



'Growing, loving and learning in the arms of Mary'

Children Missing from Education Policy

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Expectations:

1. Attendance is monitored weekly to identify any pupils not in school. On a daily basis the parents of any absent pupils are contacted to find out the reason why.
2. After every holiday, including half term, the parents of any absent children are immediately contacted to ensure the children have not gone on unauthorised extended leave. Any requests for extended leave in school time are refused unless parents can provide evidence of an emergency, e.g. sickness, bereavement, exceptional circumstances etc. In all cases parents are asked to provide a return date.
3. Any parents/carers requesting special leave are interviewed by a member of the SLT. The school will be mindful of risks to children including FGM (See CP Policy).
4. If a parent informs the school after taking leave, a decision will be made about what action to be taken depending on circumstances. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will work in partnership to track down the pupils. If any pupil does not return after 20 days, the Locality Attendance Officer for the LA will be informed. If after 20 days there is still no named school, the children will be reported to the LA as missing education.
5. ½ termly meetings will be held to ensure all pupils at risk are identified and prompt action taken.

1. Introduction

1.1 St Mary's Catholic Primary School is concerned about any child missing education not only in the way that it impacts on the individual's potential achievement but also in relation to their safety and welfare.

1.2 The purpose of the CME Policy is to ensure that children and young people missing education are re-engaged in appropriate education provision in the shortest possible time, with lasting success and that 'no child slips through the net'.

2. Legal Context

2.1 The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information.

2.2 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed a new duty on all local authorities in England and Wales for them to make arrangements to identify CME in their area. The duty applies to all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and are not receiving a suitable education.

3. Purpose of the CME Policy

3.1 The purpose of the CME Policy is to establish a set of principles which all schools, services and partner organisations can sign up to in order to ensure children and young people living in Sunderland are safely on roll of a school, placed on alternative educational programmes or electively home educated at the request of parents. This policy should be read in conjunction with existing safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.

4. Aim of the Policy

- To assist the local authority and partner agencies in identifying CME.
- Raise awareness of the notification process;
- Explain how children will be tracked and monitored until they are re-engaged in education;
- Explain the mechanism available to access appropriate education provision;
- Provide clarity to stakeholders on how children can be tracked across boundaries when a child moves to another local authority area.

5. Definition of CME

Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is not on a school roll being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, privately, or in alternative provision) and who had been out of any education provision for a substantial period of time (practice nationally is four weeks or more).

Department for Education

6. Definition of Children at Risk of Missing Education

6.1 Children and young people with poor school attendance are often the most vulnerable and are more likely to become children missing from education.

6.2 The authority recognises that the duty to identify children not receiving education does not apply in relation to children who are registered at school who are not attending regularly. The authority's CME strategy does however, include the reinforcement of duties that already exist for schools and therefore supports the monitoring of children at risk of missing education in the future.

6.3 The monitoring of children at risk of missing education is carried out in partnership with schools where attendance of individual pupils gives cause for concern with the aim of reducing the risk in the future.

7. Why children go missing from education

7.1 Children and young people can go missing from school or agreed education provision, for a wide variety of reasons. Their personal circumstances or those of their families may contribute to the withdrawal process. Children can go missing when there is no systematic process in place to identify them and ensure they reengage with appropriate provision.

The most common reasons why children miss education include:

- Failing to register at school at age 5;
- Failing to make successful transition from infant to junior and primary to secondary;
- Ease to attend due to exclusion (formal/illegal withdrawal);
- Mid-year transfer of school;
- Unable to find a school place after moving into local authority;
- Victims of bullying;
- Frequent moves of house including periods of homelessness or periods in a refuge;
- Transience/family mobility;
- Family breakdown;
- Frequent absence leading to low attendance;
- Disaffection resulting in parents withdrawing the pupil or 'being asked to leave';
- Involvement in youth offending.

Certain vulnerable groups are more likely to be affected by the factors; these are;

- Young people who have committed offences;
- Children living in women's refuges;
- Children of troubled families i.e. suffering bereavement, trauma, domestic violence, homelessness etc;
- Young runaways;
- Children with special educational needs;
- Refugee and asylum seeking children;
- Travelling families;
- Looked after children;
- Teenage parenthood;
- Children with mental health issues;
- Young carers;
- Children who are permanently excluded from school;
- Young people being forced into marriage;
- Children involved in substance misuse.

8. The Role of the Attendance Officer

8.1 To reduce the risk of children and young people falling out of the education system, the Attendance Officer will be contacted. The headteacher and deputy headteacher will work closely with the AO to identify, investigate and find CME.

The duties and responsibilities of these teams include:

- Tracking CME through a dedicated CME coordinator;
- Ensuring all notifications of CME are correctly recorded on the relevant databases;

- Investigating relevant databases e.g. S2S. Lost Pupil Database;
- Coordinating casework in relation to investigating CME including working closely with relevant services and agencies to determine appropriate provision for the child;
- Ensuring admission into school through the admissions process and the Authority's Fair Access Protocol where required;
- Reviewing and monitoring cases held until re-engagement in education is successfully secured through the Education Planning Group – Pupils missing out on education;
- Providing relevant reports for the SMT performance focus groups and relevant Boards;
- Hold regular CME meetings to review complex and urgent cases;
- Raise awareness of the CME policy and practice including training/awareness raising events for school governors and partner organisations.

Key Stakeholders

9.1 The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information. In order to fulfil the requirements of the CME policy the authority has agreed to work in collaboration to ensure the early identification and intervention of children who are not receiving a suitable education. All stakeholders have a responsibility for CME.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School will work closely with stakeholders to ensure the safety of a child.

9.2 Key stakeholders include:

- Together for Children including Admissions, Parent Partnership, Locality Attendance Officer,;
- Other schools and Academies including Support Centres;
- Health/PCT
- Youth Offending Service;
- Voluntary Organisations;
- Housing Associations;
- Police;
- CAMHS
- Homeless Services;
- Job Centres;
- CME tracking officers in other authorities;

10. Reducing the Risk of Children Missing Education

10.1 All DCC offers, schools, academies and the general public have a moral and corporate responsibility in relation to CME. Parents who do not ensure their children are accessing a 'suitable' education can be deemed as breaking the law. Anyone who becomes aware of a child or young person who does not appear to be accessing education should refer this child to St. Mary's School or attendance@sunderland.gov.uk (tel: 0191 5612857)

10.2 The authority in partnership with the other agencies listed above aims to ensure that all colleagues in all agencies who become aware of a child who is living in the county but not in identified education provision, will notify the authority.

11. The Role of Children's Services

11.1 Individual services within Together for Children play a role in preventing the risk of CME. These services will continue to be practice in addressing issues related to non-attendance/poor attendance/persistence absence.

The Role of Schools and Academies

12.1 All schools have a duty under section 1- of the Children's Act 2004 in partnership with the local authority with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in the authority's area. Section 175 of the Education Act puts a duty on all schools to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This includes identifying children who are not receiving education.

12.2 It is expected that schools and academies will have carried out all reasonable enquiries within their capacity to ascertain the whereabouts of the young person and engaging them in education prior to informing the local authority that the child is missing education. Where it has been brought to the attention of the local authority that a child is missing education and the school/academy has failed to report a child as CME, the local authority will write to the school/academy requesting details of the child's attendance.

12. Safeguarding of CME

13.1 A significant number of children referred as missing education are either found in education following initial investigations or found but not in education and subsequently supported to return. There are a number of children who are not found in education as the family cannot be located following the normal investigations.

13.2 A child who is not found in education following CME investigations does not infer that the child is at risk. However, it is appropriate to escalate the concerns to consider potential risks to the child. A process is in place to facilitate this.

14 Monitoring the policy and procedures

14.1 The Education Planning Group is made up of a range of services and is responsible for ensuring that robust systems and procedures are in place to identify, support, track and monitor children not receiving education.

14.2 The Education Planning Group monitors and evaluates the impact of the CME policy and procedures and contributes to future developments.

14.3 At St Mary's Catholic Primary School it is the responsibility of the Headteacher and Governors to work closely with The Education Planning Group and ensure systems and procedures in school are robust.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:-

Child Protection Policy

Safeguarding Policy

E-Safety Policy

Anti-bullying Policy

Behaviour Policy

Staff Behaviour Policy