



Guidance to identifying children missing from education

together for
children
SUNDERLAND

Introduction

The national definition of a child missing from education is: “All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. at home¹, 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)”

The purpose of this document is to describe the procedures that are to be adopted within Sunderland to identify, locate and engage children who are not receiving a suitable education.

This guidance does not replace any of the Child Protection Procedures. Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns are to be followed at all times. See www.sunderlandscb.com/reporting_concerns.html www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/concerned for more information on safeguarding.

These procedures have been written for the guidance of all professionals who work with children and families. Adopting these procedures will also ensure that Together for Children and the City Council:

- Meet statutory duties relating to the provision of education, and safeguarding the welfare of children not receiving a suitable education
- Ensure that robust multi-agency systems are in place in Sunderland to identify and track children missing from education, or at risk of becoming so
- Ensure that monitoring and reporting systems are in place in order to identify a lead agency for all children not receiving a suitable education.

There are four key pieces of information that practitioners should be aware of:

- 1 Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (inserted by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) “requires all local education authorities to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are not receiving a suitable education”. Together for Children must also ensure that it ‘monitors the numbers of children/young people in the authority who are not receiving an education, including those new to the area or the country’.
- 2 The Out of School Survey (Ofsted 2004) estimated that there are approximately 10,000 Children Missing Education (CME) in the UK. These children either fail to start in appropriate education provision or simply become lost from school rolls and fail to re-register at a new school when they move area. This figure was generally regarded as an under-estimate.
- 3 These ‘missing’ children are amongst the most vulnerable, therefore it is vital that practitioners in all services work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible.
- 4 Children who remain disengaged from education provision are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk in terms of safeguarding and may also be vulnerable to engagement in or become victims of anti-social or criminal behaviour, social disengagement and/or sexual exploitation. There is also a higher risk of road traffic accidents for children out of school.

¹ Parents have the right to educate their child at home under Section 7 Education Act 1996. Further information can be obtained by contacting the council’s Attendance Team on 0191 561 5601

Policy statement

Part 1 (Clause 4) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a new statutory duty on local authorities to make arrangements to establish (so far as possible to do so) the identities of children who are not receiving a suitable education. In February 2007 the DCSF issued statutory guidance to support local authorities in England to ensure they meet their requirements under this new duty.

This policy has been written in accordance with the aforementioned statutory guidance and it is designed to help Sunderland meet its statutory duties relating to the provision of education, safeguarding and welfare of children.

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of the child and to share information. This principle underpins our policy for Children Missing Education (CME), and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure children do not “slip through the net” and become missing.

To limit the opportunity for children to go missing when they fall out of the education system, a range of processes and procedures have been identified:

- Procedures to ensure all referrals made to CME are kept on a central register and monitored regularly.
- Procedures to identify and locate children missing education, through liaison with other services and agencies.
- Procedures to re-engage those who have been missing with appropriate education.
- Procedures to identify children missing education through liaison with other LAs and access to national databases (s2s).
- Development of existing systems to identify those at risk of becoming CME.

- Raising awareness, through publicity, to the general public regarding CME and every child’s right to an education.

How and why do children go missing from education?

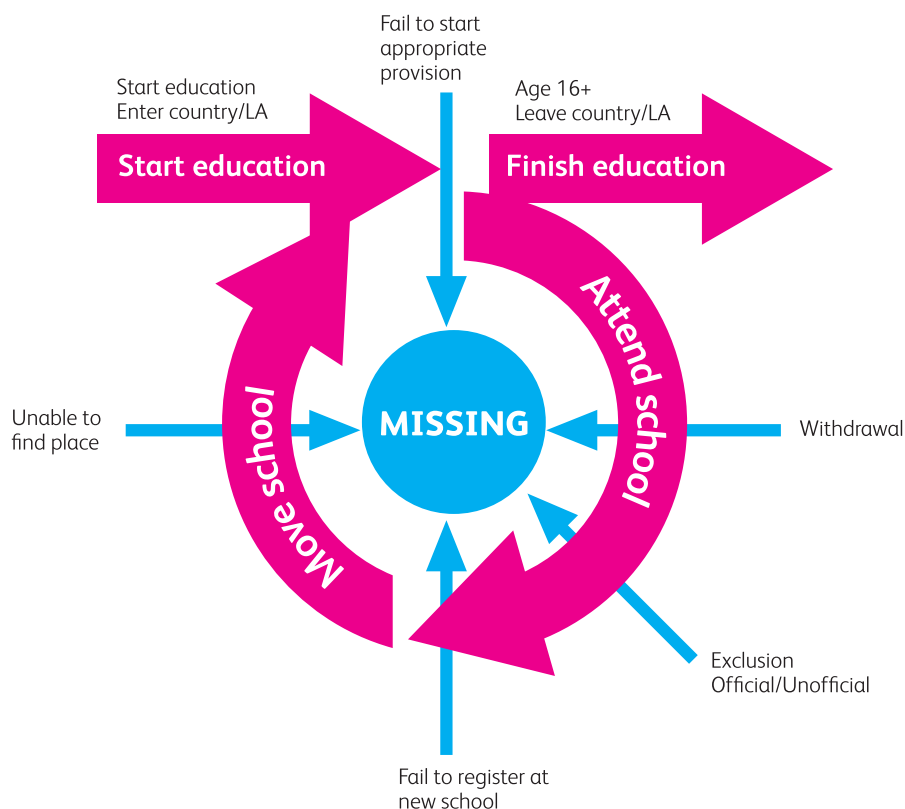
Children fall out of the education system and are at risk of 'going missing' for many reasons. Some examples of which are:

- They fail to start appropriate provision and so never enter the system (e.g. pre-school to Year 1: new to the city and no application made for a school place)
- They cease to attend, due to exclusion (which could be an illegal or unofficial exclusion) or withdrawal; removal from roll with no named destination
- They fail to complete a transfer between providers (possibly due to being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new city or area within Sunderland)
- They are offered alternative provision but fail to access this provision

- They have moved into the area and are not yet registered on a school roll (possibly including refugees/asylum seekers who have relocated from another authority from outside the UK, or after leaving a custodial establishment).

Children and young people missing from education are amongst the most vulnerable in the country. It is therefore vital that all services work together to identify these children and young people, in order to facilitate them into appropriate long-term education provision as quickly as possible.

To limit the possibility of children going missing from education, a series of systematic processes and procedures have been put in place, and links between different agencies have been formalised.



Children at risk of going missing from education

The guidance talks about the need for local authorities to monitor groups of pupils who are likely to go missing from education.

Some children who experience certain life events are more at risk of going missing from education.

These include:

- children and young people under the supervision of the youth justice system;
- children living in women's refuges;
- children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation, houses of multiple occupancy or Bed and Breakfast accommodation;
- young runaways (for further information, see the Young Runaways Action Plan – DCSF 2008);
- children whose parent/carer(s), fathers and/or mothers, and other close family members, move to another area;
- children who were registered with a school that has closed, and do not make the transition to another school;
- children with long term medical or emotional problems;
- children from families involved in anti-social behaviour;
- children whose parents withdraw them from school in order to home educate them but then fail to provide a suitable education;
- children who are on the child protection register;
- children affected by substance and/or alcohol misuse;
- unaccompanied asylum seekers;
- children of refugees and asylum seeking families;
- children from new immigrant families, who are not yet established in the UK and may not have a fixed address;
- children from families who can be highly mobile, for example, parents in the armed forces; Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families;
- children who have been bullied;
- children who have been trafficked to, or within the UK;
- children at risk of forced marriage;
- looked after children/children in care;
- children who are privately fostered;
- young carers;
- teenage mothers;
- children who are permanently excluded from school.

The identification processes within Sunderland

Notification and referral routes

Together for Children's Early Help Advice and Allocations Team co-ordinates, the identification, referral, tracking and engagement of children missing from education, through multi-agency working.

They work with key partners in Sunderland, including schools, Children's Social Care, Housing, Health, Looked After Children Team, Connexions, Youth Offending Service (YOS), Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service, Police and voluntary organisations, to develop the inter-agency network, so that all colleagues are aware of the systems of referral for pupils who are missing, or at risk of going missing from education.

Some young people will not fall into one of the categories already outlined in the policy. They may therefore be identified by practitioners through their day to day operations. All cases of children and young people missing education, or at risk of doing so, should be reported to ensure that comprehensive data is recorded.

Anyone may refer details regarding CME, including members of the public. There are a number of ways a CME referral can be made:

- By completing a CME referral form (Appendix 1)
- Through the s2s (School to School) Lost Pupil Database
- By emailing: ehaat@togetherforchildren.org.uk
- By telephoning 0191 561 2837.

Other local authorities and agencies use many different methods to report children and young people who are new to the city, including:

- By completing a CME referral form (Appendix 1).
- By writing a letter or emailing the Attendance Manager (National CME contact).
- Through s2s (School to School) secure messaging available to local authorities in England and Wales.
- By telephone the number above.

A monitoring and referral system for children not on roll, at risk of missing education and those reported missing (destination known or otherwise), has been established.

The EHAAT is responsible for:

- Maintaining and updating the CME database; acting as a link officer with schools and other agencies referring or tracking pupils out of school.
- Working with schools and other agencies to ensure that procedures and practices are in place to minimise the possibility of children and young people going missing from education.

Procedures for schools

Should a child leave a Sunderland school without the school being advised (by the parent/carer) of the name and location of a new school, the school should immediately notify the EHAAT.

Should the child be the subject of a Child Protection Plan or a Child In Need plan, the school should also notify the named social workers. Where child protection concerns arise as a result of the withdrawal from school, the school should contact ICRT on 0191 561 5007.

As CME may raise potential safeguarding issues: If schools believe a child or family has gone missing they should follow the locating pupils missing procedures (Appendix 2).

Schools should not remove any child from their roll without completing form CME1 to ensure that all children removed from the school register are, in accordance with Regulation 8(h)(iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. See Appendix 2.

EHAAT monitors pupils who have been removed from roll on a monthly basis to:

- Ensure that the legislation on this matter is followed and to,
- Ensure that no pupil is allowed to go missing from education.

EHAAT tracks pupils removed from roll, to ensure that they are admitted to another education provision, either within Sunderland or in another city. The SEN Team will track pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) who are not in a provision.

Further information relating to the school's responsibility for ensuring that children don't go missing can be found in "Locating missing pupils and the removal of pupils from the roll procedures for schools".

Partnership working in referral and tracking process

All officers in Together for Children, in the City Council and other partners have some level of responsibility around the issue of children missing education. If a practitioner is aware, or becomes aware of a child or young person who does not appear to be accessing education appropriately, they should make a referral. This may result in referrals being made for children and young people already known and/or on a school roll. However, given the concerns around the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people, this is more beneficial than receiving no referral.

Any practitioner, who identifies a young person as potentially being missing from education must take responsibility for ascertaining if that young person is on the roll of a school.

In the first instance, a call should be made to the EHAAT who will be able to ascertain if the young person is registered at school. If EHAAT confirms that the young person is not on the roll of a school, and the team is not currently involved, then the practitioner must take responsibility for formally identifying and referring the young person as not having a school place, as well as ensuring that an assessment at the appropriate level is undertaken.

It is anticipated that the following services or teams will have lead responsibility in moving individual children and young people's cases forward:

- Admissions Team
- Attendance Team within Early Help
- Connexions
- Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Team
- SEND Team
- Youth Offending Service

Alongside these teams there will be practitioners who may become aware of children missing education or be at risk of doing so. These staff will make referrals but are not necessarily best placed to pursue the child or young person's placement in an appropriate provision.

These practitioners include:

- Social Care teams
- Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust staff
- Sunderland City Council staff
- City Hospital staff
- The Police
- Gentoo staff

All children who are not on a school roll will have an identified lead officer. The decision as to who is the most appropriate officer will be made by the CME group. The lead officer will be responsible for ensuring that contact is maintained with the child and their immediate family, and that regular updates on the progression of each case are fed back to the CME group.

It may be appropriate that children missing education receive formal Early Help services. Information about these services can be found at: www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/professional/early-help

Sharing information

Due to the safeguarding issues which arose from Children Missing Education, information should be shared between agencies without barriers as this is deemed to be in 'the best interests of the child'.

If you are aware of a child missing from education (in whatever capacity) you should complete a CME referral form, which is available on Together for Children's website at:
www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/children-missing-education

Alternatively contact the EHAAT by telephoning 0191 561 2837 or emailing EHAAT@togetherforchildren.org.uk

Appendix 1

Children missing from education school notification form



This form is to be used by schools to notify the LA when

A pupil has gone missing and no contact can be made with parent/carer to establish reason for absence

- Ceased to attend the school and forwarding address of the family is not known
- When a child has not returned from holiday within 10 schools days of the expected date of return

Email the relevant details to: ehaat@togetherforchildren.org.uk

Child's forename:	Child's last name/also known as:
Date of birth:	<input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Name of parent/carer:	
Address:	Telephone no: Mobile:
School:	Date last attended school:
Possible New Address If not know possible new Area (LA)	
Additional information:	

Name: (referrer)

Date:

Appendix 2

GUIDANCE SUMMARY: REMOVAL OF PUPIL FROM THE SCHOOL ROLL – THE EDUCATION (PUPIL REGISTRATION) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2006

(For all pupils except those outside of compulsory school age)

Reason	Criteria	School action	Follow up action
1. Pupil has transferred to an alternative school	Notification has been received from parents/carers of new school and address.	CTF uploaded to s2s using DFE number for new school. Pupil's details recorded on weekly IAT9 and returned to the EHAAT. When a pupil moves to a non-maintained school (private) or one outside of England or Wales then MMMMMMMM should be used as the destination code. This enables the CTF to be stored securely and to be available if the pupil returns to a maintained school.	EHAAT will track to ensure child has started at new school or passed details on to CME Officer in the relevant area.
2. Pupil is known to have moved home address but with new school placement unknown	Notification of move received from parents/carers and the travelling distance indicates that a new school will be required. No information about new school placement has been received.	School have informed the EHAAT, who has confirmed that the pupil be removed from roll. CTF uploaded to s2s using new LA number XXXX as destination school. Pupil's details recorded on weekly IAT9 and returned to the EHAAT.	Pupil recorded on Children Missing from Education (CME) list. EHAAT will track pupil into new provision and/or pass details onto CME Officer in the relevant area.
3. Pupil has been absent from school for 20 continuous days or more. Pupil's whereabouts is unknown	School has informed EHAAT after ten continuous days of unauthorised absence CME1 completed by the school and the EHAAT.	School has made all reasonable enquiries to ascertain pupil's whereabouts. Early Help Services confirms with school that they have also made 'all reasonable enquiries'. CTF uploaded to s2s using XXX XXXX as destination school. Pupil's details recorded on weekly IAT9 and returned to the EHAAT.	Pupil recorded on CME list. EHAAT will contact national agencies to track pupil into new provision and/or pass details onto the CME Officer in relevant area (when known).
4. Pupil has failed to return from previously authorised extended leave	Pupil was granted extended leave of absence and has failed to return with the agreed time. No reasonable explanation has been received.	School has made all reasonable enquiries to ascertain pupil's whereabouts and completed CME1. The EHAAT has confirmed with school that they have also made 'all reasonable enquiries' about the pupil's whereabouts. CTF uploaded to s2s using XXX XXXX as destination school. Pupil's details recorded on weekly IAT9 and returned to the EHAAT.	Pupil recorded on CME list. EHAAT will contact national agencies and track pupil into new provision and/or pass details onto CME Officer in relevant area (when known).
5. Pupil has been withdrawn from the roll by parent/carers and will be Electively Home Educated (EHE)	Parents/carers have formally notified school of their intention to educate their child at home. School has provided parents/carers with guidance on educating children at home and notified the Attendance Team	CTF uploaded to s2s using MMM MMMM as destination school. Pupil's details recorded on weekly IAT9 and returned to the Attendance Team.	Pupil recorded on EHE list. Attendance Team works with TFC Schools Services to ensure that the pupil is receiving an appropriate education.
6. Pupil has been given a custodial sentence greater than four months	Formal notification received from Youth Offending Service	CTF uploaded to s2s using MMM MMMM as destination school. Pupil's details recorded on weekly IAT9 and returned to the Team.	Details noted on Education Management System (EMS) with Youth Offending Service (YOS) recorded as lead team. No further action until YOS notified of planned release date.
7. Pupil has been permanently excluded	Exclusion has been approved by governors and time period for appeal has expired or independent appeal not upheld	CTF uploaded to s2s using DFE number where known (usually Pupil Referral Unit). Pupil's details recorded on weekly IAT9 and returned to the Attendance Team.	Attendance Team will track pupil into new provision.
8. Pupil is medically unfit for school and will remain so until after their official school leaving date	School has received formal certification of diagnosis and prognosis from the School Health Officer or pupil's hospital consultant. Alternative provision identified.	CTF uploaded to s2s using DFE number where known. Pupil's details recorded on weekly IAT9 and returned to the Attendance Team.	Attendance Team will track pupil into new provision.
9. Pupil has died	Formal notification received	CTF uploaded to s2s using 394 LLLL as destination code	Central Education Management System amended.
10. Pupil was on School Attendance Order and the designated school has been replaced on the order by another school	Formal notification received	CTF uploaded to s2s using DFE number for new school. Pupil's details recorded on weekly IAT9 and returned to the Attendance Team.	Attendance Team track pupil into new provision.

Further information on the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 can be found at: www.statutelaw.gov.uk

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Early Help Advice and Allocations Team,
Civic Centre, Burdon Raod, Sunderland SR2 7DN

Tel: 0191 561 2837

email: ehaat@togetherforchildren.org.uk
[www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/
children-missing-education](http://www.togetherforchildren.org.uk/children-missing-education)

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