

Child Missing In Education (CME) Policy

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The Local Authority (LA) has a legal duty to identify when there are Children Missing in Education (CME) and help them back into education. This policy highlights what Richard Cloudesley School will do to help the LA with its duty and incorporates the following legislation:

- **DfE 'Working together to safeguard children' 2015**
- **DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2016**
- **DfE 'Children missing education' 2016**
- **The Education Act 1996**
- **The SEND Code of Practice 2014**
- **The Education Act 2002**
- **The Education and Inspections Act 2006**
- **The Children Act 1989**
- **The Children Act 2004**
- **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016)**
- **The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended in 2016)**
- **The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2012)**
- **The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2014**

1. Statement of intent

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children missing education (CME) risk underachieving, being victims of abuse, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life.

The Local Authority (LA) has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and help them back into education. This policy highlights what Richard Cloudesley School will do to help the LA with its duty.

2. Definition

For the purpose of this policy, a CME is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by an LA, and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere, including where parents have elected to home educate. This definition also includes children who are receiving an education, but one that is not suitable; this could include children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

3. Why children miss education

The most common reasons for children missing education include the following:

- Failing to be registered at a school at the age of five
- Failing to make a successful transition
- Exclusion
- Mid-year transfer of education provision
- Families moving into a new area

4. Children at particular risks of missing education

As there could be many reasons for a child to be missing from education, we will make a judgement on a case-by-case basis. The following list indicates pupils who are most at risk of missing education:

- **Pupils at risk of harm or neglect** – where this is suspected, local child protection procedures will be followed; however, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children's social care (and the police if appropriate) as per our safeguarding procedures. The LA officers responsible for CME will check a referral has been made, and will contact children's social care if this is not the case. Should there be a reason to suspect a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the LA will contact the police.
- **Children of gypsy, roma and traveller (GRT) families** – when a GRT pupil leaves the school without naming their next destination school, the school will contact the LA. If necessary, the school will consult the Attendance and Prosecution Service for advice on the best strategies to ensure minimal disruption to the GRT pupil's education.
- **Children of service personnel** – the school will contact the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service for advice to ensure continuity of education for these children.
- **Missing children/runaways** – should the school suspect a child has gone missing/run away, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will consult the DfE for advice on missing children.
- **Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System** – in this case, LA youth offending teams are responsible for supervising children (aged 8 to 18). Where a young person is registered at the school prior to custody, the school will keep the place open for their return.
- **Children who cease to attend Richard Cloudesley School** – where the reason for a child who has stopped attending the school is not known, the school and LA will investigate the situation.
- **Children of migrant families** – there is an increased risk of a child missing education if they are part of a new migrant family who may not yet have settled into a fixed address, or may have arrived into an LA area without the authority becoming aware. In this instance, the school will contact the LA to make them aware.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The School

The school will **enter pupils on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day** on which it has been agreed by the school, or the day that the school has been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

In the event that a pupil fails to attend the school on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence, and will consider notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity. The school will keep an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents/carers to inform them of any changes.

The school will **monitor pupils' attendance through our daily register.**

The school will notify the LA of pupils who are regularly absent from school, or who have missed 10 school days or more without permission.

Pupils who remain on the school roll are not necessarily missing education, but will be monitored and attendance will be addressed when it is poor. **The leadership team meet with the school nurse once a month to review each child's attendance.**

5.1.1 Timescale

We will always seek to engage parents and carers as partners in ensuring that their children are safe and able to attend school.

In the first 20 days that a child does not attend school, the school will make enquiries and assess the child's circumstances and their vulnerability by following the 'Process Steps' below. In some cases, the situation will be resolved between the school and the parent/carer. For other cases the timescale for initiating a multi-agency response will depend on the school's view of the vulnerability of the child, but should be no more than 20 days.

Concern for a child may be so high that a referral may be made to the Police immediately the child is found to be missing. Alternatively, information may emerge over the course of time which raises the level of concern about a child's welfare, and a referral should then be made to the Police and Children's Social Services.

The length of time that a child remains out of school could on its own be an alerting factor of risk of harm to the child. Accordingly, if a situation is not resolved within 20 days, then referrals should be made to the Police or Children's Social Services, as appropriate.

5.1.2 The Process

Day One

The school identifies that a child is not in school.

1. **The class teacher telephones the child's home** to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent/carer (person with parental responsibility for the child) that the child is safe at home. A detailed accurate record of this call or correspondence should be kept.

2. The results of this telephone call could be that:

- a) There was no answer at the home;
- b) The person who answered was not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or safe;
- c) The parent / carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is concerned;
- d) The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is not concerned.

3. **In the case of a), b) and d) the staff member who made the telephone call should immediately speak with the school's DSL to jointly consider the degree of vulnerability of the child.**

4. In the case of c) the staff member who made the telephone call should advise the parent to:

- Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searching for the child;
- Contact the Police using 101 to inform them the child is missing and complete the relevant paperwork as they advise.

Days Two to Twenty

If the judgement on day one is that there is no reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm, and the school delays further action, the process of reasonable enquiry should be repeated and enhanced, including reviewing the responses to the questions of assessing vulnerability, for up to 20 days.

If the school has enough information to judge that the child is not at risk of harm, however the child has not attended for 10 days and the absence is unauthorised, the DSL may call a team around the child (TAC) meeting to agree an action plan. The LA designated person should be informed.

If at any point the school feel that the child is at risk of harm then a referral to the LA Disabled Children's Team (DCT) will be made and a TAC meeting will be called.

It is a statutory responsibility of the school where the pupil attends, to complete a Common Transfer File (CTF) within a maximum of 15 days where the child is missing from education and details should be uploaded to the DfE s2s site (lost/missing pupil database).

Child Missing from School for More than 20 Days

If a child continues to be missing from school for 20 days, and the school and LA have exhausted enquiries and has been unable to locate the pupil and her/his family, under current Regulations. The DSL will refer to the LA disabled children's team (social services). The DSL will call a team around the child (TAC) meeting, that should include the LA designated person and a representative from the disabled children's team, to agree a course of action.

It is permissible for the child's name to be removed from the school roll once the school has been advised by their LA SEND Panel that they may do so. However, if concerns remain in relation to the safety of the child, the LA designated person should continue to pursue reasonable enquiries and missing person activity in accordance with local procedures.

If the Education Welfare Service or any other agency becomes aware the child has moved to another school the service should ensure all relevant agencies are informed so that arrangements can be made to forward records from the previous school.

5.2 The Local Authority

Under the Education Act 1996, the LA has a duty to establish the identities of children in the area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving education provision otherwise.

The LA will provide full-time education for permanently excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion.

When it is brought to the LA's attention that a child may not be receiving a suitable education, the LA will serve notices on parents/carers to assure the LA that their child is receiving such an education.

The LA will ensure that children identified as not receiving suitable education are returned to full-time education either at the school or elsewhere.

The LA will ensure that the school demonstrates prompt action and effective early intervention procedures to ensure children are safe and receiving suitable education.

The LA will apply to court for an Education Supervision Order for a CME.

The LA will ensure that children who return to full-time education are appropriately supported, taking into account the reasons why they missed education in the first place.

Pupils with special educational needs statements, or EHC plans, are able to be home educated. Where the child has an EHCP, the school should only remove the pupil from the register once authorised to do so by the home LA, otherwise this should be as soon as the school receives written notification from the parent.

The LA is responsible for liaising and sharing information with other agencies to support children who miss education. The LA is responsible for referring to the LA children's social care where there is concern for a child's welfare, as well as the police if there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed.

5.3 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their children, who are of compulsory school age, are receiving suitable full-time education.

Parents/carers are responsible for notifying the school in writing where they will be home-schooling their child, in order for the child to request that be removed from the admissions register, which, for children with a EHCP can only be done with the permission of the home local authority.

Parents/carers will notify the school regarding any absences or changes to the pupil's education arrangements.

Parents/carers will notify the school regarding any changes to alternative and emergency contact details.

6. Working with others

Families moving from one LA to another can sometimes lead to a child being lost in the system and consequently missing education. When a child moves borough, LAs will work with other LAs, regionally or nationally, to ensure this does not happen. The LA will raise awareness of its procedures with local schools, partners and agencies working with children and families.

To assist them in tracing CME, the LA has contacts with the Department for Work and Pensions, the UK Border Agency and HMRC.

Richard Cloudesley School uses a secure internet system, to allow the school to transfer pupil information when a child moves education setting.

7. Safeguarding

For the purpose of this policy, "reasonable enquiries" are defined as limited, investigative powers that the school may action to determine a child's whereabouts and whether they may be in danger.

On admission, the school will collect three alternative contacts, including emergency contact details, and ensure that parents/carers update these at least annually.

In line with the Children Act 2004, the school will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.

The LA may prosecute parents/carers that do not comply with a School Attendance Order.

The LA may prosecute or fine parents/carers of school-registered children who fail to ensure their child attends school regularly.

The DSL will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to the children's social care or the police.

Where the whereabouts and safety of a child is unknown, the school, in conjunction with the LA, may carry out the following reasonable actions:

- Make contact with the parent/carer, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- Check local databases
- Check data transfer systems such as school2school or Key to Success
- Follow local information sharing arrangements, and making enquiries via other local databases and agencies where possible
- Check with UK Visas and Immigration and/or the Border Force
- Check with agencies known to be involved with the family
- Check with the LA and school from which the pupil moved originally
- Check with the LA where the pupil lives, if this is different to where the school is located
- Check with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service in the case of children of Service Personnel
- Conduct home visits via an appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessments, and making enquiries with neighbours or relatives, if appropriate

NB. This list is not exhaustive – the school and LA will use their judgement towards what reasonable enquiries are appropriate, once all the facts of the case have been taken into account.

8. Admissions register

Richard Cloudesley School will ensure that the admissions register is kept up-to-date at all times, and will encourage parents/carers to notify the school of any changes as they occur, such as via email or newsletters.

Pupils will be recorded on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the school, or the day that the school has been notified, as the date that the pupil will attend the school.

Once a pupil has been recorded on the admissions register, the school will notify the LA within five days, and will supply the LA with all of the details contained on the admissions register for the new pupil.

Where a parent/carer notifies the school that a pupil will live at another address, the school will record the following information on the admissions register:

- The full name of the parent/carer with whom the pupil will live
- The new address
- The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address

Where a parent/carer notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school, or will be attending a different school in future, the school will record the following information on the admissions register:

- The name of the new school
- The date when the pupil first attended, or is due to attend, that school

Removing a pupil from the admissions register

Richard Cloudesley School will inform the LA of any pupil who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents/carers and are being educated outside the school system, with the permission of the home LA in the case of pupils with an EHCP.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Have been certified by a doctor as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent/carer has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- Have died.
- Have been registered at another school.
- The LA and school are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.

We will notify our LA that a pupil is to be removed from the admissions register as soon as any of the above criteria are met, and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is actually removed.

If a pupil's name is to be removed from the admissions register, Richard Cloudesley School will provide the LA with the following information:

- The full name of the pupil.
- The full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the pupil lives.
- At least one telephone number of the parent/carer with whom the pupil lives.
- The full name and address of the parent/carer who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable.
- The name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date, if applicable.
- The grounds for removal from the admissions register under Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), as outlined in section 8 of this policy.