Education Welfare

Children Missing Education

Guidance and Procedures for Early Years Settings, Schools and Academies

September 2021
Reviewed August 2025







a BRIGHTER future for EVERY CHILD make EVERY DAY count
365
children young people families
BARNSLEY CYP TRUST

September 2024

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION - GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES

CONTENTS

Children missing education guidance

Introduction - Overview Page 1
Definitions for Child Missing from Education (CME)
Children at particular risk of going missing from education

Duties of the Local Authority Page 2

Working together to identify and respond to Children Missing Education Page 3

Responsibilities of Schools and Academies Page 3

Completing the CME Referral form Page 4

Responsibilities of partner agencies Page 4

Children not of statutory school age Page 4

Responsibilities of the Local Authority Page 5
Admissions School transition and CME Page 5
CME Reasonable Enquiries Page 5

Removal of a pupil from a school roll Page 5-6
Permanent move out of country Page 6

Non- standard transition arrangements adding and removal from roll Page 7
Pupils Missing out of Education Page 7

Associated Resources, Advice, Guidance and Legislation Page 8

Useful Contacts Page 9

Appendices:
A Grounds for Deletion
B CME Referral Form and Checklist
C CME Non-Standard Transition Form

Children Missing Education Guidance

This guidance provides an outline of Barnsley Local Authority's policy and procedure for identifying, registering, tracking, and locating children missing education. It explains the statutory responsibility of the Local Authority, schools (including academies and independent schools) and partner agencies to ensure that children who go missing from the education system are speedily located.

Schools and academies must always work with the Education Welfare Service to establish the whereabouts of a child before removing from a school roll.

Pupils can only be removed from the admission register when both the school and the Local Authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child.

Where there is concern for a child's welfare, this should be referred to children's social care. If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed, the police should also be involved. Where there is a concern that a child's safety or wellbeing is at risk, it is essential to act without delay.
Call our social care assessment service on **(01226) 772423** (weekdays before 5pm).
Call our **emergency duty team on (01226) 787789** if you are calling after 5pm, at weekends or on bank holidays.
Or visit
https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/childrens-social-care/assessment-teams/

This guidance and referral forms can be located via the following link under useful resources *at www.barnsley.gov.uk/education-welfare-service* .

The statutory guidance can be found on the above link or directly at
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education

The summary of responsibilities for children missing education
Summary of responsibilities for children missing education

Introduction – Overview

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving a suitable education. Local authorities should focus their resources effectively in intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

Children Missing Education (CME) DEFINITION

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at a school (for example, at home or in alternative provision).
Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of hidden harm, exploitation, or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) later in life.
Children missing from education may have been registered at a school and identified as missing through their non-attendance or they may have moved into or been found in the area without a school place and not receiving a suitable education through Elective Home Education (EHE) or Education Other Than at School (EOTAS).

Statutory guidance clearly states that where any professional identifies a child who is not in receipt of suitable education or where there is a doubt that a child is attending school then the children missing education protocol should be followed.

Working Together **is clear that**: *"Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them, has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information, and taking prompt action."*
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2

Children at particular risk of missing education

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education. It is vital that local authorities make judgements on a case-by-case basis. This may include children from the following vulnerable groups below (this list is not exhaustive):

- Pupils at risk of harm/neglect
- Children of Service Personnel
- Missing children and runaways
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice system
- Children of new migrant families
- Children of Gypsy, Roma Traveler families

Effective information sharing between parents, schools, local authorities, and partner agencies is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Effective intervention should be at the earliest opportunity in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

Duties of the Local Authority

The Government has placed a duty on all local authorities under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. This duty applies to children of compulsory school age. These children should be placed on the Children Not in School register, which includes children missing from education and those electively home educated.

The local authority should consult the parents of the child when establishing whether the child is receiving a suitable education. Those children identified as not receiving suitable education should be returned to full time education either at a school or in alternative provision. Prompt action and early intervention are crucial to discharging this duty effectively to ensure that children are safe and receiving suitable education. The Barnsley safeguarding partnership promotes a multi-agency approach to identifying pupils who are not in suitable education, with focus on early intervention to engage pupils in education.

Barnsley Council has an effective enquiry and tracking system in place that is regularly reviewed alongside this policy. Derek Vint, Jake Miller and Rosie Smith are Barnsley Council's named officers to whom schools and other agencies can make referrals about children who are missing education they can be contacted at CME@barnsley.gov.uk

This role and its responsibilities are viewed as part of Barnsley Councils wider safeguarding duties. The role of the CME officer is integral in keeping children in Barnsley safe and engaged in education.

Barnsley Council has other duties and powers to support their work on CME which are delivered through Barnsley Education Welfare Service or commissioned through Springwell community special school and are overseen by Barnsley schools Alliance. These include:

Arranging suitable full-time education for permanently excluded pupils from the sixth school day of exclusion
Safeguarding children's welfare, and a duty to co-operate with other agencies in improving children's well-being, including protection from harm and neglect
Serving notice on parents requiring them to satisfy the local authority that the child is receiving suitable education, when it comes to the local authority's attention that a child might not be receiving such education
Issuing School Attendance Orders (SAOs) to parents who fail to satisfy the local authority that their child is receiving suitable educations, if the local authority deems it is appropriate that the child should attend school
Prosecuting or issuing parent who do not comply with a SAO
Prosecuting or issuing penalty notices to parents who fail to ensure their school-registered child attend school regularly
Applying to court for an Education Supervision Order for a child to support them to go to school

Working together to identify and respond to Children Missing Education

Responsibilities of Schools and Academies

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should follow their attendance policy and undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts, in instances where schools trade with the education welfare service, they should notify their EWO at the earliest opportunity**.** If schools do not trade with the education welfare service, they are advised to contact CME@barnsley.gov.uk for advice and support. If it is found that the child is in the area and is not attending an alternative school the school will be asked to place the child on the attendance register within ten school days of being notified of the admission, this will support the Education Welfare service in enforcing attendance and safeguarding the pupil

Schools should implement their attendance policy early to intervene into cases of poor or irregular attendance. School attendance policies should include robust referral procedures to the education welfare service. If a pupil has not returned to school following an authorised or unauthorised absence, schools are required to make reasonable enquiries to locate the child in line with section 10 of the Children Act 2004.

Reasonable enquiries to find the child should include:

- Checking with all members of staff who the child/young person may have had contact with.
- Checking with the pupil's friends, siblings, and known relatives.
- Making telephone calls to any numbers held/identified including emergency contacts.
- Sending a letter to the last known address.
- Carrying out home visits at various times to check who is at the home address and other known addresses and check with neighbours and known friends.
- Asking for the address the family is moving to.
- Checking which school, a child is expected to attend.
- Requesting copies of flight information if appropriate.
- School should inform the child's allocated social worker if that child becomes CME or is at risk of losing their school place, or due to be removed from roll.

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive and each case should be considered on its individual merits ensuring all the facts of the case have been considered. Additional enquiries to those above may be necessary.

If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care (and police if appropriate).

If the school/academy has not been able to confirm the location of the pupil by following their attendance policy and working with the Education welfare service, they **must** complete the 'CME Referral' form as soon as possible and no later than the 10th school day of absence, Appendix B, completing the checklist and sending by e-mail to CME@barnsley.gov.uk

Completing the CME Referral Form

The form should be completed by a member of staff with access to the following information:

- Pupil details
- Attendance information
- Information provided by the family
- Information about **all** enquiries made.

Responsibilities of partner agencies

All agencies that encounter, children and young people have a duty to ensure they are safe and should make reasonable enquires to ensure that a child of statutory school age is on role at and attending a school or is engaged in suitable education other than at school. Working in partnership with parents and undertaking comprehensive assessments will support agencies in identifying any gaps in education. If agencies have reason to believe that a child is in the area without suitable education, they have a duty to contact the CME officer CME@barnsley.gov.uk who will work with them to support the child into suitable education.

Responsibilities of Parents and Careers

Parents and careers are responsible for ensuring their child/children receive a suitable education through school attendance or otherwise. Parents are encouraged to work with professionals as partners to identify the needs of their child/children and ensure a suitable education through school attendance or otherwise. Any children not registered with a school must be registered with the council so that the education provided can be tracked. Parents careers and community members are encouraged to notify the Council if they believe there is a child in the area not receiving a suitable education so that further checks can be made to safeguard the child. They can contact the CME officer at CME@barnsley.gov.uk

Children not of statutory school age

If a school or provider is aware of a child, not of statutory school age who goes missing from education provision without notice, for example from a pre-school or nursery placement, the provider must still act to establish the location of the child. Although there is no statutory responsibility to attend educational provision, the school should satisfy itself that there are no safeguarding concerns related to the removal from provision. The provider should carry out reasonable enquiries to establish the location of the child, after making reasonable enquiries, if the location of the child cannot be established, the provider should contact the CME officer at CME@barnsley.gov.uk further advice.

Responsibilities of the Local Authority

Admissions, School transition and CME

The School Admissions Team and the Education Welfare Service work closely together to ensure that all families of pupils who may start or transfer school have made an application. This includes at age 5 (entry to reception), transition from Infant to Junior school where appropriate and transition at Year 6. All pupils allocated to a school will be deemed to be on roll there from the first day that they are expected to attend the school. (Pupil Registration Regulations, 2006). If by the end of the first week of the new academic year a pupil has failed to attend a school, the school should make reasonable efforts to establish the location of the child by contacting the parents, the School Admission Team and follow their school attendance policy. Where the school is unable to establish if the child is attending an alternative school a referral should be made to the Education Welfare Officer or the CME Officer who will investigate the circumstances of the child's non-attendance. If it is established that the child is in the area without attendance at another school place, the named school will be asked to place the child on the attendance register by the tenth school day so that steps can be taken to enforce attendance where appropriate.
If a professional from any agency makes an enquiry to school admissions to check if a child has a school place, and the child is not known to the admissions service they will take the details of the professional making the enquiry and the child who the enquiry is regarding and share this information with the CME officer, so that further checks can be made to ensure the child is receiving a suitable education.

The CME Officer will undertake **reasonable enquiries** on behalf of the Local Authority:

- To visit the last known address
- Contact Housing, Health, Social Care, Welfare Benefits (HMRC, DWP), Home Office, Police (Missing Children Officer) requesting any information they may have as to the child's whereabouts.
- Contact partner agencies where concerns regarding the child's welfare and safety exist, for example, if the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan.
- Contact other local authorities if there is information leading to the potential whereabouts of the child, requesting they make reasonable enquiries.
- Contact the Local Authority admissions team to establish if a further school application has been made.

It should be recognised that the type of reasonable enquires required to try and locate a child differ from case to case and additional enquires to those suggested in this section may be necessary.

If there is evidence to suggest the child has moved to a different local authority area, contact will be made with the named person in the new authority using secure communication methods. The CME officer will maintain a record of the child's details until they are located or attain school leaving age.

Removal of a pupil from a school roll

The Education Welfare Service will follow the statutory guidance outlined below when making the decision to notify schools to remove a child from their school roll. Schools **should not**

remove a child from roll until they have received notification to do so from the Education Welfare Service. 5

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register**, when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child**. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

If after **20 school days,** the CME Officer has not been able to establish the whereabouts of the child, the child will be placed on the **CME Register**. This is a register of pupils identified as being missing from education and is maintained and managed by the CME Officer. Data is held in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and current child protection legislation.

If the child is removed from the school roll, the school will also be advised that the child's Common Transfer File (CTF) https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/common-transfer-file should be uploaded by the school to the DfE School to School (S2S) Missing Children database https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-to-school-service-how-to-transfer-information.

The pupil will remain on the CME Register and regular checks will be undertaken by the CME Officer until the pupil is located or reaches the end of statutory education. These checks include:

- Contact to Housing, Health, Social Care, Welfare Benefits, Home Office, Police etc.
- Check the Get Information about Pupils (GIAP) missing Children Database to see if the CTF has been downloaded by another school.

If at any time, after the child has been removed from the roll, the school receive information regarding the child's whereabouts or are contacted by a receiving school, the CME Officer must be informed.

Permanent move out of country

Where a parent informs a school that they intend to leave the country permanently, the school should establish information in writing from the parent including the new address, details of new school, dates of move, flight details, and contact numbers of family remaining in the country. The school should establish with the new school that the child has been offered a place and has started. This can be done via email. If the child is confirmed as starting at a new school, they should be removed from the school roll, as with any other child changing school **see non transitional removal from roll below and form in Annex A**. If the school is unable to establish that the child has started at a new school, a referral should be made to the CME officer.

Non- standard transition arrangements

Adding a pupil to the school role at non-standard transition points

All schools must also notify the local authority **within five days** of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point using the Notification of a Non-Standard Transition Form (see Appendix C). The notification must include all the details contained in the admission register for the new pupil.

Removing a pupil from the school role at non-standard transition points

All schools must notify the CME officer when they are about to remove a pupil from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulation's grounds for deletion (see Appendix A).

Pupils Missing out on Education

Pupils missing out on education is different to children missing education. Children who are termed 'missing out' on education are those who do not attend full-time education at school or in alternative provision. Full-time education is defined as 25 hours per week for 39 weeks per year; if a young person is not receiving this entitlement at school or in an alternative educational provision, they are 'missing out' on education.

Schools and academies are required to complete termly returns to the Local Authority with the details of pupils who are not in receipt of a full-time education.

Associated resources (external links)

- Child abduction
- International child abduction
- Forced marriages (FCO)
- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- Home Office
- National Crime Agency (NCA)
- Missing People
- Missing Kids
- Border Force
- Missing Children and Adults strategy
- Ofsted report 2010: Children missing from education
- Ofsted report 2013: Missing children

Additional departmental advice and guidance

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- Behaviour and attendance (including exclusions, bullying and alternative provision)
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Elective Home Education guidelines
- Keeping children safe in education
- School Admissions Code
- School to school service: how to transfer information
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused: Advice for practitioners
- Working together to safeguard children
- Young runaways

Related legislation

- Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (added by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- Education Act 1996 (section 7, 8, 14, 19, 437(1), 437(3) and 443
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 4 and 38)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Children Act 1989 (section 17 & 47)

Children Act 2004 (section 10, 11, 12 & 17)

Education Act 2002 (sections 21 and 175)

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and penalty notices under section 444A (as amended

Useful Contact Numbers

NAME	TITLE	CONTACT DETAILS
Barnsley CME	CME Education Welfare Officers	Email: CME@barnsley.gov.uk
Jane Allen	Service Manager Education Welfare Service	Mobile: 07447946344 Email: janeallen@barnsley.gov.uk
Derek Vint	Area Manager Education Welfare Service	Mobile: 07875308111 Email: derekvint@barnsley.gov.uk
Jake Miller	Area Manager Education Welfare Service	Mobile: 07786525749 Email: jakemiller@barnsley.gov.uk
Rosie Smith	Area Manager Education Welfare Service	Mobile: 07702338498 Email: rosiesmith@barnsley.gov.uk
Kayleigh Wroe	Area Manager Education Welfare Service	Mobile: 07385417423 Email: kayleighwroe@barnsley.gov.uk
Lynne Lynch	Senior Education Welfare Officer Youth Offending Team	Mobile: 07786525748 Email: lynnelynch@barnsley.gov.uk
Lucy Matanga	School Admissions Manager	Tel: School Admissions 01226 773777 (open 10am to 3pm) Email: lucymatnga@barnsley.gov.uk or Admissions@barnsley.gov.uk
Nina Sleight	Service Director Early Start and Prevention	Email: ninasleight@barnsley.gov.uk

The *Education Welfare Service web page can be located at www.barnsley.gov.uk/education-welfare-service The webpage gives you access to information about the service's statutory and traded services offers, along with all related policy, guidance, and forms.*

APPENDICES

Appendix A	Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register
Appendix B	Children Missing Education Form
Appendix C	Children Missing Education – Notification of a Non-Standard Transition Form

Appendix A: Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register

Please see below link for up-to-date regulations for deleting a pupil from the register. Please ensure you have spoken to your EWO/Area Manager Link and followed the CME process prior to this.

Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

BARNSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

Children's Directorate for Early Start, Prevention & Sufficiency Service - Education Welfare
Children Missing Education Form (CME)
(Appendix B Regulation 8 - Point 6 and 8)

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4"><u>PLEASE COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS OF THIS FORM</u></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Date referral made:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Pupil Surname:

Alias:</td><td colspan="2">Pupil First Name :

Pupil Middle Name:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Date of Birth:</td><td colspan="2">UPN No :</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2" rowspan="4">Full Postal Address where the pupil normally resides

Pupils Future Address :</td><td colspan="2">Names of parents / guardians with whom the pupil normally resides full names and DOB if known.

1……
Relationship to pupil:

2……
Relationship to pupil:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Contact No Home:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Contact No Mobile:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Are there any known concerns related to staff safety in visiting this family/address: YES / NO
Please enter any details over the page</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ethnicity / EAL :</td><td>Gender:</td><td colspan="2">Year Group:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Name of School:

Contact name in school:

Current % attendance:
Please enclose a copy of current attendance register</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">On Roll: YES / NO</td><td colspan="2">Reason for Removal / Deletion from Roll (Appendix A Regulation 8 of the CME Policy)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Date last attended school:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Is this child / young person currently: please tick all applicable</td></tr>
<tr><td>A Looked After Child</td><td></td><td>A Refugee/ Asylum Seeker</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Subject to a Child Protection plan</td><td></td><td>From a Travelling Family</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>In Temporary Accommodation</td><td></td><td>Subject to a EHA</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>In a Refuge</td><td></td><td>On a Statement of SEND / EHC Plan</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Are any of the following agencies known to be currently involved with this child / family please tick if known and provide any contact names and telephone numbers on the additional comments box overleaf			
Social Care		Education Psychology	
Education Welfare		School Health / Nurse	
CAMHS		Youth Offending Team	
Any other service			

Please provide details of any siblings/family relationships below ~ please ensure to liaise with sibling schools/academies and nursery placements where appropriate

Name	**DOB**	**School**

Please complete this check list below

What is the primary reason for referring this child to your CME? Please indicate where appropriate:

Child has failed to take up a place at your school ☐

Child's whereabouts are unknown ☐

Parent is fleeing domestic violence ☐

Child/family is reported to have left the area ☐

Child is reported to have left the UK with parents/carers ☐

Child is reported to have left the UK without parents ☐

Child has failed to return from an agreed holiday in term time ☐

Child has failed to return from an unauthorised holiday in term time ☐

Parents have taken child out of school for an extended period without school agreement ☐

Child has failed to return after summer holidays and whereabouts are unknown ☐

Please provide details of any specific safeguarding concerns you have:

Is there a CSE risk? Yes/No/Unknown

Please add any other comments

Evidence of reasonable enquires In line with the CME policy – page 3

Details of recent action taken by school/ referrer. Please ensure a home visit has taken place prior to referral. Please provide details and observations of the property.				
	YES	**NO**	**Dates / Details**	
Telephone calls made				
Correspondence **- please attach copies of emails/ flight and travel documentation /letters/cpoms messages etc**				
Home visits made **Please confirm if the home has been vacated by the family.**				
Name of referrer:	**School / Service:**			**Contact no:**

Signed …… **Date ……**

Please send this CME referral form to the Education Welfare Service by E-mail to CME@barnsley.gov.uk

The Children Missing Education policy can be found at https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/schools-and-learning/children-missing-education/

Barnsley Council/Education Welfare's privacy statement is available to view at https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/8746/early-start-prevention-and-sufficiency-education-welfare-service.pdf

BARNSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

Peoples Directorate for Children and Family Social Care - Education Welfare

CME - Notification of a Non- Standard Transition (Appendix C)

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS OF THIS FORM

Pupil Surname: **Alias:** **DOB:**	**Pupil First Name:** **Pupil Middle Name:**
Full Postal Address where the pupil normally resides **Pupils Future Address**	**Names of parents / guardians** with whom the pupil normally resides full names and DOB if known please **1 ……..……** **Relationship to pupil:** **2. ……** **Relationship to pupil:**
	Contact No Home:
	Contact No Mobile:
Name of School: **Contact name in school:**	
Addition to Roll **required within 5 working days** **Date enrolled:**	**Previous School**
Removed from Roll **date removed;** **date last attended school:**	**Destination School** **Enrolment Date**
Reason for Removal / Deletion from Roll (Appendix A Regulation 8 of the CME Policy)	
Any Additional Information or Service Involvement. Are there any concerns the family will not vacate the property or leave the country? (if applicable).	
Please send this notification form to the Education Welfare Service by E-mail to CME@barnsley.gov.uk **The Children Missing Education policy can be found at** https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/schools-and-learning/children-missing-education **Barnsley Council/Education Welfare's privacy statement is available to view at** https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/8746/early-start-prevention-and-sufficiency-education-welfare-service.pdf	