

# CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

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September 2015

# **PART 1: Local Authority Responsibilities**

## **Rationale**

Cambridgeshire County Council is committed to:

- ensuring that all children who go missing from education in Cambridgeshire are quickly identified;
- supporting other local authorities to locate their own children missing education should such children move to Cambridgeshire.
- ensuring that when a parent indicates that they are expressing their parental choice to move their child to another school, there will be clear and rigorous monitoring and accountability to ensure that any such move takes place as quickly as possible through the processes covered within the In Year Fair Access Protocol.

The County Council believes that it can best achieve this if its procedures:

- are underpinned by the relevant statutory requirements in relation to children missing education;
- interconnect with the DfE central S2S (school-to-school) system and Lost Pupils website;
- are complimentary to the In-Year Fair Access Protocol
- are supported by a range of cross-referencing practices and safeguards; and
- are consistent with and supportive of local child protection best practice.

## **Introduction**

1. This guidance is intended to explain how the local authority discharges its responsibilities with regard to children missing education.
2. It outlines how the processes to identify and track children missing education are administered and informs relevant Locality staff of their operational responsibilities.

## **Legal Background**

3. Under section 436A of the Education Act 1996, as amended by the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the local authority has a statutory duty to make arrangements to enable it to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in its area who are not receiving a suitable education.
4. "Suitable education" is considered to be efficient, full-time education suitable to the age, ability and aptitude of the child and to any special educational needs which he/she may have.
5. The statutory duty applies in relation to children of compulsory school age who are:
  - i) not on a school roll; and
  - ii) who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than at school - either on the local authority EOTAS (education other than at school) roll or receiving elective home education (EHE).
6. The purpose of the new statutory duty is to ensure that children missing from education are identified quickly and effective tracking systems are put in place to ensure that action is taken to provide them with suitable education.

7. To meet the statutory duty the local authority is required to show:

- **Strategic Management and Leadership** – including clear written policies, arrangements and processes that are embedded within the authority's governance, strategic planning arrangements and cross-service, multi-agency arrangements for safeguarding and regular monitoring by senior managers, elected Members and relevant partners.
- **Networks and Points of Contact** – including clearly identified stake-holders, defined notification routes, a named central contact and clear roles and responsibilities for officers to whom duties are delegated.
- **Information systems** – including a database of children currently not in education (together with details of actions being taken), robust monitoring procedures and appropriate monitoring procedures to ensure that data is kept fairly and securely.
- **Provision-brokering services** – including agreed processes for securing the support and involvement of others services and agencies, agreed processes for securing provision for children who are identified as missing education, monitoring arrangements and information systems concerning the availability of school places and other alternative provision.
- **Effective Pupil Tracking systems** – including a record of all children who leave education without a known destination, rigorous follow-up procedures, agreed procedures with schools, clear arrangements to ensure the proper transfer of CTFs through S2S, a named administrator with responsibility for the Lost Pupil Database, arrangements to regularly upload and download from the Lost Pupil Database.

8. The essential responsibilities of the local authority in relation to children who are missing education are to:

- receive information about a child who is or is believed to be missing education;
- log details;
- check whether a place of education is already known;
- make enquiries of the last known school attended or other last known provider;
- make other reasonable enquiries – for example, with health, social care, housing and benefits agencies, etc;
- locate and contact the family;
- identify the child's needs;
- identify and access available provision – for example, local schools with places, etc;
- facilitate access to such provision;
- log details;
- monitor attendance at provision;
- track and reconcile subsequent movements.

9. Local authority procedures and processes should be alert to vulnerable groups such as:

- young offenders;

- children with a history of poor attendance/behaviour;
- children of homeless families living in temporary accommodation;
- young carers;
- families which are highly mobile – for example, Travellers;
- teenage parents;
- children living in women’s refuges;
- children with long-term emotional or medical problems;
- children who have a history of running away from home;
- children of asylum seekers;
- children of new immigrant families who have not yet settled into a fixed address.

10. Local authority procedures and processes should also be alert to movements across local authority boundaries and should ensure that any potential gaps are identified and closed. (The local authority named administrator will maintain a record of named Children Missing Education (CME) contacts in other authorities and will liaise and communicate with these as the need arises.)

11. Whilst the statutory duty is concerned with children who are not receiving education there may be occasions when a child identified as such may have been the victim of crime. In such instances, the police should be notified.

12. CME referrals may be made to the local authority by a range of sources including other local authorities, the health service, domestic violence referrals (made by the police to the local authority), the Nationality and Immigration Directorate, the general public, etc.

## PART 2: Cambridgeshire School Process for Children Missing from Education (Maintained and Non-Buying back Academies)

| TIMEFRAME  | ACTION   | RESPONSIBILITY  |
|--|--|---|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup><br>SCHOOL<br>DAY                            | Child does not attend school. School makes initial reasonable enquires to attempt to contact the family.   | SCHOOL  |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup><br>SCHOOL<br>DAY                           | School contact the Locality Education Welfare Officer. School and EWO will work together to continue to carry out reasonable enquires to identify child's whereabouts. EWO to follow CME checklist (Appendix 1). Should school/EWO have confirmation of an address outside of Cambridgeshire but is unable to ascertain a forwarding school the Cambs school may remove the child from their school roll and must inform the Central CME Administrator<br>childrenmissing.fromeducation@cambridgeshire.gov.uk  | SCHOOL<br>EDUCATION<br>WELFARE<br>OFFICER                 |
| 4 WEEKS<br>OF<br>ABSENCE -<br>CHILD TO<br>BE<br>REMOVED<br>FROM ROLL           | After four weeks should such efforts prove unsuccessful then the school, in consultation and agreement with the Education Welfare Officer, should remove the child's name from its roll and create a "missing" common transfer file (CTF) with XXXXXXXX as the destination.<br><br>The EWO/School will notify the Central CME administrator that a child is missing from education so an open CME Involvement can be opened on ONE.<br><br>childrenmissing.fromeducation@cambridgeshire.gov.uk   | EDUCATION<br>WELFARE<br>OFFICER<br><br>LOCAL<br>AUTHORITY |
| AFTER 4<br>WEEKS OF<br>ABSENCE –<br>CHILD<br>REMOVED<br>FROM<br>SCHOOL<br>ROLL | Within 28 working days of the referral being assigned to the EWO they will begin/continue their enquiries, following the CME checklist (Appendix 1) and make any further enquires that may be a result as part of the investigation.<br><br>If the EWO has exhausted all efforts but is unable to trace the child they should contact the CME Administrator to request the case be transferred to the B & A Manager as investigation officer.<br><br>The Attendance and Behaviour Manager and CME administrator will audit the CME Cases every 6-8 weeks. Periodic checks will continue with these cases as part of the regular audit. | EDUCATION<br>WELFARE<br>OFFICER<br><br>LOCAL<br>AUTHORITY |

1. Schools are advised to have a designated person with responsibility for children coming off roll and children missing from education.
2. When a parent indicates that they are leaving a school, the school will ask them to fill in a form indicating their destination. This form will be held by the designated person – see appendix 2 (removal from school roll form)
3. Should a child not attend school from the first day of absence and for following 10 days the school should make initial enquires to attempt to trace the child.
4. Should the school not be able to trace the child after 10 days the school should promptly notify the Locality Education Welfare Officer. (Should the child be subject to a Child Protection Plan or there are child protection concerns about the child the school should first immediately notify the local social services team.) The Education Welfare Officer will then work with the school and carry out reasonable enquiries to try and identify the child's current whereabouts/destination and where/if he/she is currently accessing education.  
Should school/EWO have confirmation of an address outside of Cambridgeshire but is unable to ascertain a forwarding school the Cambs school may remove the child from their school roll and must inform the Central CME Administrator
5. After four weeks should such efforts prove unsuccessful then the school, in consultation and agreement with the Education Welfare Officer, should remove the child's name from its roll and create a "missing" common transfer file (CTF) with XXXXXXXX as the destination.  
**(Schools should be aware that this process is mandatory and is based on the relevant regulations.)**  
This missing CTF should be immediately uploaded onto the DFE S2S secure site where it will be held in the Lost Pupils website.
6. Should a Cambridgeshire school which has previously sent a missing CTF to the Lost Pupils website be contacted by a school at which the missing child has subsequently registered then it should advise the receiving school to request its own local authority to download the original CTF from the Lost Pupils website.

### **NOTE**

There is a separate and specific procedure to be followed in the case of children who leave a Cambridgeshire school to go to an independent school or to a school outside England. For further information and advice schools should consult the Information Management and System Service (iMS).

Should a parent say a child is leaving a Cambridgeshire school in order to be home educated the school should:

- request written confirmation of the parents' intentions
- once this has been received remove the child's name from the school roll
- inform the Elective Home Education Administrator, 01223 703542 or email [electivehome.education@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:electivehome.education@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)
- send the CTF to the S2S Lost Pupils website using MMMMMMMM, so that the CTF goes into the database of children who have moved outside of the maintained system.

## **PART 3: Cambridgeshire School Process for children who may be missing from another school/LA and join a Cambridgeshire School**

1. Should a Cambridgeshire school admit a new child, the school should request from the parents details of the child's previous school in order that the child's CTF may be requested and downloaded, if the previous school has not generated a CTF already. If having made contact with the previous school it is apparent that that school has posted a CTF file to the Lost Pupils website then the school should contact the the Information Management and System Service (iMS) on 01480 379859. The iMS will then download the file and forward it to the receiving school. It is common practice to ask the parents for confirmation of the child's particulars (for example, a copy of the child's birth certificate);
2. Should the receiving school be unable to obtain confirmation of the child's previous school and subsequently be unable to download a CTF from that school the receiving school should not enter the child on their iMS system without first requesting a check of the Lost Pupils website. This can be done by contacting the iMS on 01480 379859 and requesting that a search be made of the Lost Pupils website for a matching record using names or former names, date of birth or gender.
3. If confirmation of the child's previous school has been obtained the UPN for the pupil will be included on the CTF file. If the child has been identified as a Child Missing Education a new UPN should not be issued, instead a temporary UPN should be issued. The iMS may be able to assist schools in identifying any previous UPN through searches on the Key to Success website. The iMS may be contacted on the number above.
4. It should be stressed that these procedures will only function effectively if all Cambridgeshire schools are committed to adhering to the principle that:

**When ever a child joins or leaves a school then a Common Transfer File must accompany him/her.**

## PART 4: CME - Central Administrative Procedures

Local authority procedures for identifying and tracking children missing education are managed and coordinated centrally through the Behaviour and Attendance Manager and the CME Administrator.

1. The CME Administrator will produce the following reports:

- **Lost Pupils – (run every half term)**  
This report from the DFE S2S Lost Pupils website identifies all Cambridgeshire children whose CTF file has been uploaded to the site as a missing pupil.
- **CME – School History Analysis (run every half term)**  
This 'One' report identifies all children whose school history end- dates fall between a specified date range, have no subsequent school history.
- **CME – Transfers**  
This 'One' report identifies all children in transfer years (Yr 6 to Yr7 and Reception to Yr1) where the allocated base is different to current base or there is no base.
- **Reports generated from other sources**  
The CME administrator may also be alerted to a child missing education from other sources within and outside of Cambridgeshire eg.
  - Domestic Violence Reports
  - Elective Home Education Office
  - Health Services
  - Other children's services.
  - Other Local Authorities
  - Independent Schools within Cambridgeshire

2. The CME administrator will enter any children not already registered on 'One'.

3. The CME Administrator will attempt to locate the child by undertaking the following where applicable :

- Contacting the last school attended for further information
- Use ONE to search and follow up investigations using:
  - the social network
  - school admissions
  - any open/closed referral within CSS i.e. social care, Support for Learning
- Immigration/Border Control checks
- Key to Success
- Other LA checks
- Other LA School checks
- Send a message to all LA via the S2S messaging service
- Home School Liaison Officers with the Traveller Team
- RAF Bases in own LA and surrounding LA's
- Investigating the origin of the UPN of the child

4. If the administrator traces the child they will log this on ONE for information only. If they cannot trace the child then an open CME referral will be made to the EWO and copied to the Locality Manager.



## PART 5: Locality Team Procedures

- Referrals will be opened and assigned to the Locality EWO as Investigating Officer and copied to the Locality Manager. Referrals sources will be either by:
  - Referral direct from the school in consultation with the EWO
  - CME Administrator

### The Investigation and recording on ONE

- Within 28 working days of the referral being assigned to the EWO they will begin/continue their enquiries, following the checklist (Appendix 1). (As the CME Administrator will have already contacted the last known school attended it may not be necessary to contact the school again. Further contact with the school may, however, be necessary if further, more detailed background information is required.) It is expected that a minimum of a home visit (if safe to do so)/ letter to last known address/phone calls to last known numbers are made within the 28 days, if this has not already been undertaken.
- Details of the investigation and any outcomes will be recorded in the communication logs on ONE within a further 5 working days. This record must include details of the investigations from the checklist (Appendix 1) and any further enquiries that may be a result as part of the investigation. ONE Communication logs must contain detail as below:
  - the number of the last known numbers rang
  - the address of the home visits
  - all unsuccessful phone calls visits, enquiries made and details of numbers, address etc

### Locality Managers and Supervision

Locality Managers should review all CME cases during supervision to explore other areas for further investigation.

### Outcomes of investigation

- **Child on a school roll or home educated**  
If a child is on roll at an identified school or is being home educated, either within Cambridgeshire or in another local authority, after confirming the information the Investigating Officer should close the CME referral and enter a note on the 'One' Communication Log stating the name of the school the child is currently attending or the authority where he/she is being home educated. The Investigating Officer should also inform the CME Administrator (and EHE administrator if home educated within Cambridgeshire).
- **Child moved to an identified town/city or an identified authority outside of Cambridgeshire**  
If the Investigating Officer learns that the child moved to an address in an identified town/city or an identified authority outside of Cambridgeshire but is unable to ascertain further information (in particular, the name of an identified school) he/she will contact that authority and refer the case to them. If written confirmation is received that the forwarding Local Authority accepts responsibility/acknowledges the

child being in their area then the Cambs CME Involvement can be closed as 'Confirmed on other LA cme list'

- **Unable to trace whereabouts of child following extensive investigations**  
If the Investigating Officer fails to obtain the whereabouts of the child following extensive investigations the case will be reviewed at the following CME audit by the Behaviour & Attendance Manager and the CME Administrator. If during the periodic audit checks made by the CME Administrator and CME Manager the EWO has undertaken sufficient investigations, but is unable to trace the child, then the investigating officer will be transferred to the CME Manager.

## **PART 6: Audit / Quality Control**

**Aim: To ensure the LA statutory duty for children missing from education is being followed.**

The CME Administrator and Behaviour & Attendance Manager will audit the CME Open referrals every 6-8 weeks. This will be reported to the Area Managers and Locality Managers.

### **MI**

Periodically the Behaviour & Attendance Manager and the CME Administrator will review the different reports in order to:

- monitor the numbers of Cambridgeshire children known to be of CME status;
- identify any actual or potential gaps in local authority procedures and practice
- produce an annual statistical report for Locality Managers / Area Directors / Management Team.
- Report on wrong coding by schools

### **CONTACT DETAILS**

Karen Beaton, Behaviour & Attendance Manager – 01223 715577

Donna Symonds, Children Missing Education Administrator – 01354 750166

**EMAIL:** [childrenmissing.fromeducation@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:childrenmissing.fromeducation@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

Appendix 1

**Child Missing Education Checklist**

|                             |  |                               |  |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Child's Name</b>         |  | <b>D.O.B</b>                  |  |
| <b>School last attended</b> |  |                               |  |
| <b>EWO</b>                  |  | <b>Date CME referral made</b> |  |
| <b>Last known address:</b>  |  |                               |  |
|                             |  |                               |  |

| <b>EWO checks (as appropriate)</b>  | <b>Date / Time</b> | <b>Name Contacted</b> | <b>Outcome</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| <b>Home Contact/Visit</b>           |                    |                       |                |
| <b>Letter to last known address</b> |                    |                       |                |
| <b>Locality Meeting i.e. LARM's</b> |                    |                       |                |
| <b>Housing</b>                      |                    |                       |                |
| <b>Social Services</b>              |                    |                       |                |
| <b>Health</b>                       |                    |                       |                |
| <b>Police</b>                       |                    |                       |                |
| <b>Refuge</b>                       |                    |                       |                |
| <b>Neighbours</b>                   |                    |                       |                |
| <b>Relatives</b>                    |                    |                       |                |
| <b>Other (please state)</b>         |                    |                       |                |
|                                     |                    |                       |                |

## Appendix 1

### Parental request to remove their child/children from the school roll

**Name of child/children :**

**Dob (s):**

#### **Reason**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| I have registered my child/children at another school.                                  | Name of school:<br><br>Start date:      |
| We are moving   | Date:<br><br>New address/contact:       |
| We are moving abroad  | Date<br><br>Country and contact address |
| I am going to educate my child/children at home and have informed the school in writing | Start date:                             |
| Other:  |   |

**Name:**

**Relationship to child:**

**Signed**

**Date:**

#### **School**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Date taken off roll                               |  |
| Has pupil's CTF been placed on S2S website? Code? |  |

**childrenmissing.fromeducation@cambridgeshire.gov.uk**

# CME PROCEDURES

