



Children Missing in Education Procedure

Definition of Children Missing in Education

In Children Missing Education – statutory guidance for Local Authorities (2016), children missing in education are defined as those who are not on a school roll or receiving suitable education, otherwise than at school. Those who are regularly absent or have missed 10 school days or more without permission may be at risk of becoming ‘children missing in education’.

There will not always be a safeguarding concern for children and young people who are missing education. Most children and young people are moving schools supported by their parents/carers, schools and local authority admission services. A smaller number, however, are at risk of dropping out or disengaging from education and, being out of school, they are at risk of exploitation, going missing and significant harm.

Risks

These ‘missing’ children can be vulnerable, it is essential that all services work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible. It is important to establish, at the earliest possible stage, the reasons for the child being missing. Possible reasons that should be considered include:

- Failure to start appropriate provision and never enter the system
- Stopped attending due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parents/carers
- Failure to complete a transition between schools
- Children from refugee and asylum seeking families
- Children from families who are highly mobile
- Children at risk of forced marriage
- Children experiencing neglect and abuse
- Children supervised by the Youth Justice System

Recognition

As a result of daily registration, schools are particularly well placed to notice when a child has gone missing. If a member of staff becomes aware that a child may have run away or gone missing, the attendance officer should be notified and try to establish with the parents/carers, what has happened. If this is not possible the DSL with the attendance officer should assess the child’s vulnerability. In the circumstance of a child going missing who is not known to other agencies, the DSL should inform the Children Missing Education (CME) officer of the local authority.

Response:

All registers must be marked within the first ten minutes of lesson and absences reported immediately to attendance officer. Contact will be made with parents/carers to ascertain reason for absence. This will be recorded appropriately. Where persistent attendance is identified, it will be reported through My Concern and DSL will identify appropriate actions.

These may include:

- Home visits
- Liaison with Social worker/Family support worker
- Liaison with Parents
- Communication with referring school for Alternative Provision children
- Communication with the police

Notifications and Actions for Children Missing from education where there are safeguarding concerns

If there are concerns about a child's safety, then a referral must be made to children's services and the police on day one. Children's services who must be contacted as soon as possible will also liaise with the police in order to identify, and act upon, any suspicion of child abuse or child related crime. The school should work in collaboration with children's services and the police and DSL should participate in any strategy discussions, section 47 enquiries and child protection conferences that may arise.

Further action:

Work with the local Children Missing Education Officer, ensure referrals are shared and CME officer will check further databases and will visit the home in exceptional circumstances.

Attendance Officer – Elaine Neeld 0121 477 1562

DSL – Anna-Marie Mason 07970 402075

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