

Education and Skills
Children Missing Education Policy

June 2020

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Executive Summary

All professionals working with children can help by being vigilant to children's safety. All children, regardless of their circumstances are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children and young people who are not being educated quickly become at risk of failing academically and socially. If their whereabouts are unknown, they may be particularly at risk of physical, emotional and psychological harm. The law states that every child should be in receipt of education, we are better placed to ensure a child's safety if we know where and how they are receiving education.

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 requires the Local Authority to establish the identities of children within the area who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children of compulsory school age within this category are regarded as Children Missing Education (CME) and should be returned to full time education.

Wiltshire Council is committed to ensuring that children and young people are in receipt of a suitable form of education and facilitated back into education where this is not evident.

Children Missing out of Education (CMOE) refers to any child of compulsory school age who is NOT registered at any approved education activity, alternative provision¹ or elective home education AND has been out of educational provision for at least 4 weeks. This also includes where a child is not attending school despite having a school place, or being enrolled in some form of approved education activity or alternative provision.

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to those children and young people who are missing i.e. their family or their individual whereabouts are unknown.

¹ This includes children placed on "reduced educational provision" by schools (either part time or full time where those children are not attending)

1. Purpose/Duty of the Local Authority

1.1

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Part 1, Section 4, Wiltshire Council like all authorities, has a statutory duty to identify children who are not receiving education. Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002, Wiltshire Council also has a statutory duty to provide promptly, a school place for every child requiring one. As part of this duty it is necessary to ensure that any child or young person of statutory school age is allocated a school place as soon as possible, and in any event, the local authority (LA) will process in- year transfer forms within 10 school days if all relevant information has been provided.

1.2

As a Local Authority, we have duty under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in our area who are of compulsory school age but who are not registered pupils at a school or in receipt of some other form of suitable education. We must therefore identify all children within our area and ensure that they are either registered pupils at a maintained, non – maintained or independent school, academy or receiving education other than at school.

The obligation under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify children and young people who are not receiving a suitable education includes a duty to intervene. Local Authorities also have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people through their educational obligations.

The policy informs Local Authority Officers, schools and other agencies about the policy and procedures to be followed in order to prevent and also identify children who are/or might be missing from education. It should be read in conjunction with DFE statutory guidance and Employment and Skills advice on school attendance and Reduced Educational Provision, The Wiltshire

Safeguarding Vulnerable People Partnership (WSVPP) Safeguarding Procedures, the Wiltshire Children and Young People's Trust and the WSVPP Multi-agency Safeguarding Thresholds Document and the 'Children Missing from Home and Care Protocol'.

This policy outlines the procedures necessary to establish, wherever possible, the identities of children in Wiltshire that are not receiving a suitable education, and/or are identified as missing.

Current evidence suggests that consistent and regular attendance in education is a protective factor for all children and young people and that it is a key responsibility of the Local Authority and its schools. One way for the Local Authority and its schools to safeguard the welfare of children is to ensure that they are all on a school roll or registered as Electively Home Educated and that children are not removed from roll inappropriately (off-rolling) and become 'missing'.

Reference should also be made to the following national guidance:

[Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges: Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2019](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

[Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2016](#)

Local Authority Guidance:

The Local Authority's FAIR ACCESS Protocol

(<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/schoolseducationandlearning/schoolsandcolleges/schooladmissions/schooladmissionsformsanddocuments.htm>)

2. Scope

2.1

This policy details good practice and procedures for everyone in Wiltshire Children's and Young Peoples Workforce, regardless of their discipline or agency. Key partner agencies include Community Health, Schools, Police, Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Voluntary and Community Organisations.

Implementation and Review:

3. Context

3.1

'Missing' children are amongst the most vulnerable in the country. Children either fail to start in appropriate provision or simply become lost from school rolls or fail to re-register at a new school when they move area. It is vital that practitioners in all services work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible.

3.2

Children who remain disengaged from education are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk, which could include engagement in anti-social or criminal behaviour, social disengagement, sexually risky behaviour, substance misuse (including alcohol), county lines, modern slavery and/or sexual exploitation.

3.3

This policy and procedures should ensure that the Local Authority;

- Meets statutory duties relating to the provision of education and safeguarding the welfare of children missing in education.
- Ensures robust multi-agency systems are in place in Wiltshire to identify and track children missing from education or at risk of doing so
- Ensures that monitoring and reporting of systems are in place in order to identify a lead agency and a key worker for all children missing from education.

3.4

Children drop out of the education system and are at risk of ‘going missing’ because they;

- Fail to start appropriate provision and so never enter the system (e.g pre-school to reception/Year 1 or new to area and no application is made to school **(CMOE)**
- cease to attend **(CMOE)**
- are excluded **(CMOE)**
- may be subject to illegal and unofficial exclusion, off-rolling or withdrawal
- are removed from roll with no named destination **(CMOE)**
- Fail to complete transition between school placement providers (particularly for school Year 6/7 transfer or being unable to find a suitable school place after moving into Wiltshire) **(CMOE)**
- go missing (individually or with their family); or disappear from the area of Wiltshire and cannot be traced **(CME)**.

3.5

For the purpose of this document a Child Missing Education is defined as:

“Any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity” (e.g school, alternative provision, elective home education)

3.6

Some children who experience certain life events are more at risk of going missing from education. This is not an exhaustive list but may include:

- Young people who have committed or are committing offences
- Children living in a women's refuge
- Young runaways
- Children of homeless families, living in temporary accommodation, house of multiple occupancy or bed and breakfast
- Children with long term medical, mental health and emotional problems
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Children of refugees and asylum seeking families
- Children in new immigrant families, who are not yet established in the UK and may not have a fixed abode
- Children in care
- Children from travelling backgrounds or traveller families
- Young Carers (Children who provide care for other children/adults)
- Children from transient families (families who move often from one geographical area to another)
- Parents/guardians with mental health issues
- Teenage parents
- Children who are permanently excluded from school (especially those excluded illegally)
- Children who engage in substance misuse including alcohol
- Young people in forced marriage or under threat of forced marriage
- Those at risk or suffering from Child Sexual Exploitation
- Those at risk of criminal exploitation including County Lines and modern slavery

Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns must be observed at all times.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all children's services practitioners working with a child missing education to thoroughly consider the completion of an holistic assessment such as Early Help CAF or My Support Plan – to clearly identify the issues and needs of the child and inform what broader outcomes need to be achieved to ensure the best possibility of the child returning to education. The completion and registration of such an assessment will build a picture of the most frequent issues/needs for this cohort and allow for more informed service provision.

4.1

Completion of an assessment such as Early Help CAF or My Support Plan will help to clearly identify the needs of the child, and to inform the delivery of broader outcomes to be achieved to ensure the best possibility of the child returning to education. The completion and registration of CAF and My Support Plan helps to build a picture of need and informs service provisions for this group.

The Wiltshire Council Education Welfare Service has the responsibility on behalf of the Local Authority to ensure:

- Follow up of all referrals of children and young people reporting as missing from education.
- Liaison with all partner agencies to track children and young people who may be missing education.
- Collation of information on all reported cases of CME in Wiltshire maintained schools, academies and alternative provision providers.

4.2

Upon receipt of notification the EWS (Education Welfare Service) will attempt contact with the family by undertaking a visit to the home, continuing telephone calls and writing to the parent/carer. This will be in conjunction with carrying out checks on internal council systems and with other agencies such as Social Care, Police, Housing and other partner agencies. Where a child is not located an entry will be made on the S2S database.

4.3

Wiltshire Council School Effectiveness Service has an overview of Education Other Than At School' provision and its staff attend In Year Fair Access Panels in Wiltshire. Other parts of the council (e.g SEND/Support and Safeguarding/Virtual School staff) offer child centred support to young people identified by schools as being at risk of permanent exclusion and respond in allocating a range of alternative educational provisions within the county through established referral routes, panel arrangements and agreed protocols. There are strong links with colleagues supporting pupils from identified vulnerable groups (e.g Special Educational Needs, Children in Care, Support and Safeguarding Social Work Teams.) This team also ensure that the correct procedure is followed and that information in relation to pupils excluded is communicated effectively.

4.4 Admissions Team

The admissions team have overall responsibility, and accountability for ensuring all children and young people in Wiltshire receive an appropriate offer of placement.

The Admissions Team processes all applications for all school places. This includes applications for Voluntary Aided, Foundation Schools and Academies.

Where a Voluntary Aided, Foundation Schools or an Academy receives an admissions application via the school, the school are responsible for sending this to the Admissions Team within five school days of receipt as well as confirming if an offer of a school place can be made.

In all cases the Admission Team will communicate the outcome of the application to the parent and where applicable provide them with information on how to appeal.

4.5 Looked after Children – Virtual Schools

The Virtual School monitors carefully the attendance of Wiltshire's Looked after Children to ensure that any absence from school is reduced and accounted for.

Welfare Call is commissioned to track attendance daily and report all absence of each individual Looked after Child.

4.6 Children Missing Education Procedures

Children missing education procedures should be followed where a child or young person has not taken up an allocated school place as expected and/or has 10 days or more continuous absence from school without an explanation and/or has left school suddenly and the destination is unknown.

Schools should start to complete the Children Missing Education Checklist if a pupil has had a maximum of 5 days of non-school attendance and where the school has been unable to contact the parent/carers.

Any concern of a Child Missing Education should be reported to the Local Authority through the Education Welfare Service. Notifications should be sent to pupilmove@wiltshire.gov.uk.

Informing the Local Authority of Deletions from the School Register.

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- the name of pupil's other or future school and the pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable; and

- the ground prescribed in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

Schools should inform the Education Welfare Service **and** the Child's SEND Lead Worker where a child has an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) when;

- They become aware that a deletion may be made
- A pupil is withdrawn by the parent/carer from the school without warning
- They receive a verbal notification of a parent's intent to home educate

CMOE/CME Monitoring Group

A monitoring group led by the School Effectiveness Service has set up an internal multi-disciplinary (Virtual School, SEND, Support & Safeguarding etc.) group which keeps a list of all children and young people who are either CME or CMOE (see Executive Summary for definitions). The group will track or monitor all such young people; taking the necessary action to intervene or direct intervention to ensure the presenting issues are addressed.

The above is supported by the Education Welfare Service who retain oversight for all children who are registered as Elective Home Educated and those who are formally classed as 'Children Missing Education' (absent 10 days or more / whereabouts unknown).

Note: We only know about who we know about; who we have been informed about or the situations we have detected. It is an expectation that all schools advise the local authority formally of any child whose parents/carers are electing to Home Educate. Where schools have moved children and young people onto alternative timetables and provision- whether part time or full time they should use the Reduced Educational Provision guidance and notification processes.

SCHOOL MISSING PUPIL REFERRAL – CME1

Name of School:		Tel No:	
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Please note that this form should only be used where child is thought to be CME and you have evidence that the child is not residing at their known address. This form should not be used for non-attendance issues at school.

Date pupil last attended:

Date of most recent letter sent to parent/carer regarding the pupil’s absence:

1. Pupil Details

Date pupil placed on school’s admission register:

First Name(s):		Date of Birth:
		Year Group:
Surname(s) including any other names the pupil may be known by:		Gender: M / F
		UPN:
Ethnicity and languages:		Migrant, refugee or asylum seeker Y / N
		Gypsy Roma/Traveller Y / N
Service family Y / N	Provide details of regiment parent(s) attached to:	
SEN Support Y / N	Child Protection Plan: Y / N	LAC: Y / N
Statement of SEN / EHCP	Child in Need Plan: Y / N	Have you notified the relevant worker and virtual school?
Not on SEND code	Support Assessment Y / N	Y / N
(Please delete those not relevant)	Have you notified the relevant social worker or key person? Y / N	

Who does the child live with?		Any other person with parental responsibility who does not live at the same address as the child:
Details of any other known adults who live at the same address as the child:		Details of siblings, ages and school where known:

2. Parent/Carer's Details

Relationship:	Title:	First Name(s):	Surname:
Language:	Parental Responsibility Y / N		Is an interpreter required? Y / N
Address:			Home phone:
Postcode:			Work phone:
			Mobile:
			Email:

Relationship:	Title:	First Name(s):	Surname:
Language:	Parental Responsibility Y / N		Is an interpreter required? Y / N
Address:			Home phone:
Postcode:			Work phone:
			Mobile phone:
			Email:

3. Please give details of enquiries made (please ensure all these enquiries are made before referring as CME)

Telephone calls

Contact name	Date	Outcome

Home visits

Date	Outcome	Spoke to neighbours?

Have you spoken to family and/or friends?

Name	relationship	Date	Outcome

4. Please provide all additional emergency contact names, numbers and emails held.

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5. Do you have any reason to be concerned that child or extended family members may be at risk of any of the following? Please tick and indicate if Child (C), Family (F) or Both (B)

	Yes	No	Historic	C / F / B
Sexual, physical, emotional abuse and/or neglect?				
Any history of domestic abuse?				
Any LA Children's or Adult's social care services involved? E.g. Section 47 enquiry due to start?				
Any persons present or visiting the family who poses an on-going risk to children, or suspected of previously harming a child?				
At risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) known or suspected?				
At risk of radicalisation?				
Any reasons to believe the child or extended family members are at risk from FGM, forced marriage, modern day slavery, human trafficking?				
Any involvement in criminal activities?				
Any involvement in anti-social behaviour?				
Any drug/alcohol/substance misuse?				
Any change in child's/family's financial circumstances?				
Has the child not returned from agreed leave of absence?				
Does child need any essential medical or health care?				
Any bereavement or loss, family or friends?				
Any previous CME episode?				

If you have ticked 'Yes' to any of the above, please provide further details, including for example, what actions have been taken or safeguarding concerns that have been referred to Children's Services, MASH, Police or concerns referred to other professionals.

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PLEASE ATTACH THE LATEST ATTENDANCE REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE

Signature and Designation of Referrer:	
Print Name:	
Date of Referral:	

Please email securely to pupilmove@wiltshire.gov.uk

5. Elective Home Education (EHE)

5.1

If a parent wishes to Electively Home Educate (EHE) his/her child, the school must deregister the child at the point written notification is received from the parent expressing their intention to do so. Deletion from the admissions register should take place as soon as notifications are received.

Schools are then required to inform the Local Authority by completion of a Safeguarding Form (Appendix 2) attached to the parent's letter, the school's letter of acknowledgment and a registration certificate. Upon receipt of the required documents the Education Welfare Service will make contact with the parents/carers who are then required to provide evidence that the child is in receipt of a 'suitable education'. If the parent/carer fails to provide evidence the Education Welfare Service will pursue the matter and may commence School Attendance Order Proceedings. Education Welfare Officers have a duty to ensure that children are in receipt of a suitable education. In Wiltshire the Local Authority seeks to assure itself of the suitability of education provision for EHE children on an annual basis unless there are specific safeguarding or welfare concerns; in which case more immediate intervention via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) will be sought.

Please email to pupilmove@wiltshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2 Safeguarding Form - Elective Home Education						
Pupil details as held on school record						
School						
Surname/Legal Surname				Forename		
Middle name			Chosen name			
Date of Birth			Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> M	Year
Address						
Post Code			Admission Date			Leaving Date
Reason for Leaving	<input type="checkbox"/> Awaiting placement		<input type="checkbox"/> Bullying		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved out of county	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifestyle		<input type="checkbox"/> Not known		<input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Please give details: _____						
Is there a safeguarding concern? (If Yes please complete box below)	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES		Are parents aware of your concerns?		<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	
Details of any safeguarding or child protection concerns, including dates of any referrals to Children's Social Care						

Parents/Carers contact details as held on school record

Priority	Name/Relationship	Home Address/Phone/Mobile/Fax	Work Address Phone/Email
1		Tel Mobile	Tel Email
2		Tel Mobile	Tel Email

Other Agencies involved

Please indicate with a tick if the following agencies are involved with the student

Education	Education	Social Care	Youth Offending
Child and Adolescent Mental Health services	SEN	Health	Other

Details of involved Agencies (name and contact telephone numbers)

Does the student have a Statement?	YES	NO	SEN Start Date
In LA Care?	YES	NO	Care Authority
Has the child been subject to a CAF?	YES	NO	CAF lead

If you are the lead professional who will assume this role when the child starts EHE?

Contact details of the new lead professional	
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Ethnicity		Home Language		Religion	
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Data Protection Act 1998: The school is registered under the Data Protection Act for holding personal data. The school has a duty to protect this information and to keep it up to date. The school is required to share some of the data with the Local Authority and with the DfE

Headteacher's signature		Date	
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Please return this form with the [parental letter of instruction and school acknowledgement letter](#) and accompanying [registration certificate](#) to:
pupilmove@wiltshire.gov.uk