

Quick Guide to Children Missing Education



BARNLSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

What is meant by Children Missing Education?

Children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving a suitable education otherwise via Elective Home Education 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 have been found in the area without a school place.

Why is this area of work so important?

Children Missing Education need to be identified **and we have to know by law where they are** to ensure that every child and young person can fulfil their potential and that they receive the universal services to which they are entitled to, making sure that they do not 'slip through the net' and stay safe from harm. Children Missing Education can be linked to other area of safeguarding, such as domestic violence, forced marriage, child sexual exploitation, child trafficking, female genital mutilation or behavioural issues.

Local Authority responsibility

The Government has placed a duty on all local authorities under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to establish the identities of statutory school age children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise.

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 and in ensuring that children are safe and receiving suitable education. The Barnsley safeguarding partnership, promotes a multi-agency approach to identify pupils who are not in suitable education, with focus on early intervention to engage pupils in education.

What should all partner agencies, schools and parents do?

Statutory guidance clearly states that where any professional identifies a child who is not in education or where there is a doubt that a child is attending school then the Children Missing Education(CME) 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.”*

Working in partnership with parents and undertaking comprehensive assessments will support agencies in identifying any gaps in education. Schools and partner agencies 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 or partner agency should complete a Child Missing Education referral form and email to the CME Officer with as much information as possible and this should also include information about any specific concerns they might have about the child.

If a child of non-statutory school age stops attending and is believed to be missing from education, the education provider must still act to establish the location of the child and follow the same guidance and reasonable enquiries to establish the location of the child, if the location of the child cannot be established, the provider should contact the CME officer.

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.

Removal of a pupil from a school roll

The Education Welfare Service will follow the statutory guidance 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. 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.

Non-standard transition

All schools must also notify the local authority **within five days of adding** a pupil’s name to the admission register and also notify the local authority 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 .

Key Contacts and Further Information

CME Referral and Non transition forms should be emailed to CME@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 that can be found under the useful resources section.