked and monitored until they are re-engaged in education.
- Explain the mechanism available to access appropriate education provision.
- Provide clarity to stakeholders on how children can be tracked across boundaries when a child moves to another local authority area.

Definition of CME:

For the purpose of this document: 'Children missing from education' describes all children of compulsory school age who:

- Are not on a school roll or being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision). For example, children of travelling communities or immigrant families who are not registered for education; or
- Have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as ten days without provision of reasonable explanation). (DFE Sept 2016)

Each year a number of children will either fail to start in a new school or appropriate education provision, or become lost from school rolls or fail to re-register at a new school when they move home.

Definition of Children at Risk of Missing Education:

Children and young people with poor school attendance are often the most vulnerable and are more likely to become children missing from education. The authority recognizes that the duty to identify children not receiving education does not apply in relation to children who are registered at school who are not attending regularly. The authority's CME strategy does however, include the reinforcement of duties that already exist for schools and therefore supports the monitoring of children at risk of missing education in the future. The monitoring of children at risk of missing education is carried out in partnership with schools where attendance of individual pupils gives cause for concern with the aim of reducing the risk in the future.

Why children go missing from education Children who are missing from education can be especially vulnerable; it is essential that all services work together to identify and re-engage

these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible. It is important to establish the reasons for the child being missing at the earliest possible stage. Possible reasons that should be considered include:

- Failure to start appropriate provision and never enter the system;
- Stopped attending, due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parent/carers;
- Failure to complete a transition between schools;
- Children from refugee and asylum seeking families;
- Children from families who are highly mobile;
- Child at risk of a Forced Marriage;
- Children experiencing abuse and neglect.
- Unable to find a school place after moving into local authority;
- Victims of bullying;
- Frequent moves of house including periods of homelessness or periods in a refuge;
- Family breakdown;
- Frequent absence leading to low attendance
- Disaffection resulting in parents withdrawing the pupil or 'being asked to leave';
- Involvement in youth offending.

Children who remain disengaged from education are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk such as anti-social behaviour and/or sexual exploitation.

Children from families who move frequently between local authority areas can sometimes become 'lost' in the system and consequently missing from education. Where a child has moved, local authorities should check with other local authorities – both regionally and nationally – and share information in order to ascertain where a child has moved. Once the location of the child is established, the relevant local authority must ensure that the child is receiving an education either by attending a school or otherwise.

Certain vulnerable groups are more likely to be affected:

- Young people who have committed offences;
- Children living in women's refuges;
- Children of troubled families i.e. suffering bereavement, trauma, domestic violence, homelessness etc;
- Young runaways;
- Children with special educational needs;
- Refugee and asylum seeking children;
- Travelling families;
- Looked after children;
- Teenage parenthood;
- Children with mental health issues;
- Young carers;
- Children who are permanently excluded from school;
- Young people being forced into marriage;
- Children involved in substance misuse.

The Role of the Access, Inclusion and Multi Agency Teams:

In school

As a result of daily registration, schools and other educational establishments are particularly well placed to notice when a child has gone missing. If a member of staff becomes aware that a child may have run away or gone missing, they should try to establish with the parents/ carers, what has happened. If this is not possible, or the child is missing, the designated safeguarding teacher/advisor should, together with the class teacher, assess the child's vulnerability.

In the more general circumstances of a child going missing who is not known to any other agencies, the Head Teacher should inform the Pupil Tracking Officer and Education Welfare

Officer of any child who has not attended for 10 consecutive school days without provision of reasonable explanation.

All schools must also notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The notification must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new pupil. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point – at the start of the first year of education normally provided by that school – unless the local authority requests that such returns are to be made.

Other Agencies (outside of schools)

- Where any agency in contact with children and families believes that a child is not on the roll of a school or receiving education otherwise, then this information should be passed to the Pupil Tracking Officer with any details they have of the child in question.
- The Pupil Tracking Officer should ensure through the Education Welfare Officer that reasonable enquiries are made - e.g. home visits, liaison with Children's Social Care Services and/or Housing - and notify the school if it appears that the child has moved out of the area.
- If no information is forthcoming within 2 days, the Pupil Tracking Officer should alert her/his manager, who should inform Children's Social Care Services and the Police in writing.

To reduce the risk of children and young people falling out of the education system, the authority has developed a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Access and Inclusion services that support the work needed in this area. These teams work closely together to ensure there is coherence and consistency within the system. These teams ensure that the process for identifying, investigating and finding CME is carried out. The duties and responsibilities of these teams include:

- Tracking CME through a dedicated CME coordinator;
- Ensuring all notifications of CME are correctly recorded on the relevant databases;
- Investigating relevant databases e.g. G2, Lost Pupil Database;
- Coordinating casework in relation to investigating CME including working closely with relevant services and agencies to determine appropriate provision for the child;
- Ensuring admission into school through the admissions process and the Authority's Fair Access Protocol where required;
- Reviewing and monitoring cases held until re-engagement in education is successfully secured through the Education Planning Group – Pupils missing out on education;
- Providing relevant reports for the SMT performance focus groups and relevant Boards;
- Hold regular CME meetings to review complex and urgent cases;
- Raise awareness of the CME policy and practice including training/awareness raising events for school governors and partner organisations.

Key Stakeholders

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information. In order to fulfil the requirements of the CME policy the authority has agreed to work in collaboration to ensure the early identification and intervention of children who are not receiving a suitable education. All stakeholders have a responsibility for CME.

Key stakeholders include:

- Children's Services including Admissions, Out of School Team, Equality for Minorities (Ethnic Minority and Travellers), Parent Partnership, Education Welfare Officers, KSCB, KCMET, Integrated Pathways team;
- Other schools and Academies including Support Centres;
- Health/PCT
- Youth Offending Service;
- Voluntary Organisations;
- Housing Associations;
- Police;
- CAMHS
- Homeless Services;

- Job Centres;
- CME tracking officers in other authorities;

Reducing the Risk of Children Missing Education:

All schools, academies and the general public have a moral and corporate responsibility in relation to CME. Parents who do not ensure their children are accessing a 'suitable' education can be deemed as breaking the law. Anyone who becomes aware of a child or young person who does not appear to be accessing education should refer this child to KSCB (Kirklees Safeguarding Children Board) or KCMET (Kirklees Children Missing Education Team). The authority, in partnership with the other agencies listed above, aims to ensure that all colleagues in all agencies who become aware of a child who is living in the county but not in an identified education provision, will notify the authority.

Role of Children's Services:

Individual services play a role in preventing the risk of CME. These services will continue to practice in addressing issues related to nonattendance, poor attendance and persistence absence. They will, at the same time, work in partnership with Access, Inclusion, KSCB and KCMET to monitor and investigate children who meet the criteria under the definition of CME and who are at risk of missing education.

The Role of Schools and Academies:

All schools have a duty under Section 1 of the Children's Act 2004 and in partnership with the local authority to improving the wellbeing of children in the authority's area. Section 175 of the Education Act puts a duty on all schools to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes identifying children who are not receiving education. It is expected that schools and academies will have carried out all reasonable enquiries within their capacity to ascertain the whereabouts of the young person and engaging them in education prior to informing the local authority that the child is missing education. Where it has been brought to the attention of the local authority that a child is missing education and the school/academy has failed to report a child as CME, the local authority will write to the school/academy requesting details of the child's attendance.

Safeguarding of CME:

A significant number of children referred as missing education are either found in education following initial investigations or found but not in education and subsequently supported to return. There are a number of children who are not found in education as the family cannot be located following the normal investigations.

A child who is not found in education following CME investigations does not infer that the child is at risk. However, it is appropriate to escalate the concerns to consider potential risks to the child. A process is in place to facilitate this.

A child missing from education is not in itself a safeguarding matter, and there may be a reasonable explanation for this. However, regular school attendance is an important safeguard and unexplained non-attendance can be an early indicator of problems, risk and vulnerability.

Schools should endeavour to deal with this problem in three ways; by preventing poor school attendance and truancy; acting once any absence occurs to establish children's safety and try to get them back to school; and taking action to trace children whose whereabouts were not known.

Monitoring the policy and procedures:

KSCB is made up of a range of services and is responsible for ensuring that robust systems and procedures are in place to identify, support, track and monitor children not receiving education. At St John's Primary School it is the responsibility of the Headteacher and Governors to work closely with The Education Planning Group and ensure systems and procedures in school are robust.

Further Information:

Bradford Children Missing Education – Guidance for Schools

Leeds One Minute Guide – Children Missing Education

Wakefield – Children Missing Education - Guidance for Schools, Providers and Professionals

This guidance should be read in the context of the statutory duties upon local authorities and parents as set out in the following:

- The Education Act 1996;
- The Education Act 2002;
- The Children Act 1989;
- The Children Act 2004;
- Children missing education: Statutory guidance for local authorities (Sept 2016);
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended (Education law regarding pupil registration where a child is on a school role): The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

In particular, the guidance provided for professionals seeking to exercise their duty under the Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and the Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 aims to ensure that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Additionally, this guidance seeks to ensure that the duty to co-operate to improve the wellbeing of children under section 10 of the Children Act 2004[32] is discharged. All schools will have a designated teacher for looked after children. These teachers are ideally placed to assist when identifying those looked after children currently in school who may be at greater risk of going missing from education.

Practice and Procedures

The following attached document has been adopted from Kirklees and should be read in its entirety by all staff and visitors to the school. A copy of the policy forms part of the induction pack for all new staff, students and volunteers and a practice is carried out annually as part of the Health and Safety refresher.

Inclusion and Equality

In line with our duties under the Equality Act (2010) and as set out in our Equality Policy we are committed to providing an environment conducive to learning. Everybody is valued, respected and challenged regardless of race, gender, religion, social background, culture or disability.

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually as per Kirklees guidelines or when there are any changes to the statutory guidance that warrant it. It may also be reviewed earlier should it no longer comply with school practice or the legal requirements of the school.

Policy produced by Aidan Blackburn..... **Date:** September 2022.....

Approved by (Chair of Governors): **Date :**

Review Date: September 2025

If you need further copies of this document, or would like the document in another format, such as enlarged print, audio tape or another language, please contact the School Bursar, at the school.

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