

Children Missing Education

Guidance for schools and the Local
Authority
August 2023

Children's and Education, Children's services



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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.
- A school age child is believed to be living in the LA and there is no evidence to say that the child is receiving an appropriate education

2. NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY AND OUR EXPECTATIONS

National standards

[Section 436A](#) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 says that LAs 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 LA 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](#) schools are expected to make reasonable enquires to find the whereabouts of a missing pupil.

The National Guidance, [Children Missing Education](#), 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 harm, exploitation or radicalisation and

becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later on in life”.

In 2022-23 the Department for Education began to collect information , on a voluntary basis , from local authorities. City of York has participated in the voluntary collection. Information about the collection is available [here](#).

In the summer of 2023 the Department for Education made a call for evidence regarding improving the support for children missing education:[here](#)

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, schools and multi academy trusts (MATs) 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 number of pupils become CME.

Staff within the LA such as early help services, business intelligence, children's services (CS) 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 services via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 01904 551900 or at MASH@york.gov.uk .

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

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the National Guidance, [Children Missing Education](#) 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. This may require contact with a school overseas and online translation services such as [Google translate](#) can be helpful.
- 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). Information about using CTF is [here](#). 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.
- Complete a Pupil Movement form (see appendix) and send to cme@york.gov.uk

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

- If the pupil or family is known to CS inform the named social worker or 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, youth justice service, police etc.
- If the pupil has an EHCP 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, Instagram.
- Complete a Pupil Movement Form (see appendix) and send to cme@york.gov.uk

If the pupil is still not located contact the School Attendance Adviser (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 or until the pupil is located) and their absence should be recorded. Please note the school must contact the School Attendance Adviser 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 School Attendance Adviser the school should ensure the pupil's attendance data is up to date and 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. Information about using S2S can be found on the DfE website, [here](#).

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 child may be missing education, the LA will undertake reasonable and proportionate checks.

In all cases the School Attendance Adviser will:

- Log the referral on the Synergy 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 Synergy pupil database.
- Check with the Single View database and if appropriate the CS database (Mosaic) to establish if CS are currently involved with the child. If the child is known to CS then the named worker will be informed.

If the child is not known to CS and there are no concerns held by the school, and following the above checks, the School Attendance Adviser 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 remain open as CME for four school weeks though updates can be made to the pupil record should there be new information.

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

Where no referral is made to CS the School Attendance Adviser may conduct further checks as appropriate such as:

- If the pupil has an EHCP 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, youth justice service, 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 School Attendance Adviser 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 CS via MASH 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 school weeks after being notified as CME.

6. CONCERNS ABOUT A PUPIL'S WELFARE OR SAFETY or CHILD LEAVES WHEN AT RISK, LOOKED AFTER, SUBJECT TO A CHILD PROTECTION PLAN OR CHILD IN NEED

If the child has named worker or is known to children services you must contact the worker immediately.

If the child is not open to children services you should contact the MASH for advice on 01904 551900 where you have concerns that a child is vulnerable or have concerns about their health, safety or welfare such as:

- a pupil who is living in a family where there are concerns about domestic abuse,
- substance abuse or mental health problems,
- a pupil who may be in contact with a person who poses a risk of harm to children and young people,
- a pupil who may be involved in child sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation
- a pupil who may be the victim of, or involved in, a crime,
- a pupil who may be taken out of the country illegally (e.g. abducted),
- a pupil who may be taken out of the country for an illegal act (e.g. forced marriage, female genital mutilation, child trafficking).

Home Office movement search requests

The Home Office has provided the following information (August 2023) on how submit movement search requests for children who are believed to have gone overseas and for whom there is a specific safeguarding concern and activity has already been undertaken to locate the child:

- 1) LAs to email the Home Office Intelligence Domestic Data Sharing Team via HOIDDST@homeoffice.gov.uk.
- 2) Domestic Data Sharing Team will then issue a Business Needs Form to be completed and returned
- 3) Domestic Data Sharing Team will liaise with the LA to create a letter of mutual understanding (LMU)
- 4) Once the LMU is satisfactory and has been signed off, the LA will be issued with a MS request form and can then submit requests to the Home Office

7. 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 LA will receive queries from other LAs or agencies seeking to locate a child in York or to check they are in education. The School Attendance Adviser shall:

- Check information held on the pupil database.
- Check with the Single View database and, if appropriate, CS database (MOSAIC) to establish if they are currently involved with the child
- Log the referral on the Synergy pupil database and record as a possible CME if it is believed the child is resident in City of York
- 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 School Attendance Adviser shall write to, or contact, the family to clarify how they are educating the child.

Information about school admissions and how to apply for a school place is available on the City of York website [here](#).

8. 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 on a regular basis by the School Attendance Adviser.

Data regarding CME is shared with:

- DfE via the termly CME return
- Children's services DMT via quarterly KPI updates from business intelligence
- Safeguarding partnership within the quarterly child exploitation data report

9. CONTACT DETAILS

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

- Mark Smith, School Attendance Adviser, 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

- Business Intelligence Service, business.intelligence@york.gov.uk for advice about S2S and CTF
- Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH on 01904 551900, mash@york.gov.uk, if you have a concern that a child is vulnerable or at risk of significant harm.

Appendix.

City of York Pupil Movement form 2023



2023 Pupil
Movement Form.doc