

Children Missing Education Procedures

September 2017

Introduction

1. Part 1 (Clause 4) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a statutory duty for Local Authorities (LAs) to make arrangements to establish the identities of Children Missing Education (CME).
2. The duty applies to: 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.
3. In September 2016 Statutory Guidance was issued for Local Authorities in England regarding Children Missing Education replacing that of January 2015.
4. The local authority will:
 - i) Produce a written policy;
 - ii) Ensure that there are embedded arrangements to identify and provide services for children missing education;
 - iii) Ensure appropriate monitoring;
 - iv) Identify and provide clear notification routes for key stakeholders;
 - v) Identify a named CME contact;
 - vi) Maintain a database of CME;
 - vii) Monitor the numbers of CME;
 - viii) Provide and monitor appropriate brokering services;
 - ix) Monitor the effectiveness of processes;
 - x) Ensure that up to date information regarding school places and access to alternative provision is readily available;
 - xi) Develop and monitor effective tracking systems;
 - xii) Support schools to make an effective contribution to this tracking;
 - xiii) Support and encourage schools to transfer files via S2S;
 - xiv) Identify a designated officer to monitor use of S2S;
 - xv) Use the Lost Pupil Database area of the S2S site.

5 The procedures detailed below constitute the LA's written policy and replace and supersede those published by CBC in January 2017.

Whilst the council recognises that all children missing education are vulnerable it recognises that particular cohorts of children may be more at risk of becoming CME and targets these groups accordingly. These cohorts include children and young people:

- i) With high mobility;
- ii) Excluded from school;
- iii) Involved in the Youth Justice System;
- iv) Involved in persistent anti-social behaviour;
- v) At risk of harm.
- vi) At risk of Child Sexual Exploitation, Radicalisation, Trafficking or FGM

CBC Procedures

6 Should the CBC CME officer receive a referral of a child believed to be CME he/she will enter the child's details on the CME database. (Referrals may come from within/outside the LA, using the CBC CME E-Form - see link on page 8 - or from other agencies, other LAs, general public etc (also see link on page 8). Childrens Social Care are alerted of all CME referrals on a weekly basis.

7 The CME officer will then check to establish whether the child is currently registered with a school or other education provider within Central Bedfordshire. Checks will be made of PSS, Admissions, Appeals Tracker and Mosaic.

8 If the CME officer establishes that the child is not in receipt of education he/she will contact the parents requesting them to confirm the arrangements they have made for their child's education. (This group of children will include those who have failed to transfer at the end of their phase or who have recently moved into Central Bedfordshire but have yet to secure a school place for their child.)


9 Should the parents fail to respond to these enquiries within 10 working days the CME officer will either undertake a home visit or will request a School Attendance Officer (SAO) do this on their behalf within 5 working days.

10 Should the SAO fail to make contact with the parents or should he/she consider that the parents are no longer resident at that address he/she will notify the CME officer.

11 The CME officer will then liaise with the Team Leader Access and Inclusion Service to consider whether, in the case of a parent whose whereabouts is known, it is appropriate to begin proceedings leading to the serving of a School Attendance Order.

12 Should it become apparent to either the CME officer or the SAO that the child is or may be home educated the case should be referred to the Elective Home Education Officer who will investigate and verify that the child is in receipt of a suitable education.

13 If the CME officer does not have details of the child's current address he/she will make further enquiries to try and acquire more information. Such enquiries may involve:

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- i) Contacting the child's last known school/local authority;
 - ii) Making enquiries of other agencies including health;
 - iii) Liaising with the CBC Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefits teams;
 - iv) Liaising with CBC housing department and other housing providers.
 - v) Checking the Electoral Roll

Dependent upon the outcome of these enquiries the CME officer will take further action as necessary, liaising with the Team Leader Access and Inclusion Service. Should subsequent enquiries fail to produce any definite information the case will be kept open and the Central Bedfordshire Childrens Services Hub be alerted.

14 Each referral should remain on the CME database until it is confirmed that the child is in receipt of suitable education.

15 If a child has not been located within 12 weeks the case will be reviewed and further action taken as necessary.

Use of the DFE S2S Facility

16 Each term the CME officer will download the details of CBC children whose CTFs (Common Transfer Files) have been uploaded by schools to verify that these have been placed appropriately. If a child's name has been placed on the Lost Pupils Database inappropriately the CME officer will contact the school. (Schools should not place a pupil on the Lost Pupils Database without having first made reasonable enquiries and then made a formal referral to the CME officer.)

17 The CME officer will regularly record the number of CBC children currently listed on the Lost Pupils Database as "Missing Pupils" and will report to the Team Leader Access and Inclusion Service.

Cross Border Arrangements

18 CBC and its neighbouring LAs have agreed protocols with regard to children who attend school in one LA but reside in another. According to the terms of these protocols if a child who attends a school in Central Bedfordshire becomes CME the CBC CME officer will notify and liaise with the CME officer of the LA in which the child resides.

19 If a child who attends a Central Bedfordshire school but resides in another LA is excluded, the CBC Inclusion Support Officer will immediately notify the child's home LA.

20 If a child who attends a Central Bedfordshire school but resides in another LA is absent from school due to long-term medical needs or pregnancy the Access and Inclusion Service will notify the child's home LA.

21 Should a CBC School Attendance Officer carry out a truancy sweep and identify a child who lives in another LA and appears to be CME he/she will immediately notify that LA.






Responsibilities of schools

The term 'school' refers to those maintained by a Local Authority, Academies, Free Schools and Independent Schools

22 Schools have a key role to play in ensuring that children do not become CME. Schools are responsible for maintaining attendance registers and monitoring pupil attendance in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations (England) 2006 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016

23 In order to comply with these regulations schools must notify their LA when they are about to remove a pupil from a school roll and should only delete a pupil from the roll when:

- i. The headteacher has received confirmation from the child's parent/carer that he/she has been registered at another school, and there is no School Attendance Order in place;
 - ii. The child has ceased to attend the school and is no longer ordinarily resident at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school and the school has received confirmation from another school that the child is now on its roll;
 - iii. The headteacher has received written confirmation from the child's parent that the child is to be electively home educated - in such circumstances the school should notify the Access and Inclusion Service using the prescribed procedure and referral form;
 - iv. The child has been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 4 weeks and both the headteacher and the local authority have failed after reasonable enquiry, to locate him/her;
 - v. The child has not returned to school within 10 days following the expiry of an agreed extended leave of absence (more than 10 days) and the head teacher has established that the child's absence is not the result of sickness or any unavoidable cause and the headteacher and the local authority have both failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate him/her;
 - vi. The child, having been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, has not been offered a place in reception class;
 - vii. A school medical officer has certified that the child is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
 - viii. The child has died;
 - ix. The child will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and he/she intends to leave;
 - x. The child has been permanently excluded from the school and the deadline for lodging an appeal has elapsed, or the parents have notified the school in writing that they do not intend to appeal;
 - xi. The local authority has named another school in a School Attendance Order or where a School Attendance Order has been revoked because alternative arrangements for the child's education have been made;
 - xii. The child is detained in pursuance of a final court order or order of recall and will be continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than 4 months and the headteacher does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the child will return to that school at the end of that period he/she is detained following a court order or order of recall.
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24 When a school removes a pupil from its roll (other than as part of the normal transfer process or following a permanent exclusion) the school should inform the Access and Inclusion Service by completing a Notification of Removal from School Roll E-form. If this removal from roll form does not include a named destination for the child the case may be treated as a CME).

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/RemovalFromSchoolRoll.ofml>

25 IF AT ANY TIME A SCHOOL HAS SAFEGUARING CONCERNS THEY MUST REPORT THIS TO CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE CHILDREN'S SERVICES HUB ON 0300 300 8585

Out of hours: 0300 300 8123

Email: cs.accessandreferral@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

School Transfer

26 At the start of each school year the School Admissions Service will email each school/academy to remind them to download their 'final offers' list from the School Admissions Module (SAM) database. The list details those children who have been allocated a place at that school. At the start of term the school should ensure that all those children named on the 'final offers' list attend from the first day of term and are placed on roll. Should a child not attend from the first day of term the school should immediately take steps to contact the child's parents to ascertain the reasons for the child's failure to attend.

27 If the school is advised by the child's parents that he/she has been enrolled at another school or is receiving education otherwise than at school, the school should seek confirmation of this and advise the School Admissions Service by completing the Non-Starters and New Starters form and sending this to the School Admissions Service. (If the parents notify the school that they are home educating their child the school should also inform the Access and Inclusion Service).

28 If the school is unable to make contact with the child's parents or to otherwise ascertain a reason for his/her failure to attend the school should carry out reasonable further enquiries and, if these prove unsuccessful, should refer the child to the CME officer. (The School Admissions Service will refer to the CME officer any non-starters listed by the school on the Non-Starters and New Starters form.)

29 If a child transfers school at any time during the school year as a result of a parental request (in-year admission) the School Admissions Service will notify the school to which the child is transferring in order that the child can be placed on roll from the first day of expected attendance. Should the child fail to attend from that day the school should immediately take steps to contact the child's parents to ascertain the reasons for the child's failure to attend. (See above)

30 If a child not of compulsory school age on roll in a reception class does not attend from the first day of term or stops attending the school should contact the child's parent to ascertain a reason (e.g. deferred admission). If no reason is forthcoming the school should remind the parent that the child must attend school once he/she becomes of compulsory school age and should clarify whether the parents intend to subsequently enrol their child at that school or another.



Schools' Use of the DFE S2S Website

31 All schools and academies are required to use the DFE S2S website in order to ensure that a child's CTF (Common Transfer File) accompanies him/her every time he/she joins/leaves a school.

32 If a child joins a CBC school without a CTF being received from a previous school, the school should request details of the previous school from the child's parents. If these details are not forthcoming the school should ask the CME officer to search the DFE S2S Lost Pupils Database.


33 If a CBC school, having previously sent a missing child CTF to the DFE S2S Lost Pupils Database subsequently becomes aware that the child is attending another school, it should create a new CTF and send this to the school the child is now known to be attending. (The school should also ask the CME officer to retrieve the original file from the Lost Pupils Database.)


34 If a child leaves a CBC school to attend an independent school, a school outside England or to be home educated the school, upon receipt of written confirmation of the parents' intentions, should remove the child's name from the school roll. The school should then send the CTF to the DFE S2S website. (This CTF should be coded MMMMMMMM).

School CME Referrals

35 When a child due to start school, or to transfer across phase, fails to attend from the first expected date of attendance the school should ensure that he/she is nevertheless placed on roll and should endeavour to make contact with the parents within 7 days. (The school should also contact School Admissions to check whether the child has registered at another school.) Should the school's efforts to contact the parent prove unsuccessful and the child continues to fail to attend the school should refer the child to the CME officer as a potential CME.

36 If a child leaves a CBC school without the parents notifying the school of a proposed destination school or if a child fails to return to school after a holiday the school should take reasonable steps to contact the parent to ascertain their intentions with regard to the child's education. (Should the school have safeguarding concerns it should contact Central Bedfordshire Childrens Services Hub contact details in point 25 above).





37 If the school, having made reasonable enquiries, fails to identify the child's whereabouts or his/her parents' intentions it should make a CME referral to the CME Officer. The CME officer will carry out further investigations, including, if necessary:

Checking various databases;

- i. Making further enquiries of other agencies
- ii. Ensuring a home visit is undertaken either by the CME Officer or School Attendance Officer;
- iii. Liaising with the CBC Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit teams;
- iv. Liaising with the CBC Housing department and other housing providers;
- v. Contacting the Practitioner Support Unit of the NHS.
- vi. Checking the Electoral Roll

38 If the child is located the CME officer will notify the school and advise on any further action which the school needs to take.

39 If the child is located within another LA the CME officer will contact this LA in order to ensure that the child is tracked into education.

40 If the child is not located the CME officer will advise the school, if it has not already done so, to remove the child from the school roll and to send his/her CTF to the DFE S2S (School to School) Lost Pupils Database. (This CTF should be coded XXXXXXXX).

41 Referrals by Schools should be made using the E-Form link below

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/ChildMissingEducation.ofml>

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/GeneralChildMissingEducationReporting.ofml>





When a child is newly registered

42 Schools must provide information to their LA when registering new pupils within five days, including the pupil's address and previous school (where they can reasonably obtain this information).

Schools are now required to complete an e-form which can be found on the Central Bedfordshire Performance Hub at the link below

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schools-portal/administration/inclusion/newly-registered-children.aspx>

Monitoring

43 The CME officer will report to the Team Leader Access and Inclusion Service and each half-term, identifying key emerging issues and highlighting particular areas of concern.

44 The Team Leader of the Access and Inclusion Service will report to the Head of Virtual School and Vulnerable Pupils on CME issues which may warrant escalation.

45 The local authority officers with responsibility for CME are:

Samantha Barrington and Victoria Kesseru

0300 300 6479

cme@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

These procedures will be reviewed in September 2018.





Appendix 1 - Children Missing Education Policy

Children With Long Term Absence;

When a situation occurs where a parent/s requests or it is identified that a pupil may be absent from school for a significant period of time (not medical issues as separate procedures apply) there are responsibilities placed on parents, the school and the Local Authority. Whilst it is important to ensure that the school place for the pupil can be protected as far as is reasonable, there is also a responsibility to ensure that any pupils on a waiting list are not unnecessarily disadvantaged and also to protect the school from accruing an unnecessary amount of absence.

It is difficult to give definitive guidance on the period of time a school may accept a pupil will be absent for as each case will need to be looked at individually. It is also important to take cultural aspects into account such absence may be a Traveller child travelling, a pupil visiting overseas (not holiday) or where a child goes to stay with a distant relative due to family issues.


The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 prescribes the only legal grounds where a pupil can be removed from roll* and it is important that schools are aware and comply with this legislation.


The following guidance issued by Central Bedfordshire Council's Access and Inclusion Service is to support schools in situations where there is/is likely to be long term absence. It is vital that schools inform parents of these parental expectations prior to implementing this guidance.

Expectations on Parents

1. Inform the school giving as much notice as possible of when the pupil is going to be absent and why.
2. Inform the school of the expected date of return.
3. Alert the school to any changes regarding the date of return whilst the child is absent.
4. Acknowledge that not following these procedures may result in a pupil being removed from the school roll and recorded as a Child Missing Education by the Local Authority.

Expectations on Schools

1. Communicate this guidance to parents by means of home school agreement, newsletters home or when it receives applications for long term leave of absence.
 2. Schools must follow the Children Missing Education procedures and NOT remove a pupil from roll until instructed to by the Local Authority's Children Missing Education Officer
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3. Consult with the Children Missing Education Officer where they feel there has been an unreasonable request made by a parent

Expectations on Local Authority

1. To ensure that its Children Missing Education Procedures are disseminated and schools are regularly reminded that these must be followed
 2. To give timely advice to schools when requests for support/advice are sought
 3. To carry out its statutory functions with regard to Children Missing Education
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 – Regulation 8

Contact us...

by telephone: 0300 300 6479

by email: customers@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

on the web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Write to Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

