

ST. CHAD'S C.E.(C) PRIMARY SCHOOL
CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION and reducing the risks
'Building together with Jesus for a better future.'

We are a Church of England School and our policies are written with a commitment to our Christian Character, which is rooted in the Bible.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the person of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Background

All professionals working with children, as well as the wider community can help by remaining vigilant to children's safety and wellbeing. The law states that all children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

'All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in an alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period (usually four weeks or more)'

The [Children Act 2004](#) places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and to share information appropriately. This principle underpins SCC's policy on CME, and there is an expectation that all agencies and professionals will work together to ensure that children are participating in education, whether at an educational provision or at home.

Children at risk

There are certain points at which children are most at risk of becoming missing from education, and the most common reasons for this include:

- Children not registered by parents/carers at school when they achieve compulsory school age.
- Children not registered at school for the start of high school (Year 7).
- Frequent house moves, periods of homelessness or time spent in refuges.
- Family breakdown.
- Parents "withdrawing" children from school for an invalid reason.
- Schools off-rolling pupils without the correct checks and procedures being followed.
- Exclusion (lawful and unlawful).
- Children whose educational status is unknown, and it is therefore not possible to identify whether the child is receiving a suitable education.

Certain groups of children are more likely to be affected by the factors listed above and include:

- Children in Public Care (Looked After Children).
- Children who have been the subject of a Child Protection Plan.
- Refugees and asylum seekers.
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families.
- Children who have experienced domestic violence or other adverse family circumstances.
- Children with special educational needs.
- Migrant families.
- Children who have had attendance difficulties.

The Role of schools

1. When a child is expected to join a school and does not arrive, for the first 10 school days school make their own enquiries. This includes trying to contact the parents/carers by telephone or letter. We may also contact the School Admissions Team to establish if the child has been registered elsewhere.
2. For absence of between 10 and 20 school days, we may request EWW support (if eligible) to establish the reason for the unknown absence and lack of information. The request includes a record of the reasonable enquiries made so far.
3. If after 20 school days (four school weeks) the child has not been located, we will complete and submit a CME Referral Form to cme.referrals@staffordshire.gov.uk and it is at this point that the Headteacher will take the child off the school roll.
4. If a child is absent, or fails to return from an agreed holiday, we follow our normal procedures for investigating the absence, using "Reasonable Enquiries" (see Appendix 1)
5. If a child is absent from school because they are believed to have moved away, we are still required to keep the pupil on roll whilst making reasonable enquiries, and only remove from roll after 20 school days have elapsed. It is at this point that a referral to CME is made.
6. When our school and EWW have investigated, but not located the child and 20 school days have elapsed, we follow the procedure outlined in 3.
7. If there is a concern regarding the immediate safety of the child First Response will be contacted. Dependent on the level of concern, the Education Safeguarding Advice Service may also be consulted by emailing esas@staffordshire.gov.uk or telephoning 0800 13 13 126 (option 3).
8. It is the decision of the Headteacher as to when to remove a child from roll; however, deletions from a school roll can usually be made after four school weeks (20 school days) continuous absence where all reasonable attempts have been made to trace a child and the CME team have been notified. In these circumstances the child's details will be uploaded onto the Teachernet s2s lost pupils' database.
9. There is statutory guidance governing when schools can delete children from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 8 of the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#).
10. When a child is deleted from the school's admissions register, we will update our school management information system and clearly indicate the date and the reason for removal from roll. On the "i" tab next to "Reason for Leaving" the new school's name will be given together with its seven-digit school identifier number (schools in England and Wales) or the school name and locality (schools in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Channel Islands, Gibraltar or Armed Forces Schools abroad).
11. When a pupil leaves us for a known destination, we will upload the child's records to s2s - a secure national database. This generates an email to the receiving school which then downloads the information.
12. In February 2018 all schools in Staffordshire were issued with "Deregistration Guidance". This is a quick reference sheet which lists all the reasons why a pupil can be taken off roll. Schools are asked to refer to this guidance and notify the LA accordingly depending on the reason.
13. When a pupil is taken off roll due to their having been admitted to a new school, we will complete an OR.1 (off-rolling) form which we then send to schools.capitadatateam@staffordshire.gov.uk. This will then ensure that the pupil is recorded as being at the new school and will avoid unnecessary investigation.

14. Where a pupil leaves us without a known destination, (which will have been referred to CME see 3.) we will also upload the child's records to the secure area of s2s known as the Lost Pupils Database. Any school then admitting the child without previous school history can request their LA to search the Lost Pupils Database for the child's records.

15. For those pupils mentioned in 13 above, the "Reason for Leaving" on the school's management information system will be amended to show "Unknown Destination". The Common Transfer File will also be completed, and coded XXXXXXXX (destination unknown) or MMMMMMMM (moved to independent sector or out of England and Wales). It can then be uploaded onto s2s in the normal way. These records are securely stored in an area of s2s known as the Lost Pupils Database. If a file is rejected, schools should recode the file MMMMMMMM.

16. **Important** - Please note that new Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities was issued by the DFE in September 2016. This makes specific reference to schools' responsibilities around CME and sets out the correct reporting mechanisms to ensure that these often-vulnerable children are accurately monitored.

17. Schools pay particular attention to the section entitled "School Responsibilities" regarding notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity for those children who move onto and off school rolls at non-standard transition points.

18. All relevant documentation is available on the [CME webpage](#), however if schools have any queries they should contact the CME team for advice.

If you know of any child who is not receiving an education, or you know of a child who has gone missing from a school, or are in any doubt please contact:

Children Missing Education,
Staffordshire County Council,

Families First,
Faraday Road,
Stafford

ST16 3NQ

Telephone: 01785 278999 or 895966

Email: cme.referrals@staffordshire.gov.uk

If you are concerned about a child's safety i.e.

- you have a serious concern about the safety of a child
- you think a child is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed
- you are worried that a child is living in circumstances where they are treated badly and not cared for properly.

You **must** contact First Response on: 0800 13 13 126

Office hours: 8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Thursday; and 8.30 am to 4.30 pm Friday

Email: frist@staffordshire.gov.uk

Approved : Spring 2021

Review date: Spring 2022

Reasonable Joint Enquiries for Children Missing Education (CME)

The 2016 DFE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance states that local authorities and schools should agree roles and responsibilities locally in relation to making joint enquiries. Please note the process below is specifically for potential CME cases, which are defined as when the child stops attending without explanation and school have no knowledge of their whereabouts; and are not persistently absent children who would be dealt with under the school's normal attendance procedures.

First 0-10 school days of absence

Actions to be taken by school

N.B. If you have any safeguarding concerns about the child you MUST immediately contact First Response

In the 0-10 day period schools should:-

- Employ their first day contact processes
- Make contact with known relatives, significant adults
- Make enquiries with classmates of the child (if appropriate)
- Liaise with school(s) attended by siblings.
- Arrange home visit(s) by school staff
- Send letter(s) home
- Check with previous school(s) if appropriate
- Make contact with agencies known to be working with family, including MOD if military family

If these actions have been completed and the child has still not been located, the matter should be referred to the Local Support Team. Schools should request Education Welfare Worker (EWW) support from the LST to establish the reason for the unknown absence and lack of information. This request must include a record of the reasonable enquiries made so far.

Between 10-20 school days

Actions to be taken by EWW

- Undertake unannounced home visit(s)
- Make enquiries in local community e.g. neighbours, community groups.
- Make enquires with other local agencies e.g. Housing, Women's Aid, Police, Children's Services etc.

If the child is not located after the above joint enquiries have been made, and twenty school days (four school weeks) have elapsed, the school has a duty to refer the matter to the CME Team using the referral form found at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/childrenmissingeducation and it is at this point that the child can be removed from roll.