

Children Missing Education (CME)

Liverpool Policy April 2016

Section 1

- 1.1 The government has placed a duty on local authorities (Education and Inspections Act 2006, Section 436A) to make arrangements to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, suitable education is efficient full-time education suitable to her/his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.
- 1.2 The duty applied in relation to children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and who are not receiving suitable education otherwise than being at school, for example, at home, privately or in alternative provision.
- 1.3 **The duty does not apply in relation to children who are registered at a school and are not attending regularly.** Schools already have a duty to monitor attendance through the attendance register and to follow their attendance procedures when the attendance of an individual pupil gives cause for concern.
- 1.4 The purpose of this document is to establish a set of principles which all agencies can subscribe to and to set out the responsibilities of staff in schools, the Local Authority and Partners in ensuring that all children and young people have the opportunity to access appropriate and suitable educational provision and is underpinned by Liverpool's safeguarding procedures to ensure that the Local Authority (LA);
- Is able to fulfil its statutory duty to provide an education for all children of compulsory school age (year 11 students are covered by this policy until the last Friday in June of their last year in school);
 - Identify, reengage and maintain contact with those children and young people missing from education who reside in Liverpool.
 - Ensure Liverpool City Council, schools and families work together, along with other partners, to track students believed to be not to be on roll with an education provider until they are registered in a new school or other educational provision.
- 1.5 The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people and to share information. This principle underpins this policy and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure that children and young people do not 'slip through the net' and become missing.
- 1.6 These missing children and young people are amongst the most vulnerable in Liverpool and therefore it is vital that practitioners in all services work together to identify and reengage these children and young people as quickly as possible.
- 1.7 Liverpool City Council has in place arrangements for close joint working and appropriate information sharing with other local authorities and relevant partner agencies that come

into contact with children and families including Liverpool City Council departments, Connexions Service, Social Care, Health, Youth Offending Teams, Merseyside Police, social landlords, Revenues and Benefits as well as links with the Border Agency.

1.8 Liverpool City Council is committed to ensuring;

- Tracking procedures are monitored to ensure best practice with regard to safeguarding children and young people,
- Work with other agencies is carried out so that the Local Authority knows all children of statutory school age who reside within Liverpool and that their education provider is identified.
- All pupils of statutory school age who go missing from schools in Liverpool and move within the LA or to other areas are speedily located,
- Support is provided to other LA's to locate their own missing/lost pupils

Independent schools, located within the LA, are legally required to advise the Local Authority about the details of all children admitted or removed from the roll of their school.

Finally it should be noted that this document does not apply to young people who run away from home or care placement. This group is subject to separate arrangements detailed in Liverpool's LSCB policies, procedures and protocols

Section 2

2.1 Children who go missing from the roll of a school or alternative provision provider.

Schools and the Local Authority have a statutory duty to make reasonable enquiries to locate a pupil following unauthorised absence from school and, after 20 school days of unauthorised absence, to transfer the pupil records using the statutory electronic Common Transfer File (CTF)

2.2 The 2006 pupil registration regulations came into force on September 1st 2006.

Regulation 5 New pupils joining a school – expected first day of attendance.

Schools must now put pupils on the admissions register on the first day that the school expects them to attend, not as previously, when they first attend.

Pupils join the school roll from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or has been notified, that the pupil will attend and must be listed in both the admissions and attendance registers from that day. If a pupil has accepted a place at the school and fails to attend on the agreed date, school must follow up the absence to ensure that the pupil does not lose their place and that any safeguarding and missing from education concerns are addressed. If the child or young person does not join the school within 5 days of the expected first day of attendance a referral must be made to the Education Welfare Service.

2.3 The national definition of a child missing education is;

“All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, privately or in alternative provision) **and** who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more)”

2.4 Children who are on a school roll but;

- The child or young person fails to attend school without offering a reasonable explanation **and**;
- School has been unable to locate the pupil at the last known address and has completed the CME checklist.

2.5 Children who are deemed to be at risk from harm.

If the child or young person is subject to a child protection plan or is a child looked after, notify the social worker as soon as no contact can be made.

Day 1 - Where there is concern for a child who is deemed to be at risk from harm, or where there is reason to suspect the child is a victim of crime, notify social care and/or the police immediately and inform the Education Welfare Service.

2.6 This document does not replace any of the Child Protection Procedures. Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns are to be observed at all times.

2.7 Children who are not deemed to be at risk or harm.

Follow attendance procedures e.g: first day contact.

Days 1-5 – Schools should make all investigations to determine the whereabouts or reasons for absence from school.

Days 6-19 - Where a pupil has been missing for 5 school days, the school should contact the Education Welfare Service. A missing pupils’ checklist should be completed by the school.

Day 20 - Where a pupil remains missing from school/education provision, review the situation with the Education Welfare Service. If all enquires have been completed by the school/education provider and the Education Welfare Service, and the child is still untraced, a CME referral form should be completed by the school and in agreement with the Education Welfare Service, pupils may be removed from the roll once all the following have been completed:

- Remove the pupil as a leaver from your database.
- Set up a Lost Pupils’ destination school on your database, using the Local Authority code and the school establishment number.
- Create a common transfer file (CTF) for the pupil, using the above Lost Pupils’ destination school.
- Upload the CTF to the school to School (S2S) website. <https://securedatatransfer.teachernet.gov.uk/sdtlive/asp/login.asp> or go to

www.teachernet.gov.uk and navigate to the login screen using the S2S links.

- Once uploaded, the pupil data will be stored in the national lost pupil database. The use of XXX as the Local Authority code and the school establishment number XXXX is correct and not an illustration. School will pass a copy of the Pupil Checklist with the **Missing Pupil Form** to Joanne McKenna, CME Co-ordinator. These procedures ensure that these “reasonable enquiries” are carried out before a pupil is removed from a school roll. It is vital that schools try to obtain as much information as possible from parents and pupils in advance, if it is suspected that they may be moving out of area to reduce the risk of them disappearing without trace. It is also equally important to notify the Education Welfare Service as soon as possible if it is suspected that a pupil is missing to ensure that all enquiries can be completed within the four week timescale, therefore, keeping unauthorised absence to a minimum. The Children Missing Education Co-ordinator will continue to regularly monitor any “lost children” to track them into provision. They will also contact, where appropriate the Border Agency. If at any time during the tracking process, the child is located, the Children Missing Education Co-ordinator will:-
 - Contact the school, informing them where the child has been located.
 - Where an actual forwarding address is identified, contact will be made with the person responsible for Children Missing Education in the new Local Authority.

The DfE has stated that it is no longer acceptable for schools to back date the off roll date to the beginning of enquiries once it is agreed a pupil can be removed from roll.

Section 3

3.1 Professionals should work together to identify children and young people of compulsory school age who have no educational provision to ensure they can swiftly return to a suitable form of education provision.

Systems for identifying and maintaining contact with children missing education.

3.2 Liverpool City Council’s systems for identifying and maintaining contact with children missing education and current developments for identifying those at risk of going missing from education.

- The Local Authorities CAPITA system provides the database by which a child’s name can be checked to establish whether or not s/he is registered with an education provider or educated at home by the parent.
- An ‘Out of School’ register is held which identifies those pupils who are known to the Local Authority and are without any education provision.
- The most complex of cases may require the completion of an assessment to identify which services may be required to provide support to the child or young person.

3.3 Identifying Children at risk of becoming missing from education.

Some children are at greater risk of becoming a child missing education.

The following groups have been identified as at risk.

These include:

- Young offenders
- Children at risk from Child Sexual Exploitation
- Children at risk of becoming involved with gun and gang crime
- Children living in refuges
- Children at risk of radicalisation or extremism
- Runaways
- Children of homeless families
- Children of Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Children of new immigrant families
- Children looked after
- Children from the Gypsy, Roma, Irish and Show People Communities
- Children who are privately fostered
- Young carers
- Pregnant teenagers and school age mothers
- Children with psychological/mental health problems
- Children who have been permanently excluded.
- Children whose parent/s are in prison
- Children subject to witness protection arrangements

3.4 Why do children go missing from education?

- They fail to start appropriate provision and thus never become a part of the education system;
- They cease to attend their education provision due to an unofficial exclusion or removal from the school roll;
- The parent/carer withdrawal of a child from the school roll with no details provided of alternative provision; or
- They fail to find alternative provision when moving to a new address within Liverpool or moving into Liverpool from Out of Borough.
- They fail to transfer from primary to secondary school
- Fail to complete a transition between providers (eg, being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new Local Authority or transfer between school education phases).

They could potentially be at risk from sexual exploitation

- Forced Marriage.
- Female Genital Mutilation

Section 4

4.1 Sharing Information.

Legislation is in place that enables appropriate information to be shared safely and securely.

Information can be shared in accordance with the following legislation:

- Current Child Protection legislation, which states that any child missing from education, is deemed to be a 'Child in Need'.
- Section 27 of The Children Act 1989, which states that a Local Authority may request help from any Local Education Authority and other agencies in exercising their duty to provide support and services to children in need and that Education staff have a duty to gather information regarding concerns.
- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that it is the duty of the parent of every child aged five to sixteen to cause the child to receive efficient, full-time education, suitable to his or her age, ability or aptitude and to any special need he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- The Children Act 2004, which states that all public agencies should work together, exchange and share information for the welfare and protection of children in the area.
- Data Protection Act 1998,
 1. Schedule 1, Principle 1 and Schedule 2(5)(b), to process data which is necessary to enable an Authority to pursue every avenue to trace a child, as well as Schedule 2, specifically:
 2. Para 3 "disclosure is necessary to protect the vital interests of the child", and;
 3. Para 5d "disclosure is necessary for the exercise of any functions of a public nature, exercised in the public interest"

Section 5

5.1 Identifying a child missing education

Schools have their own procedures regarding contacting children at risk of going missing from education. These include the use of the schools to schools (S2S) website and the Lost Pupils Database for the transfer of pupil data. Schools should act responsibly in this matter in terms of the safeguarding agenda and the duty to ensure that the whereabouts of all children are known. This proactive approach will help to enable us in limiting the opportunity for children and young people to become missing or "lost".

5.2 Local Authority Procedures

The CME officer has an extensive range of contacts and has established information sharing procedures with internal and external agencies. The CME Officer attends regular meetings of the North West network for CME.

5.3 Notification Routes

- From schools – where a child has left the school and the whereabouts or new provision not established; on admission list but does not arrive and contact cannot be made; or where a school becomes aware through their own pupils/families or other contacts, or any child who is not registered at a school.
- From other professionals within Children’s Services e.g. EIT, Admissions.
- From other Local Authorities – S2S secure messaging, secure email.
- From members of the public
- School Secretaries/Administrators
- Registered Social Landlords
- Accident and Emergency Department
- Parent Partnership Services
- Children’s Social Care
- Police
- Youth Offending Teams
- Health Visitors/School Nurses
- UK Border Agency

5.4 Recording Children Missing Education

The Children’s Services pupil database has a module which is used, amongst other reasons, to record children missing education. It is the CME Officers responsibility to record necessary information on this database to enable accurate information to be reported to the Director of Children’s Services as and when appropriate.

5.5 Local Authority Procedures

The CME Officer will be responsible for co-ordinating referrals from schools, internal and external agencies and recording the information on the pupil database. The CME Officer will perform a number of checks using the prescribed checklist with various agencies using the agreed protocols to ascertain the whereabouts of a child. It is the CME Officer’s responsibility to record the missing child on the S2S Lost Pupil database if necessary which is accessed by CME Officer’s within Local Authorities across the country.

5.6 School Procedures

The following advice and guidance is provided for schools in an effort to ensure consistent practice.

5.7 Missing Pupils

Under normal circumstances when a child moves school the receiving school must contact the previous school to inform them they have placed the pupil on roll. In response to this, the previous school must complete a Common Transfer Form (CTF) and transfer this file to the new school via the secure data transfer site, referred to as School-to-School (S2S). The purpose of this national system is to try and avoid pupil’s going missing. Where a pupil leaves a school and no notification of a new school has been received, a school must within 1-10 days of their last date of attendance notify the LA CME officer having once completed the referral form and checklist. The pupil must remain on roll for at least 20 continuous school days whilst further enquiries are completed by the CME Officer.

5.8 Pupils located in Liverpool

- If the child returns to school or is found during the 20 days the child should not be taken off roll.
- The school should work with the child/family and if appropriate other agencies to ensure the child remains engaged in education.
- They may be removed from roll *only* if they then go on roll at another school.

5.9 Pupils located outside Liverpool

- The school should complete the referral form and checklist with information of the forwarding address and send to CME Officer who will make enquiries with the receiving authority to confirm the child's whereabouts.

5.10 Pupils not located

- If after completion of the referral form and checklist and submission to the CME Officer the child remains untraceable the school may remove the pupil from the roll.
- The pupil must remain on roll for at least 20 continuous school days whilst enquiries are completed. The school will post the child on the S2S site. In accordance with DfES S2S instructions the destination should be given as XXXXXXXX (i.e. 7X's). This website enables LA staff on a national basis to see who is missing and provide fresh information where possible.
- The removal date will depend on whether the pupil has been traced to another school or is untraceable.
- The School must adhere to The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 Regulation 8 'Deletions from Admission Register'.

5.11 Procedures for other agencies

This may include the Police, health professionals, voluntary organisations, etc. Where an agency has information regarding a child who is not currently accessing education or is aware of a child who is at risk of missing education they should inform the CME Officer as soon as possible using the attached referral form. The Agency's own referral form will be accepted but as much details as possible needs to be included to ensure the maximum chance of tracing the pupil. Please contact joanne.mckenna@liverpool.gcsx.gov.uk. The CME Officer will be responsible for co-ordinating the referrals from schools, internal and external agencies and ensuring accurate recording on the pupil database

Children Missing Education Local Authority Lead and contact details:

CME Officer,

School Improvement Liverpool

Toxteth Annexe

Aigburth Road

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