

# WARRINGTON Borough Council



## **Children Missing from Education** **Policy and Procedure.**

**Key legislation:**

Children missing education, statutory guidance for local authorities, DFE, November 2013

Children missing from education, report summary, OFSTED, August 2010;

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

Local Authority attendance, behaviour and safeguarding policies

Local Authority Fair Access protocol

## **Document Structure**

The purpose of this document is to provide a detailed description of the roles, responsibilities and processes involved in the management of Children Missing from Education throughout the Local Authority

## **Contact Details**

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## **Document Version Control**

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## **1.1 Definition**

The DFE defines Children Missing Education as;

***‘all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being (suitably) educated otherwise (eg privately or in an alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more)’***

### **Child missing from suitable education**

In July 2008 the department for Education broadened the definition to include those children who are not receiving suitable education. The word ‘suitable’ is added to take account of children who might not otherwise have received an education because they are ill or excluded, for example, and is defined as; ‘efficient full time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have’.

## **1.2 Why do children go missing from education?**

Some children are missing from education simply because they do not start school – their parents do not enrol them. Other children stop going to school, or don’t make the move from primary to secondary, some families never enrol their children when they move to the country from elsewhere.

Any child or young person missing education is at risk of not achieving their educational potential and could be placing their safety and welfare at risk.

Children and young people who are not included in an educational provision are more likely to be at higher degrees of risk that could include participation in anti-social or criminal behaviour, social isolation and/or sexual exploitation.

There are certain points at which children are most at risk of becoming missing from education, the most common reasons include;

- Children not registered by parents/carers at school when they achieve statutory school age
- Children not registered at school for the start of high school (year 7)
- Frequent house moves, periods of homelessness or time spent in refuges
- Family breakdown
- Parents 'withdrawing' children from school
- Schools removing children from a school roll without the correct procedures and checks being followed
- Exclusion (official and unofficial)
- Children being electively home educated, but not officially recognised as such.

Certain groups of children are more likely to be affected by the factors listed above and include;

- Children in Care
- Children who have been subject to a child protection plan
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Gypsy, Roma and travelling families
- Children who have experienced domestic violence or other adverse family circumstances
- Children with special educational needs
- Migrant families
- Children with attendance difficulties

## **2.1 Procedures**

The purpose of section 436A of the Education Act 1996 is to ensure that local authorities' arrangements enable them to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at school, and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

Every practitioner working with children has a responsibility to inform the CME Officer if they know or suspect that a child is not receiving suitable education. Practitioners should use the Warrington CME referral form to report possible cases of CME.

Warrington has a lead officer for CME. This member of staff works within the education safeguarding team and co-ordinates the tracking, identification and liaison for Children Missing education (CME). A central database (CAPITA) is kept of all children on roll in Warrington schools and children known to be educated otherwise, including Elective Home Education.

Once a child has been identified as 'missing' the CME officer marks the pupils record on CAPITA and includes notes to include the last date the child attended school. The CME officer will place the child's name and details on the CME register and Pupils Out Of School Monitoring (POOSM) meeting agenda to ensure a multiagency review of the case will take place within 4 weeks. Appropriate processes can then be followed to ensure the child is tracked and moved into education as soon as possible.

If the child has moved out of the area but enquiries have established a likely destination, the CME officer will initiate enquiries in that area alerting the CME officer in the likely authority, of the probable arrival of that child in their area. At this point the receiving CME officer will assume responsibility for the child.

Until confirmation has been received that the child has been found the child's name will remain on the CME register and CAPITA as a CME.

**This policy does not replace any statutory safeguarding procedures. Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns are to be observed at all times.**

## **2.2 Referrals received from out of borough**

These are passed to the CME officer who initially searches CAPITA and liaises with Admissions to establish if the child is on roll at a Warrington school. If a probable address is provided, the CME officer will liaise with agencies and plan a visit to assess and oversee the case until education provision has been identified and accessed. The CME officer will provide the family with admissions forms and support to complete them. Each case will be discussed and reviewed at monthly POOSM meetings.

## **2.3 Referrals received from within borough**

In these cases, searches made by the CME officer will include; visiting the given address, contacting parent/carers and relevant agencies.

All referrals where the child is not found will be reviewed at monthly POOSM meetings. The CME Officer remains responsible for contacting referrers and ascertaining the level of concern and next steps to be taken.

## **2.4 Children found**

Referrers are notified immediately that a child is found (either via POOSM for within borough referrals or directly for out of borough referrals). The date a child is found, school destination and start date is logged on CAPITA. Where a child has moved out of Warrington, the CME officer verifies with the new school that they are on roll and closes the case.

## **2.5 Children on roll of a school**

Schools have a safeguarding duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have similar safeguarding duty for their pupils. Schools should take prompt and reasonable steps to contact the parent in instances where a child leaves or ceases to attend a school.

All schools have been made aware of their responsibilities regarding placing and removing children's names from a school roll and on the marking of attendance registers to ensure they comply with The Education (Pupil Registration) regulations 2006. Schools will be asked to complete a CME referral form and return these to the education safeguarding team.



The Local Authority attendance team work with all schools on statutory attendance matters and with schools who purchase the attendance SLA to support children who are or are at risk of becoming CME.

## **2.6 Unaccepted school places**

Children and young people may not be on a school role because a parent has chosen not to accept the offered school place. Where this occurs the Admissions Team will inform the CME officer. Schools remain responsible for informing the Local Authority of children who do not attend in these instances.

## **3.1 Pupil Out Of School Monitoring**

Warrington Local authority holds monthly multiagency meetings to discuss and review all CME cases. They are also tasked with reviewing pupils who are receiving LA provision in place of school provision (pupils who are too ill to attend school and those who have been permanently excluded) and those who are at risk of becoming CME. This multiagency Pupil Out Of School Monitoring (POOSM) meeting is attended by;

- Education safeguarding officer (CME officer)
- Inclusion team
- Attendance team
- Education quality adviser
- Vulnerable pupils education manager (Chair)
- Virtual school support officer
- YOT
- NHS CIC
- New Horizons
- Admissions
- CAMHS
- Virtual school safeguarding manager (minutes only)
- Children in care officer (minutes only)
- Complex families worker (minutes only)

Young people discussed at POOSM include;

- CME (Children of statutory school age who are not currently on a school roll)
- Permanently excluded pupils (for the duration of their exclusion)
- Pupils accessing local authority medical needs tuition.
- Electively Home Educated Pupils who are not yet receiving suitable provision ((Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996)) and who could become subject to school attendance orders ((Section 437 (3) of the Education Act)).
- Pupils with school attendance below 50% and have multiagency involvement who are not be subject to prosecution for non-attendance. Pupils with low attendance above 50% will be monitored and supported by their school and LA attendance team (if SLA is purchased).
- Pupils of pre-school age who have not yet applied for a school place.
- Other pupils at risk.

Only young people not on a school roll or accessing appropriate provision will be recorded as CME on CAPITA, those at risk and receiving LA tuition will be recorded as having involvement under POOSM, with a key worker assigned to provide monthly updates.

Minutes and agendas for POOSM meetings will be circulated by the education safeguarding support officer.