


Children, Schools and Families

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (CME) GUIDANCE

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AUTHORISING OFFICER:	JUSTIN DONOVAN
AUTHORISING OFFICER'S SIGNATURE:	
AUTHOR OF PUBLICATION:	MATT KANE
POST:	CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION PROJECT MANAGER
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Introduction and background

In 2007 the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) issued statutory guidance for local authorities relating to Children Missing from Education.¹ This followed a change in the law brought about by the Education and Inspections Act 2006.² This change gives local authorities a new duty to establish, (so far as it is possible to do so), the identities of all children in their area who are not receiving suitable education. The DCSF guidance makes it clear that in carrying out the duty, authorities must put in place arrangements for joint working and information sharing with partner agencies which come into contact with children.

The purpose of this document is to provide a quick guide and easy reference for staff from within the authority, from schools and from partner agencies which have contact with children. It sets out what staff should do when a child believed to be missing from education comes to their attention.

The authority has appointed a CME Officer who is responsible for receiving all CME referrals. The CME Officer keeps a database of all children missing from education and monitors them until they return to education. S/he works closely with other teams within the authority to ensure that suitable education is arranged promptly.

More information about CME is available on <http://www.hertsdirect.org/missingeducation> or from the CME Officer.

This guidance does not replace any of the Child Protection Procedures. Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns are to be observed at all times.

'Our aim is to ensure that every child and young person has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and no child slips through the net.'
(Every Child Matters: Next Steps 2004)

The Out of School Report (Ofsted 2004) estimated that there are approximately 10,000 children missing from education in the UK.³ These children either fail to start in appropriate education provision or simply become lost from school rolls and fail to re-register at a new school when they move area.

The guidance issued by the government states that all agencies which come into contact with children must cooperate with the local authority's arrangements for identifying children thought to be missing from education.

¹ Statutory Guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving education (DCSF 2007)

² S436A, Education Act 1996, as inserted by Education and Inspections Act 2006

³ OFSTED: Out of School; A survey of the educational support and provision for pupils not in school (2004)

Who is a child missing from education?

A child is missing from education if:

they are of compulsory school age (age 5-16); and
they do not have a school place; and
no alternative education arrangements have been made for them.

A child is not classed as missing from education if:

they have a school place but are not attending regularly;
they are being home educated;
they are in temporary alternative provision such as a Pupil Referral Unit.

Some children, often the most vulnerable, are at greater risk of going missing from education. These include:

looked after children;
children living in women's refuges;
young runaways;
children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation;
children with long term medical or emotional problems;
unaccompanied asylum seekers;
children of refugees or asylum seeking families;
children in new immigrant families not yet established in the UK;
children from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background;
children who are privately fostered;
young carers;
children from transient families;
teenage mothers;
young offenders;
children permanently excluded from school.

Children missing from education are at greater risk of:

physical harm
sexual exploitation
becoming involved in crime
demonstrating anti-social behaviour
abusing drugs and alcohol
being illegally employed

It is vital therefore that the authority, schools and other agencies work closely together to help safeguard children.

Referral procedure

For children leaving school with no known destination:

A well established procedure is already in place for schools when pupils leave a school and their destination is unknown. School staff can view and download the guidance on children leaving school with no known destination on the Hertfordshire Grid for Learning at

http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/traded/sitss/mis/data_collection/ctf.shtml

For children believed to be missing from education:

The referral procedure for children believed to be missing from education (excluding those above, who leave a school with no known destination) is simple and straightforward. It must be followed by staff within CSF, in schools and partner agencies when children believed to be missing from education come to their attention.

Anyone who believes a child may be missing from education should refer this to the CME Officer in one of the following ways:

By phone on 01992 556867

By e-mail at csf.cme@hertscc.gov.uk;

For those with access to Herts intranet, by filling in the form available on Connect at

<http://connect.hertscc.gov.uk/connect/organisation/csf/csfpolicyaz/formseducation/?view=connect>

Following this procedure will enable the local authority to meet its statutory duties relating to the identification of children missing education, safeguarding their welfare and providing education.

The CME Officer will follow up all referrals, liaising with other agencies as necessary, to establish whether or not the child really is missing from education, and report back to the referrer. If the child is missing from education, the CME Officer will ensure the details are passed to the appropriate team to secure suitable education. All children missing from education will be monitored by the CME Officer until such time as suitable provision is made.

NB It is likely that schools receiving direct applications outside of the normal admissions cycle will be the first to know of children missing from education. In the event that the school is unable to offer a place, and it appears from the application that the child is not in education, a referral should be made as described above.



Children Missing from Education (CME) Referral Form

Use this form to notify the CME Officer of any child you believe is missing from education. Don't worry if you don't know all the details - fill in as much of the form as you can and send it to the CME Officer.

Do not use this form for children who have a school place but are not attending regularly.

Name of referrer Date

Organisation Contact number

Name(s) of child(ren)

DOB M/F

DOB M/F

DOB M/F

DOB M/F

Address

Name(s) of parents/carers

Contact no

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Other relevant information

This form should be returned to the CME Officer, East Quadrant, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DF, or e-mailed to csf.cme@hertscc.gov.uk.