



Child Missing in Education Policy

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PROTOCOL FOR CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

Introduction

The Local Authority, has a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in the area who are of compulsory school age but who are not registered pupils at a school or receiving some other form of suitable education. This protocol is intended to inform Local Authority staff, schools, Headteachers, Governing Bodies and other agencies about how we minimise and prevent “Children Missing Education” (CME). It relates to children who are of Statutory School Age who do not currently have a school place or their provision is unknown. It should be read in conjunction with: Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, DFE September 2016. This protocol is part of a suite of documents used by Buckinghamshire County Council to support their statutory duties see appendix C.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to make sure that children not receiving a suitable education are identified quickly, and effective tracking systems and support arrangements are put in place.

Children not receiving a suitable education are at increased risk of a range of negative outcomes that could have long term damaging consequences for their life chances.

Buckinghamshire County Council is committed to ensuring that all pupils who go missing from schools in the County, or who disappear from other counties and may have arrived in Buckinghamshire, are speedily located, ensuring that:

- The whereabouts are known of all pupils who go missing, who move to other areas or who are lost from schools in Buckinghamshire.
- Partnership is established with other local authorities (LAs) and agencies to locate missing/lost pupils who may have moved across boundaries.
- Children Missing Education are identified and that suitable provision is made for the child’s educational needs.

Legislation & Guidance

Newtown School will inform Bucks County Council of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admissions register where for example they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be compulsory school age
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period
- Have been permanently excluded.

A full list of the grounds for deletion are prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended. (Appendix B). The local authority should be notified in advance of the deletion, when the school becomes aware that the deletion will be made.

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-attendance-and-supporting-children-in-education/remove-a-pupil-from-the-school-roll/>

All schools (including Academies and independent schools) must agree with the relevant local authority the regular interval that the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for up to 10 days. Please contact the County Attendance Team for further guidance.

countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

Details of legislation and guidance relating to children missing education can be found at Appendix A.

Children at particular risk of missing education

Children missing education are:

“Children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school, for example, at home, privately, or in alternative provision.”

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education so it is vital that local authorities make judgement on a case by case basis. The list (is not exhaustive) below presents some of the circumstances that local authorities should consider when establishing their CME practices and policies:

1. Pupils at risk of harm/neglect - Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected schools should follow local child protection procedures. Local authority officers responsible for CME should check that a referral

has been made and, if not, they should alert children's social care. If there is reason to suspect that a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the police should also be involved. Please see the link in appendix A for guidance on "Forced Marriage" and Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Board for other related protocols on issues affecting children's safety, such as "Female Genital Mutilation" and "Child Sexual Exploitation". The Department's statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) is available on the Department's website.

2. Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Families – Research has shown that many children from these families can become disengaged from education, particularly during the secondary school phase. It is therefore vital that schools inform the LA when a GRT pupil leaves the school without identifying a new destination school, particularly in the transition from primary to secondary so that they can attempt to facilitate continuity of the child's education. Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly and their children can be at increased risk of missing education. Local authority CME officer can advise schools on the best strategies for ensuring the minimum disruption to GRT pupils' education, for example dual registration with other schools.

3. Families of Armed Forces - Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MOD Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) on 01980 618244 for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.

4. Missing children/runaways - Children who go missing or run away from home or care may be in serious danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation or abduction as well as missing education.

5. Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System - Children who have offended or are at risk of doing so are also at risk of disengaging from education. Local authority Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are responsible for supervising those young people (aged 8 to 18). YOTs should work with the local authority CME officer to ensure that children are receiving, or return to, appropriate full-time education. Where a young person was registered at a school prior to custody, the school may keep the place open for their return.

Elective Home Education

Some parents decide to provide suitable education for their children by educating them at home. In Buckinghamshire the Elective Home Education (EHE) service keep a database of all children educated at home. The Elective Home Education Team can be contacted via Home_ed@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

Identifying Children Missing from Education

Buckinghamshire County Council has a duty to make arrangements to enable them to establish (as far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, 'suitable education' means efficient full time education suitable to her/his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs a child may have.

Where children have left a Buckinghamshire school with no known destination and are untraceable by professionals, along with children who may have moved from other LA areas to an unknown destination in Buckinghamshire, the Children Missing Education Officer will liaise with external

agencies to trace them, although the responsibility for identifying and supporting CME cases is shared across all agencies and services.

Information about children not receiving a suitable education can be received from within local authority boundaries from colleagues within schools, members of the public, the local authority and other agencies or other local authorities around the country.

In respect of information sharing all services and agencies should follow the agreed procedures for information sharing laid down in the Buckinghamshire Multi-Agency Data and Information Sharing Protocol for Children and Young People.

The CME Officer will work with schools and other outside agencies to raise awareness of Children Missing Education and their roles in identifying and responding to the needs of children missing from education.

Many, if not all, local authority services and partners have some level of responsibility around the issue of Children Missing Education. Whenever anybody becomes aware of any child or young person who does not appear to have education provision they should make a referral to the Children Missing Education Officer.

Members of the public are also encouraged to make referrals where they have reason to believe that a young person is not in education.

Notification and Referral Procedures

The Children Missing Education Officer must be notified of any children thought to be missing from education by making an online referral:

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-attendance-and-supporting-children-in-education/refer-a-child-not-receiving-a-formal-education-to-us/>

If you have any questions before making a referral, please contact the Children Missing Education Team:

01296 383098 / 01296 382091

Email: childrenmissingeducation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Once a referral is received the child's details will be checked against the Authority's pupil information system (ONE) and when a child has been confirmed as missing education, they will be added to the CME database.

The CME database comprises information on children:

- Identified as missing from education.
- Who have been removed from roll where future educational provision is unknown.
- Who have not started at a school following one of the key transitional points.
- Who are waiting for a school place (where appropriate, e.g. where the Buckinghamshire admissions team have not been able to contact the applicant, or where the application has taken longer than expected)
- Children who have moved into Buckinghamshire and do not have school applications processing by the Authority

School Referrals

Where the school is notified by parents/carers that a pupil is to leave the school, every effort must be made to establish what arrangements are being made for the pupil's continuing education. In the vast majority of cases the pupil will be transferring to another school, often one within the authority. In these cases, schools should communicate with the new school to establish the date on which the pupil is to start so the date for deletion from the old school can be determined.

Deletions from the admission and attendance registers must be made in line with the provisions of Register Regulations 2006, which can be found at:

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2016/792/contents/made> and apply to all schools in England, including independent schools.

Schools and Local Authorities must work **jointly** to identify CME..

If the child has an allocated Social Worker and has an unknown destination, schools must make immediate contact with the child's Social Worker and then refer to Children Missing Education team. The following steps should be taken where no explanation for absence has been provided and schools are unable to contact the parents/ carers of the child (no immediate welfare concerns):

Within First 5 Days

- Check with all members of staff who the child may have had contact with.
- Check with the pupil's friends
- Telephone calls made to any numbers held in the school records
- Attempt telephone contact with all known emergency numbers
- Send emails to all known email addresses
- Speak to other agencies that have been working with the family
- Check with any schools known to have siblings or relatives on their roll
- Conduct a home visit if you have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so.

Within days 5-10

- Write to address of emergency contact (if known)
- Speak to your School Attendance Officer for advice:
countyattendanceteam@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- Inform the parent/ carer of the child in writing that you are concerned about their unexplained absence from school and that a referral to the Children Missing Education Team may be required if no response is provided
- Repeat a home visit if you have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so.

Day 10

- Complete online CME referral form /contact CME Officer:
<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-attendance-and-supporting-children-in-education/refer-a-child-not-receiving-a-formal-education-to-us/>

If the child is not located, school (after 10 days of continual absence and where all initial checks have been completed) should complete an online CME referral form and the accompanying CME tracking checklist. The Children Missing Education Officer will complete their procedures. Once all reasonable efforts have been made to find the child a decision will be made as to whether the child can be deleted from the register in line with current legislation. The CME team will advise when a child referred to them can be removed from roll.

If a child is known to have moved away, but no new education provision has been identified, the school can remove from roll under regulation 8e of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 once the following conditions have been met: - The new address (that is not a reasonable distance from the school) is updated on the school MIS)

- The school have written to the parent / carer to state the date that the child will be removed from roll (and that they must reapply for a place if they return)
- The school have completed a CME referral form
- The school have created a Common Transfer File using XXXXXXXX as the destination and uploaded this onto the S2S secure site so that the pupil's details can be stored in the Missing Pupils Database.

Tracking Children Missing from Education

The following processes are followed:

- Missing pupil database lists generated by the Children Missing Education Officer are monitored regularly.
- All cases are shared with the Multi Agency teams which comprises of the following services, teams and agencies as appropriate:

Teams within Buckinghamshire Council such as:

Youth Offending Service

Elective Home Education

County Attendance Team

Admissions

SEN

Education of Children in Public Care

Social Care / First Response

Alongside these services the Children Missing Education Officer will, where appropriate, liaise with the following teams in identifying, tracking and monitoring Children Missing Education.

OLEA

Primary Care Trust

Schools

Police Service

Housing Services

Community Safety Teams

Revenue & Benefits

Any other agency known to be involved with the family

Inland Revenue

UK Border Agency

In the case of children from families of those in the Armed Forces, check with the Children's Advisory Service (CEAS).

Additionally, the Children Missing Education Officer will attempt to make direct contact with the child's family by telephone, email, letter and home visiting. Enquiries will be made of any known emergency contacts held by a school, and where appropriate enquiries will be made of neighbours.

The Children Missing Education Officer will also carry out checks against the GIAP website.

Recording CME

The CME database statistics are recorded and reviewed on a monthly basis.

Supporting Children Missing Education

Once a young person has been found and they are without educational provision they will, in the majority of cases, be expected to join a mainstream school via the normal admissions process.

Where necessary the Local Authority's Admissions Fair Access Protocol will be used. This ensures the most vulnerable young persons are offered a place at a suitable school and that all schools in an area admit their fair share of children with challenging behaviour. Further information regarding school admission can be found at School admissions | Buckinghamshire Council

However, should they be deemed vulnerable, challenging or hard to place in any way their name will go forward to the Fair Access Board to enable that young person to re-engage with education. Where appropriate an Exclusions & Reintegration Officer will support this process.

Where the child has an EHC plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs, the case will be referred to the Special Educational Needs department. Schools should contact their attached officer or email sen@buckinghamshire.gov.uk telephone 01296 382269.

Child traced

If a child has previously been referred to the Children Missing Education Officer and has now been traced, please send details to the Children Missing Education Officer as soon as possible so that records can be amended.

SUMMARY OF THE CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION REFERRAL PROCESS

Schools should make a referral to the CME team if:

- A pupil has moved out of Buckinghamshire but does not have a new school place confirmed
- A pupil has been missing from school for 10 school days, and the school has failed to locate the pupil after carrying out reasonable checks during this time

Schools should **not** make a referral to the CME team if the pupil is still known to be residing at the Buckinghamshire address but is not attending school. In this situation, the school's usual attendance procedures should be followed. **In most instances, schools do not need to make a CME referral if the child is known to be overseas - they should continue to follow their usual non-attendance processes.**

Where there are attendance issues but no immediate safeguarding concerns, schools should follow their usual attendance processes and do not need to refer to First Response. Absence in itself without mitigating factors is unlikely to be a safeguarding concern.

In the event that absence from school raises a potential safeguarding risk and where there are immediate concerns for a child's welfare it is essential that action is taken without delay: <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/care-children-and-families/child-protection-and-safeguarding/>

Schools should contact the CME team via phone or email if they are unsure if they need to make a referral.

Agencies other than schools, and members of the public can also make a CME referral.

All referrals should be made via the online CME referral form and accompanied by a CME tracking form (Appendix D).

- When a referral is received by the CME team, the CME Officer will confirm from the tracking form that the school have carried out all preliminary enquiries. If these are not complete, the school will be asked to continue making checks.
- If the school has completed preliminary checks, the CME Officer will create a CME involvement against that pupil's record on the ONE database.
- The CME Officer will also check for any known siblings/social care/SEN involvement and contact the relevant schools/teams to share information.
- If the pupil's approximate location is known the CME team will take action as appropriate e.g. contact parent/carer; carry out a home visit; contact the CME team in the new location.
- If the pupil's approximate location is not known the CME team will undertake checks as appropriate e.g. address checks with health records, home visit to previous address, contact parent/carer, share details with other CME teams via S2S.
- The referrer should update the CME Officer with all relevant information subsequently received.
- If the missing pupil is located, the referrer will be notified, and the ONE database updated. If the referrer is a school, and the pupil is to be removed from roll, the address must be updated correctly before removing from roll. If you do not have exact address details (for example if the pupil has moved overseas) you can enter a generic 'moved overseas' address. Please contact your MIS support for any queries regarding how to update address information.
- If the missing pupil is not located and all preliminary checks have been completed by the CME team and school, the CME Officer will inform the school that the pupil can be removed from

roll. The CME Officer will keep the referral open and carry out checks every 3 months with appropriate agencies.

- Once a pupil has been missing for over 1 year, checks with appropriate agencies will be made every 6 months, until the child is located or becomes school leaving age, whichever is sooner.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Associated Links

CME Guidance www.education.gov.uk/g00229816/children-missing-education

Attendance Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Working together to Safeguard Children

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Child abduction www.pact-online.org

International child abduction www.reunite.org

Forced marriages www.gov.uk/forced-marriage

HM Customs and Revenue www.hmrc.gov.uk

Home Office www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office

Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership www.bucks-lscb.org.uk

UK Border Agency www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk

Other departmental advice and guidance you may be interested in

Behaviour and attendance (including exclusions, bullying and alternative provision)

<https://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/behaviourpolicies/f0076803/guide-for-heads-and-school-staff-on-behaviour-and-discipline>

Child sexual exploitation

<https://www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/healthandwellbeing/safeguardingchildren/a00200288/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation-action-plan>

Child trafficking

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-who-may-have-beentrafficked-practice-guidance>

School Admissions Code

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2>

Elective Home Education guidelines <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/electivehome-education>

Young runaways <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-orgo-missing-from-home-or-care>

Related legislation

School Attendance: Education Act 1996 (section 7, 8, 14 & 19)

Education Act 2002 (section 21)

Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 4 & 38)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Child protection: Children Act 1989 (section 17 & 47)

Children Act 2004 (section 10, 11, 12 & 17)

Education Act 2002 (section 175)

APPENDIX B

Grounds for Deletion from the Admissions Register

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state:

Deletions from Admission Register

8.— (1) The following are prescribed as the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age shall be deleted from the admission register

- (a) where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local education authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local education authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school;
- (b) except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he has been registered as a pupil at another school;
- (c) where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within subparagraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion;
- (d) in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school;
- (e) except in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered;
- (f) in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence exceeding ten school days for the purpose of a holiday in accordance with regulation 7(3), that — (i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) both the proprietor and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is;
- (g) that he is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- (h) that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and — (i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2); (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) both the proprietor of the school and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is;
- (i) that he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the

proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period;

(j) that the pupil has died;

(k) that he will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and the relevant person has indicated that he will cease to attend the school;

(l) in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school;

(m) that he has been permanently excluded from the school; or

(n) where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school

APPENDIX C

- Reduced Timetable guidance – to be found on SchoolsWeb/Exclusions & Reintegration page
- Children Missing Education guidance – to be found on Schools Web/Children Missing Education Page • Elective Home Education guidance – to be found on SchoolsWeb/Elective Home Education page
- Home tuition guidance/referral document – to be found at: Home Tuition ([aspireap.org.uk](https://www.aspireap.org.uk/home-tuition.html)) (<https://www.aspireap.org.uk/home-tuition.html>)
- Exclusions and Reintegration guidance – to be found on SchoolsWeb/Exclusions and Reintegration page
- Irregular School Attendance – to be found on SchoolsWeb/County Attendance Team page

Appendix D



Children Missing Education (CME) tracking sheet for Schools

Child's Name: _____ DoB: _____

School Name: _____

Please note, this form **must** be completed in full for the referral to be accepted. If you have not carried out a particular action, please explain your reasons.

Within First 5 Days	Date Completed	Details
Check with all members of staff who the child/young person may have had contact with.		
Check with the pupil's friends		
Telephone calls made to any numbers held in the school records. (If this is an automated system please make telephone contact manually)		
Attempt telephone contact with all known emergency numbers.		
Send emails to all known email addresses		
Speak to other agencies that have been working with the family eg SEN, social care. Please provide contact details here:		
Check with any schools known to have siblings or relatives on their roll		
Conduct a home visit if you have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so.		

CME TRACKING SHEET FOR SCHOOLS

Child's Name: _____ DoB _____

Within days 5-10	Date Completed	Details
Write to address of emergency contact (if known).		
Speak to your School Attendance Officer for advice.		
Inform the parent/carer of the child in writing that you are concerned about their unexplained absence from school and that a referral to CME may be required if no contact is made.		
Repeat a home visit if you have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so.		
Day 10: Complete online CME referral form /contact CME Officer		

CME are at significant risk; is your DSL aware of this referral? Yes ☐ No ☐

Following a CME referral being made, schools should remain vigilant and contact the CME team should any further information come to light, including contact from another school or Local Authority.

CME contact details:

childrenmissingeducation@buckinghamshire.gov.uk

01296 383098 / 01296 382091