

Policy Updated: September 2020

Review Date: September 2021



Whitehouse Primary School

Children Missing from Education (CME) Policy

At Whitehouse Primary the spiritual, social, moral and cultural (SMSC) development of all our children and being safe is paramount. We believe that the most important function of the school is to maintain an environment in which every member of the school is able to achieve success and self-fulfilment. There must be a total consistency of expectation that everyone (irrespective of gender, race or culture) should feel safe and secure, have empathy for all others, and place a high value upon individual achievement and personal development.

What is meant by Children Missing from Education?

Children missing from education are defined as children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable education elsewhere: for example, at home, privately, or in alternative provision. They fall into two broad categories.

- Children of compulsory school age whose whereabouts and circumstances are known to the Local Authority but who have, for whatever reason, been out of education for **20** school days or more
- Children of compulsory school age whose whereabouts and circumstances are unknown to the Local Authorities.

Children and young people who are missing education may also be at risk of becoming missing more generally from home or from care.

Why is this so important?

Knowing where children are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of safeguarding. Missing school can be an indicator of abuse and neglect, and in older children, may raise concerns around child sexual exploitation.

Local Authority Duty.

Local Authorities have a duty (Education and Inspections Act 2006) to make arrangements to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education. To fulfil the duty to provide an education for all children of compulsory school age the Local Authority will take all reasonable steps to:

- Track children and young people missing from education
- Identify those at risk of becoming missing from education and
- Ensure a range of effective preventative interventions are in place
- Maintain contact with those missing, or at risk of missing, education

Who is at greatest risk and why?

Children fall out of the education system because they:

- Fail to start appropriate provision and therefore never enter the system
- Cease to attend due to exclusion (e.g. unofficial exclusions) or withdrawal
- Fail make the transition between schools within or across the Local Authority area

And where there is no systematic process in place to:

- Identify those children
- Ensure that they re-engage with appropriate provision in a timely way

Research shows that the following are particularly at risk:

- Young people who have committed offences
- Children living in women's refuges
- Children of homeless families and/or living in temporary accommodation
- Young runaways
- Children with long term medical or emotional problems
- Children affected by substance misuse
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Children of refugees and asylum seeking families
- Children in new immigrant families without a fixed UK address
- Children who have been trafficked to or within the UK
- Children in care
- Children who are privately fostered
- Young carers
- Teenage mothers
- Children who are permanently excluded from school
- Children who are unofficially excluded from school

At Whitehouse Primary School, we adhere to the recommendations within the Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020) document. We will ensure that as a school we will have:

- Staff who understand what to do when children do not attend regularly
- Appropriate policies, procedures, and responses for pupils who go missing from education (especially for those on repeat occasions)
- Staff who know the signs and triggers for travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation and force marriage
- We will inform the Local Authority when:
 - A child on roll fails to attend without explanation
 - A child who is expected to join a school fails to start
- Procedures to inform the local authority when we plan to take pupils off-roll if a pupil:
 - Leaves school to be home educated

- Move away from the school's location
- Will remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
- Are in custody for more than four months or more (and will not return to the school afterwards);
- Are permanently excluded

For advice on non-school attendance issues and legal interventions, we will refer to the Senior Attendance Officer. If there are wider concerns about the safety of a child, we will refer directly to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in line with our safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Removing children from the roll of a school

At Whitehouse Primary we understand the importance and our responsibilities regarding placing and removing children's names from a school roll and the marking of attendance registers. If a child who is currently on the school's roll fails to attend without reasonable explanation or contact from home, or a child who is expected to join a school fails to start, the relevant school staff should undertake an initial investigation. If this investigation fails to resolve these issues the school should inform the Local Authority. The Local Authority recommends that this initial investigation should be completed in 10 days or less.

Children should remain on the school roll until all the actions set out in this guidance note have been completed and they have been informed in writing to remove the child's details from roll. Following initial investigation by the school the Local Authority will aim to complete subsequent enquiries within 10 days.

At Whitehouse Primary, we follow the recommendations by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) and this states that a school may only remove a child from their roll when a pupil:

- Registers at another school
- Is withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Has been permanently excluded
- Fails to return after an extended family holiday*
- Has a medical condition prevents their return to the school
- Will be in custody for more than four months
- Has left the school but it is not known where they have gone*
- The school is replaced by another school on a school attendance order
- The pupil is above compulsory school age
- Death of the pupil

* Following efforts by both the school and the Local Authority to locate the pupil

Authorised periods of absence

Schools have very limited discretion to grant authorised periods of absence. Each application is considered individually by the school within the context of the national regulations.

At Whitehouse Primary, we will alert parents to the legal position and the actions they may take if the child fails to return from an authorised period of absence by the agreed date. In the event that a school grants an extended period of absence, if the child fails to return by the agreed date and the school makes reasonable enquiries to establish why, the school should report the child as missing education. (Please see our Attendance Policy for more detail).

Partners in the identification and referral of children missing from education

Many, if not all, Local Authority services and those delivered with or by other partners have some level of responsibility around the issue of children missing from education. When any member of our workforce becomes aware of a child or young person who does not appear to be participating in education appropriately then they should make a referral to the Local Authority. Milton Keynes Council will co-operate fully with requests from other Local Authority areas for assistance in locating a child they believe may have moved to Milton Keynes.

Identifying and reporting children missing education

The senior officer responsible for ensuring that duties towards children missing from education are met is:

Simon Sims, Strategic Lead of the Children Missing Education Team

Simon.sims@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Telephone: 01908 253919

For further advice and to forward referrals please contact:

The Children Missing Education Team cme@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Telephone: 01908 253338

The Local Authority has a clear process for when a child is missing from education. The first stage is the responsibility of the school, the second the Local Authority.

Stage 1

The school should undertake reasonable actions to identify the whereabouts of the child. This includes telephoning all contact numbers, making enquiries with friends and family, making enquiries with schools attending by any siblings and wherever possible undertaking a visit to the home address. The form found at the end of this document should be used to record these actions as they are worked through.

Stage 2

If the first stage does not identify the whereabouts of then a member of the Setting and School Sufficiency and Access team will complete a wider database check. If the location of the child is identified then the school will be informed and if necessary the parents or carers will be supported by the Local Authority to apply for a school place closer to the new home address. If there are any safeguarding concerns a referral to the Children and Families Referral Hub will be made by the Head of Delivery - Setting and School Sufficiency and Access using the appropriate form.

However, if no trace can be made then a referral to the Children and Families Referral Hub will be made by the Head of Delivery - Setting and School Sufficiency and Access. The Head of Delivery - Setting and School Sufficiency and Access will advise the school (in writing) to remove the pupil from roll and upload the Common Transfer Form (CTF) on S2S. The ONE database (the pupil database system the Local Authority uses) will also be updated by a member of the Setting and School Sufficiency and Access team.

Working with schools, the Local Authority aims to complete the search process in no more than 20 school days.

Technical Note: Common Transfer Files

If a school knows which school a child is moving to they should ensure that the Common Transfer File (CTF) is sent to the receiving school using S2S as quickly as possible. S2S is the Department for Education school to school website, which is a secure method of transferring pupil or other sensitive data between schools, Local Authorities and the Department for Education. It has been a *statutory duty* since 2002 for schools to upload a CTF file via the S2S website every time a pupil leaves a school. Receiving schools are then notified that a file is waiting for them to download. The website must also be used to post CTF files for children missing in education and for those leaving mainstream education.

If the new school is unknown, the CTF should be code XXXXXXXX (destination unknown) or MMMMMMMM (moved to Independent Sector or out of country, including Scotland) and uploaded onto S2S in the normal way. These records are then stored in a secure area of S2S known as the Lost Pupil Database. If a CTF file is rejected schools should recode the file MMMMMMMM. Schools should check S2S regularly to look for the CTF of new pupils which have been sent to them. If a new pupil is admitted and the CTF is not available, schools should ask for the Local Authority to complete a search of the children missing education database for the pupil's CTF which can then be forwarded to the school.

*The following reporting form from the Local Authority will be the form we use when reporting any child missing from education.

REPORTING FORM FOR ALL CHILDREN REMOVED FROM SCHOOL ROLL OR MISSING (CME FORM).

Milton Keynes Council - Child Missing Education Referral Form	
Contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub if you have child protection concerns	
CHILD	Name of School
	Pupils name
	Date of birth
	Sex
	Ethnicity
	Language(s) spoken
	SEN needs (please specify)
	Date last attended school
	Reason for non-attendance (if known)
FAMILY	Parent(s)/carer(s) name
	Last known home address
	Probable destination (if known)
	Email address
	Contact numbers
	Sibling details
	Any professional involvement to support family

Provide details of the actions taken by the school to check the pupil's whereabouts

Contact with parent(s)/carer(s)

Check with pupil's friends and relatives

Check with local schools attended by siblings

Check with other local authorities or schools

Home visit(s) or welfare checks

Check with neighbours

Completed the CSE and Neglect toolkit and made any necessary referrals: <https://www.mkscb.org/our-resources/>

Please provide any further information on probable whereabouts of the pupil and return the form to: cme@milton-keynes.gov.uk

This box will expand – please provide as much information as possible.

Attach any written notification from parent if the pupil has been withdrawn

Name of person completing form

Date

Further Information is available at : www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/schools-and-lifelong-learning/information-for-schools/children-missing-education