



Children Missing in Education Policy

Riverside Federation

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This policy is in support of the Riverside Federation's vision:
Small schools providing opportunity, delivering challenge, building respect.

Table of Contents

1. Procedure.....	3
2. Introduction.....	3
3. Legal Context.....	3
4. Purpose of the CME Policy	3
5. Aim of the Policy.....	4
6. Definition of CME	4
7. Definition of Children at Risk of Missing Education.....	4
8. Why children go missing from education	4
9. The role of the Attendance and Exclusions Strategy Manager	5
10. The role of the Children Missing Education Assistant.....	5
11. Key Stakeholders	6
12. Reducing the Risk of Children Missing Education.....	6
13. The Role of Schools and Academies.....	7
14. Safeguarding of CME	7

1. Procedure

Attendance is monitored weekly to identify any pupils not in school. On a daily basis the parents of any absent pupils are contacted to find out the reason why.

After every holiday, including half term, the parents of any absent children are immediately contacted to ensure the children have not gone on unauthorised extended leave. Any requests for extended leave in school time are refused unless parents can provide evidence of an emergency, e.g. sickness, bereavement etc. In all cases parents are asked to provide a return date and if possible copies of flight details etc.

Any parents/carers requesting special leave are interviewed by a member of the SLT. The school will be mindful of risks to children including FGM (See CP Policy).

If a parent informs the school after taking leave, the EWO will be informed. The Pastoral Support team and the EWO will work in partnership to track down the pupils. If any pupil does not return after 20 days, they will be reported as missing education and taken off roll. Any pupil leaving the school without a named school being identified will also be reported to the EWO. If after 20 days there is still no named school, the children will be reported to the LA as missing education.

Fortnightly Inclusion Meetings will be held to ensure all pupils at risk are identified and prompt action taken.

2. Introduction

The Riverside Federation 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 education are re-engaged in appropriate education provision in the shortest possible time, with lasting success and that 'no child slips through the net'.

3. 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.

4. 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 Norfolk are safely on roll at a school, placed on alternative educational programmes or electively home educated at the request of parents. This policy should be read in conjunction with existing safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.

5. 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 reengaged 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.

6. Definition of CME

For the purpose of this document a child missing education is defined as:

Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is not on a school roll being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, privately, or in alternative provision) and who had been out of any education provision for a substantial period of time (practice nationally is four weeks or more). Department for Education.

7. 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 recognises 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.

8. Why children go missing from education

Children and young people can go missing from school or agreed education provision, for a wide variety of reasons. Their personal circumstances or those of their families may contribute to the withdrawal process. Children can go missing when there is no systematic process in place to identify them and ensure they reengage with appropriate provision.

The most common reasons why children miss education include:

- Failing to register at school at age 5;
- Failing to make successful transition from infant to junior and primary to secondary;
- Ease to attend due to exclusion (formal/illegal withdrawal);

- Mid-year transfer of school;
- 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;
- Transience/family mobility;
- Family breakdown;
- Frequent absence leading to low attendance
- Disaffection resulting in parents withdrawing the pupil or 'being asked to leave';
- Involvement in youth offending.

Certain vulnerable groups are more likely to be affected by the factors; these are; 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.

9. The role of the Attendance and Exclusions Strategy Manager

The Attendance and Exclusions Strategy Manager is the LA designated officer for Children Missing Education in Norfolk and oversees the work undertaken to track and monitor this vulnerable group.

The Attendance & Exclusions Strategy Manager will report to Children's Services Leadership Team (CSLT) as required regarding Children Missing Education. The Attendance and Exclusions Strategy Manager is also responsible for ensuring the recording and reporting of all exclusions and therefore the Exclusions team must be informed of all exclusions from school (both permanent and fixed term). It is expected that all schools will follow the DfE statutory guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

10. The role of the Children Missing Education Assistant

The Children Missing Education Assistant will maintain a list of all children in the authority who are known to be not on a school roll or whose whereabouts cannot be established. When another LA or another agency contacts Norfolk regarding a child who is believed to have moved into the area the Children Missing Education Assistant will check the Tribal/CareFirst database to establish if the child is on roll at a Norfolk school. If they are, the CME Assistant will contact the school and confirm that the child is attending and will provide an appropriate update to the referrer. When information is received (on a CME 1) that a child who has a statement or Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) has been removed from roll the CME1 will be shared with SEN Centre of Excellence csehcp@norfolk.gov.uk so EHCP Co-ordinators can follow up the case. Information received from colleagues within Children's Services or other agencies will be checked and recorded by the Children Missing Education Assistant.

If a child cannot be identified as having registered at a school and an address in Norfolk is included in the enquiry paperwork, the CME Assistant will refer the details on a CME 3 form to the operational Attendance Team at csattendance@norfolk.gov.uk so that a visit can be made to that address. The progress will be monitored and logged (See flowchart Appendix 5) until the child is on a school roll, receiving a suitable full-time education, is registered as undertaking Elective Home Education or it has been established no longer resides in Norfolk. This information is recorded on Tribal database within Children's Services.

11. 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 works 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. The Riverside Federation will work closely with stakeholders to ensure the safety of a child.

Key stakeholders include:

- Children's Services including Admissions, Out of School Team, Equality for Minorities (Ethnic Minority and Travellers), Parent Partnership, Education Welfare Officers.
- Other schools and Academies
- Health/PCT
- Youth Offending Service;
- Voluntary Organisations;
- Housing Associations;
- Police;
- CAMHS
- Homeless Services;
- Job Centres;
- CME tracking officers in other authorities;

12. 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. 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 identified education provision, will notify the authority.

13. The Role of Schools and Academies

All schools have a duty under section 1-of the Children's Act 2004 in partnership with the local authority with a view 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.

14. 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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with Norfolk Children Missing Education Practice and Procedures