

# Children Missing Education Policy



**Approved by:** Board of Directors Nov 2021

**Signed by:** Chair of Directors Nov 2021

**Written by:** Pippa Hart, Senior Learning Manager  
10/11/21

## Children Missing Education (CME)

### Aim of the policy

This policy is intended to inform staff, governors and parents/carers of the procedure and practice to be followed in order to track, monitor and maintain contact with children missing from education and those at risk of going missing from education.

### Introduction

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education, which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Fairfield High School recognises that in some cases a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and such children are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation; it also recognises that prolonged absence could be the result of travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

Fairfield High School will deal with concerns around attendance and CME by encouraging school attendance and preventing truancy; by establishing a student's safety when an absence is highlighted and try to encourage them back to school, and by taking relevant action to trace children whose whereabouts are not known.

The CME Policy has been designed to support and meet Fairfield High School's statutory duties in relation to educational provision and the safeguarding and welfare of children.

It does not replace any of the current child protection procedures, existing safeguarding procedures and therefore this policy should be read in conjunction with existing Attendance and Safeguarding policies and procedures and KCSIE 2021

### Legal Context

The Children Act 2004 placed a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed a new duty on all local authorities in England and Wales for them to make arrangements to identify CME in their area. The duty applies to all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and are not receiving a suitable education.

The statutory guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missingeducation> sets out the key principles to enable local authorities in England to implement their legal duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, children missing education (CME).

### Definition of CME

For the purpose of this document, a child missing education is defined as:

Any child of compulsory school age (5-16)

- who is not on a school roll,
- nor being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, privately, or in alternative provision)
- and who has been out of any education provision for a substantial period of time (practice nationally is four weeks or more.)

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Children missing education are at significant risk of:

- underachieving,
- being victims of harm,
- exploitation or radicalisation,
- and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

These 'missing' children can be vulnerable; it is essential that all services work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible. It is important to establish the reasons for the child being missing at the earliest possible stage.

Possible reasons that should be considered include:

- Failure to start appropriate provision and never enter the system;
- Stopped attending, due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parent/carers;
- Failure to complete a transition between schools;
- Children from refugee and asylum seeking families;
- Children from families who are highly mobile;
- Children at risk of a forced marriage;
- Children experiencing abuse and neglect.
- Children who remain disengaged from education are potentially exposed to higher degrees or risk.

Children who go missing or run away from home or care may be in serious danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation or abduction as well as missing education.

**CME is not persistent absence.**

### **Frequently asked about cases:**

#### **1. Movement between Local Authorities**

When families move between local authority areas it can sometimes lead to a child becoming 'lost' in the system and consequently missing education. In instances where a family has moved, local authorities should check with other local authorities (either regionally or nationally) and share information in order to ascertain where a child has moved. Once the location of the child is established, the relevant local authority must ensure that the child is receiving an education either by attending a school or through the provision of electronic or distance learning packages where these are available.

#### **2. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT)**

Research has shown that many children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families can become disengaged from education, particularly during the secondary school phase. Fairfield High School will inform the local authority when a GRT student leaves the school without identifying a new destination school. Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly and their children can be at increased risk of missing education. Local authority Traveller Education Support Services (TESS), where these exist, can advise schools on the best strategies for ensuring the minimum disruption to GRT students' education.

#### **3. Armed Forces**

Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in the UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MoD Children’s Education Advisory Service (CEAS) for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.

### **The role of Fairfield High School**

It is expected that Fairfield High School will have carried out all reasonable enquiries within their capacity to ascertain the whereabouts of the student and engage them in education prior to informing the local authority that the child is missing education and will follow the procedure below:

- Fairfield High School are required to notify the local authority within five days when a student’s name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. School will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the student.
- If a student fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child’s whereabouts. Where there are safety or other concerns, and also in circumstances where a child is being particularly monitored, the school will notify the Local Authority and/or Social Services of this, depending on the circumstances.
- Schools must notify the local authority when a student’s name is to be removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point under any of the fifteen grounds set out in the regulations, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the student’s name is removed from the register.
- Where a student has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the student can be removed from the admission register after making reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. This can only be applied if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend because of sickness or other acceptable and unavoidable cause.
- After 4 weeks the child’s Common Transfer file should be uploaded to the Department for Education secure site for the transfer of student information when a student moves between schools. In these circumstances the child’s name is kept on a centrally held register, and should be clearly identified as missing from education.
- Where the child’s name has been removed from the school roll, but s/he has not been located, the Head Teacher should arrange for the student’s records to be retained until the child is located. They may be held centrally according to local arrangements.
- If a school receives a new student without receiving information about the student from their previous school, the school should contact the Local Authority / School Admissions.

### **Attendance Monitoring**

Fairfield High School also has an Attendance policy to encourage high levels of attendance and punctuality at school and employs the services of the local authority to support in cases where attendance is below expectations.

- The Attendance and Attendance Support Officer monitor the attendance of students daily. All school staff monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that all students’ poor attendance is investigated.

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- All attendance is reviewed weekly by the Deputy Head, Attendance officer and Senior Learning Manager
- Fairfield High School ensure that parents provide at least two, current, emergency contact numbers for their child.
- The school office also contacts home on the day of any unexplained absence, alerting parents/carers to the absence.
- It similarly notifies unexplained lateness after the register has closed.

As part of Fairfield High School's safeguarding duty, all student absence is investigated. Further information about schools' safeguarding responsibilities can be found in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2019' and in the school's Safeguarding Policy.

If a member of staff becomes aware that a child may have gone missing from school this should be reported to the school office and Designated (Deputy) Safeguarding Lead. The office will try to establish with the parents / carers what has happened.

If this is not possible, or the child is missing, the Designated Safeguarding Lead should assess the child's vulnerability by making reasonable enquiries, and refer any concerns about the child to Children's Services.

In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the expectation is that the school and the local authority will have in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries.

The type of procedures may include the appropriate person checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords (private or social housing providers) and other agencies who may be involved. School should also record that they have completed these procedures.

**If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).**

In the following circumstances a referral to Children's Services and / or the police should always be made promptly:

- The child may be the victim of a crime;
- The child is subject of a Child Protection Plan;
- The child is subject of Section 47 enquiries;
- The child is a child looked after (CLA);
- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household;
- There is a history of the family moving frequently;
- There are serious issues of attendance.

**Appendix 1****Children Missing Education Referral Form**

**Schools** – Please complete parts 1 & 2. **Other** – Please complete part 1 only

**PART 1**

Child's details			
Forename(s)		Gender	Male/female
Surname		UPN	
AKA		Year group	
Date of Birth		Specific information	CIN/CP/EHA/SEN/EHC LAC-please indicate placing authority:
Ethnicity		First language	
Address		Postcode	

Parent/carer's details			
Forename(s)		Forename(s)	
Surname		Surname	
Relationship		Relationship	
Phone		Phone	
Mobile		Mobile	
Email		Email	
Address (if different)		Address (if different)	
Postcode		Postcode	

Any known sibling's details (please copy and paste this section for each sibling)			
Forename(s)		Gender	Male/female
Surname		UPN	
AKA		Year group	
Date of Birth		Specific information	CIN/CP/CAF/SEN/EHC LAC-please indicate placing authority:
Ethnicity		First language	
Address(if different)		Postcode	

Current school information			
School		Tel. No.	
Address		Email address	
Last date attended		Reason for leaving	

**Details of Referral:** Please include as much information as possible.

**PART 2**

<b>Name of referrer</b>	<b>Organisation Name</b>	<b>Position of referrer</b>
<b>Contact No.</b>	<b>Email address</b>	
I have read and followed the CME guidance <input type="checkbox"/>		

**If this is a school referral – Please complete this section also.**

ABSENCE DAYS- 1-10- ACTION TAKEN BY SCHOOL		
	Date	Outcome
1st day contact		
CME safeguarding checklist completed. (refer to guidance)		
2 <sup>nd</sup> day contact & Emergency contact numbers		
Letter to Parent/carer		
School Attendance Officer informed		
Enquiries of wider school community E.G. Staff, pupils, friends		
Home visit		
Any other relevant information.		

Please ensure all parts of the form are completed. Incomplete forms will be not be accepted.

Please return both forms, using one of the following methods:

- a secure email : [cme@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:cme@herefordshire.gov.uk)
- **anycomms+** to Herefordshire Council 'children missing education'
- Referrals may also be posted, but this may delay response time.

Admissions and CME Officer  
 Plough Lane,  
 Hereford, HR4 0LE

## **Appendix 2 CME KCSIE 2021**

### **Children missing from education**

164. Children missing from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

It is important the school or college's response to children missing from education supports identifying such abuse and also helps prevent the risk of them going missing in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where going missing from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. Further information and support, includes:

- schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the Department's statutory guidance: Children Missing Education.
- further information for colleges providing education for a child of compulsory school age can be found in: Full-time-Enrolment of 14 to 16 year olds in Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges.
- general information and advice for schools and colleges can be found in the Government's Missing Children and Adults Strategy.