



One minute guide

Children Missing Education

No. 21 March 2019

What is meant by Children Missing Education?

Children Missing Education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise (e.g. privately, electively home educated (EHE) or in alternative provision).

CME is different to children missing or absent from home or care (there is a one minute guide about this). However, in a small number of cases this may also apply.

Why is this area of work so important?

We need to identify Children Missing Education to ensure that every child and young person has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and that they receive the universal services to which they are entitled to. We also need to make sure that they do not 'slip through the net' and stay safe from harm. Children Missing Education can be linked to (but not always) concerns about safeguarding, health, domestic violence, forced marriage, child sexual exploitation, child trafficking, female genital mutilation or behavioural issues.

The law requires us to know where all children are and what school they attend even if they have left the country. [Clause 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) places a duty on the local authority to identify children missing education and a new section 436A of the [Education Act 1996](#) (school attendance) requires all local authorities to make arrangements to establish (so far as is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are not receiving a 'suitable education'.

What should all partner agencies, schools and parents do?

It is the responsibility of schools, health services and other partner agencies to act when they are aware of or believe that a child is missing from education. Reasonable enquiries should be made in the first instance and as much basic information should be collated as possible including names, addresses, contact details, emails, details of other family members, friends etc. before the Children Missing Education Team in the local authority is notified.

Schools should act quickly to make all reasonable enquiries to try and ascertain the child's whereabouts to prevent the child becoming CME. If the child's whereabouts are still unknown, the school should complete a Child Missing Education referral form and email to the CME Team within four weeks of being aware that the child is missing from school. Schools should include information about any specific concerns they might have about the child.

Parents must tell the school if they no longer need the child's school place (whether leaving the school, local area or the UK), even if leaving for a short period of the time.

Who leads on this work in Children's Services?

Within Children's Services in Leeds we have a Children Missing Education (CME) Team and their role is to identify children missing education, make enquiries to locate the child and if the child is still in Leeds, seek to engage the family in the process of getting the child back onto a school roll and attending school.

Where we do not have an address for the child and investigations suggest that the child is living in another local authority, the CME Team inform a similar team in the new local authority so that they can try to locate and engage the family. When the whereabouts of the child is known and the family are living in Leeds at the point of referral, the CME Team focus on getting the child back into school. If the family are living in another town or city, that local authority takes on this responsibility.

Also if it seems that the family have left the UK we aim to obtain some independent verification of this from a school or similar professional agency in the new country if this is possible.

The CME Team receives referrals to carry out this work and referrals are prioritised by the level of risk identified on the referral. The CME Team track cases through Children's Social Work Service, carry out home visits, consult various search engines and make telephone calls enquiries to: neighbours, relatives, partner agencies, new schools, other local authorities, other countries, benefits agencies and the border agency.

When another local authority believes that a child has moved to Leeds and may be missing from education, they contact our CME Team. The team also receive referrals for children who are new to the country.

Who are the key contacts?

Children Missing Education Officer mike.belford@leeds.gov.uk Tel: 07891 272301

Children Missing Education Officer tina.sinclair@leeds.gov.uk Tel: 07891 270313

Notifications and referral forms should be sent by email to: cme@leeds.gov.uk

Enquiries to the email address or the CME helpline Tel: 0113 3789686

Want to know more?

You can find out more from the Department for Education [website](#)



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