

Guidance on Children Missing Education Ealing's Guidance

January 2017

Children's and Adult's Services

Children Missing Education

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1. Background

The Laming Inquiry Report into the death of Victoria Climbié was published in 2003 and led to many changes in legislation and practice, many of which were implemented in the Children Act 2004. One important aspect was to identify the most vulnerable groups including children not on a school roll and ensure best practice in inter-agency working. As part of this, Local Authorities each have a duty to make arrangements to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, children missing education (CME).

For the most recent statutory guidance on Children Missing Education, please see the following document:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

2. School and Local Authority Procedures

2.1 Introduction

If at any time staff have concerns about a child's welfare, and in particular, consider that a child may be, or is, suffering significant harm, they must follow established Local Safeguarding Children Board (Child Protection) procedures which take precedence over CME procedures.

You should first discuss the case with the designated Child Protection Lead at your school. Information must be systematically recorded and copies of correspondence saved.

2.2 Dealing with Absence and Irregular Attendance

Children who are poor or irregular attenders are in many cases more likely to be vulnerable and some will become children missing education. Poor and irregular attendance must be discussed with the School Attendance Service.

First day contact: phone the parent/carer and all additional contact numbers if unable to get in touch with parents/carers. Make a record of calls made, time, date and conversations.

School administrative staff or support staff should contact parents on any day a registered pupil is absent without explanation, including in cases where the pupil skips lessons after registration. By contacting the parent the school also ensures that the parent is aware that the child is not in school enabling the parent to take steps, where necessary, to establish the child is safe.

Further information is available from the School Attendance Service. Primary Schools all have a named Education Welfare Officer and High Schools can contact Frank Jenkinson- 020 8825 5973 (School Attendance Service Manager).

Government guidance on attendance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

2.3 Leavers

2.31 Registers and Pupil Registration Regulations

The Pupil Registration Regulations apply to **all** schools.

The only circumstances in which a registered pupil can be deleted from the school register are outlined in [regulation 8 of the Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

When the circumstances of a child absent from school are not known, both the school and Local Authority must carry out a 'reasonable enquiry' as detailed in the following School Procedures and Attendance Worker Procedures.

Please see the latest Government School Attendance Guidance (November 2016):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>.

The following summary of the regulations and guidance is not comprehensive but is relevant to children missing or at risk of missing education. Of particular note are regulations 5, 8 and 12 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016:

[Regulation 5 \(3\)](#) Specifies that pupils join the school roll, i.e. must be listed in both the admissions and attendance registers, on the expected first day of attendance. It follows that the usual procedures for dealing absence therefore apply even where the pupil does not arrive on that day.

[Regulation 8](#) Sets out the **only** circumstances in which pupils of compulsory school age can be deleted from the register. The following table sets out the grounds under regulation 8 and has been resolved against amendments:

	Grounds for deleting a pupil of compulsory school age from the school admission register set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended
1	8(1)(a) - where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
2	8(1)(b) - except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he has been registered as a pupil at another school.
3	8(1)(c) - where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion.
4	8(1)(d) - in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.
5	8(1)(e) - except in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered.
6	8(1)(f) - in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that — (i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
7	8(1)(g) - that he is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
8	8(1)(h) - that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and — (i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);

	(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
9	8(1)(i) - that he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.
10	8(1)(j) - that the pupil has died.
11	8(1)(k) - that the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and— (i) the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school; or (ii) the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form.
12	8(1)(l) - in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school.
13	8(1)(m) - that he has been permanently excluded from the school.
14	8(1)(n) - where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.
15	8(1)(o) where— (i) the pupil is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy; (ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the pupil; and (iii) those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.

Regulation 12 Schools must provide the Local Authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have 10 days of continuous unauthorised absence. It requires schools to inform the Local Authority of the following as soon as they become aware of the circumstances and before the deletion from the register is made.

New statutory guidance (Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for local authorities September 2016) now also requires schools to report to the local authority all in-year joiners and leavers.

Home Education: parents have to advise the school in writing that they are withdrawing their children to educate them at home or other than at school.

Notification should be sent to Debby Legg, Behaviour Service Data and Support Team Manager DLegg@ealing.gov.uk.

Permanent Exclusions: Notification should again be sent to DLegg@ealing.gov.uk.

Pupil has ceased to attend and no longer lives within travelling distance of the school. The school is to determine the new address and the name/locality of the new school. If the information is unobtainable, you must advise Children Missing Education cme@ealing.gov.uk who will carry out further checks and refer on to the appropriate local authority.

2.32 Transfer of Pupil Data Electronically

[Section 5 \(5\) of the Education \(Pupil Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2005](#) places a duty on schools to transfer pupil data electronically (the Common Transfer File, CTF) via S2S when a pupil moves to a new school within 15 days.

The Department for Education has a secure internet site [School to School \(S2S\)](#) for the electronic transfer of information (CTFs) when a child moves school. Failure to meet this duty is a criminal offence and could lead to prosecution.

Training and ongoing advice is provided by Fiona Bradley FBradley@ealing.gov.uk.

All leavers must therefore be accounted for on S2S by one of three options:

- Admitted to a new school in the maintained sector- the transfer of pupil data using the CTF will be carried out and confirmed with the new school.
- Moving abroad, into private provision or to be educated at home- will be entered on the Lost Pupil Database as MMMMMMMM.
- Leavers with unknown destination- entered on the Lost Pupil Database as XXXXXX. This should be done after the school and Attendance Worker have completed the Reasonable Enquiry Form and made a referral to Children Missing Education.
- In exceptional cases it may not be considered appropriate to pass on details of a pupil's history to a new school. Each case would need to be judged on its merits in consultation with relevant parties. Examples include a family fleeing domestic abuse or a family in a witness protection programme. Further guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-transfer-file-16-specification>.

2.4 Leavers Protocols for Schools

Planned Absence: Parents are always asked and expected to inform the school in advance of any planned absence. This should be included in the school's attendance policy.

Planned Leaving: When a school becomes aware that a child is leaving, it is helpful and may save time later, if the parent can be asked to clarify this and be given the Leaving School Form to complete. Parents may be given a school compliments slip to hand in to any new school so contact can be made.

2.5 Reasonable Enquiry Procedure for Unplanned Leavers and No-shows

These procedures do not replace any safeguarding or child protection procedures or guidance but are to be used in conjunction with them.

In line with the duty on all Children's Services Authorities to safeguard the welfare of children (s. 11 of the Children Act 2014), both the school and the Local Authority will put in place procedures designed to track the whereabouts of the child and to record that they have completed these procedures. These procedures apply only when contact has not been possible with the family and/or explanation provided is not reasonable or satisfactory.

When a reasonable enquiry should be carried out:

- Any pupil on a school roll who ceases to attend and the destination school and forwarding address is not yet known.
- Pupils on a pre-admission list/register for Reception or Year 7 who do not arrive on the expected start date.
- Pupils who have not returned after a school/term-time holiday.

Vulnerable Groups:

Some children who experience certain life events are more at risk of missing education. These include, but are not limited to:

- Young people who have committed offences
- Children living in women's refuges
- Children of homeless families (living in temporary accommodation, B&B, house of multiple occupancy)
- Young runaways
- Children with long term medical or emotional problems

- Children with a statement of special educational needs or Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- 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 address
- Looked after children
- Children with a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller background
- Children who are privately fostered
- Young carers
- Children from transient families
- Teenage mothers
- Children who are permanently excluded from school and move
- Children who have been excluded illegally
- Children with a history of poor attendance
- Children at risk of sexual exploitation
- Children at risk of 'honour'-based violence (including forced marriage and female genital mutilation)
- Children at risk of radicalisation
- Children involved with gangs

Assessing Vulnerability:

If there is any doubt about the vulnerability of a pupil, consult your school's designation Child Protection Lead. Vulnerability must be reassessed regularly as it may increase depending on new information or lack of information, and the passage of time itself may lead to increased concern.

Is there a good reason believe a crime may have been committed? For example:

- Is there a history of domestic violence?
- Is this very sudden and unexpected behaviour?
- Has the child/young person gone missing without their family?
- Are there health, religious or cultural reasons to believe the child/young person is at risk? For example, forced marriage, female genital mutilation)
- Have there been suspicions in the past concerning this child and family which together with the sudden disappearance are worrying?

If yes, then refer to police and Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service (ECIRS) in line with current Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures.

If the child/young person is subject to a Child Protection Plan or looked after by the Local Authority, inform the allocated social worker.

The following may also assist judgement in making a referral:

- Have there been recent life events within the family which in light of this sudden disappearance may be significant? For example, changes in household, births or deaths, divorce, redundancy
- Any significant incident in school? For example, bullying or disputes with staff
- Have there been suspicions in the past which together with the sudden disappearance are worrying?
- Have there been any concerns about the child associating with significantly older young people or adults?
- Younger children are more at risk

If yes to these questions, the school must exercise judgement to decide action, speed of response and need to use the Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures. Referral as appropriate may be made to the police, ECIRS, School Attendance Service (primary schools) or School Attendance Worker (High Schools). Advice can be sought from ECIRS on 020 8825 8000.

2.6 Reasonable Enquiry- School Actions Checklist

In the case of a pupil being absent without explanation (including Reception and Year 7 pre-admission list and in-year admissions offered a start date), schools must log their actions (letters, emails, phone calls, decisions). This can be done using the Reasonable Enquiry Form found within this document and also on the EGFL CME page.

Day 1:

- Assessment of vulnerability.
- First day calling to the parent and other contacts to establish the cause of absence and when the child is likely to return.
- Email the parents if you have an email address.
- Seek information from staff (subject tutors, form tutor, other staff who may have had contact with the pupil), pupils, other parents and other schools if pupil has siblings attending other schools, to try and determine the family circumstances as they may know, for example, if the family were intending to move or go on holiday
- Where concerns exist and there is no reasonable explanation or contact, consider escalating to a higher level to the School Attendance Lead or the designated CP Lead.
- All children with an unauthorised absence who are looked after by the Local Authority or are currently open to Children's Social Care, should be referred to the school's CP Lead.

Day 3:

- Best Practice is to send a letter and email again on the third day of absence if still unable to contact the family by phone and they have not responded to messages left.

Day 10:

If no response to letters, phone messages or emails within a week, the school must notify the Local Authority School Attendance Service and copy CME, providing a copy of the Reasonable Enquiry Form, who will then make further checks:

- Primary Schools by referring to their School Attendance Service Worker- who will conduct a home visit if required.
- High Schools by referring to their School Attendance Officer, copying in Frank Jenkinson (School Attendance Service Manager)- the Safer Schools Officer should conduct a home visit if required.

If the family are through to be abroad or have not returned from leave, then a letter should be sent to the 'Occupant' at the last known address which may elicit further information.

Reasonable Enquiry Forms will be updated and passed to the CME Officer who will undertake further checks.

Day 20:

After all reasonable checks have been conducted, matters may be resolved or sufficient information gathered to consider removing the child from the school roll. While it is the school's decision to remove a pupil from their school roll, they must indicate which of the fifteen legal reasons under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the pupil is being removed from the school roll.

Once removal from roll, the School Administrator must upload the child's CTF on the S2S database entering XXXXXXXX into the destination field (pupils with no known destination) so any new school will be able to make contact.

Letter to be sent to last known address informing that pupil is being removed from the school roll and Children Missing Education have been notified at the Local Authority.
Keep a copy of the letter in the pupil file.

3. Contacting the Children Missing Education

CME Officer: School Attendance Service

Email: cme@ealing.gov.uk

Contact: 020 8825 5040

Address: Children Missing Education, Perceval House, 2/NE/3, 14 – 16 Uxbridge Road, Ealing, W5 2HL

4. Letters and Forms

These letters are templates and can be amended as required.

School's Reasonable Enquiry Letter to be sent on third day of an unauthorised absence:

School's Headed Paper

Parent Name
Or Occupier or Landlord
Address

Date

Dear Parent (or Occupier or Landlord),

CHILD'S name.....Dob.....

Your child last attended school on and we have not heard from you, nor been able to contact you or your emergency contact numbers by phone, to find out the reason for absence and likely return date.

Please can whoever receives this letter (the parent, friend, occupier or landlord) contact the school as a matter of urgency to tell us what the situation is.

Please inform us if the family have moved, or gone away or on holiday; and let us have their new address or their phone numbers so we can establish contact; or give us details of any relatives or friends who may be able to assist. If the child is attending a new school then please let us know.

The school and the Local Authority are required to carry out enquiries to find a child who stops attending school. If we do not receive an adequate reply to this letter within one week then the school is required to advise the Local Authority. An Attendance Worker will visit the home and may contact social services and/or the Police in the course of their enquiries.

Your child's absence is being marked unauthorised and we will be considering removing his/her name from the school roll if the absence continues.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher
Cc. pupil file
School Attendance Worker

School's Reasonable Enquiry Letter to be sent around the thirteenth day of unauthorised absence:

School's Headed Paper

Parent Name
Or Occupier or Landlord
Address

Date

Dear Parent (or Occupier or Landlord),

CHILD'S name.....Dob.....

Your child last attended school on And we have not heard from you, nor been able to contact you or your emergency contact numbers by phone to find out the reason for absence and likely return date. We have also not received a response to a letter sent to your home address asking for information. Your home has been visited and enquiries carried out. We have now notified the Local Authority that your child may be missing education.

As further information has not been forthcoming and your child has now had at least 13 days of unauthorised absence and you appear to no longer reside at the above address, I am writing to advise you that your child's name will be removed from the school roll unless you get in touch within one week of the date of this letter.

If you return, then you may need to obtain a new school place for your child. You will have to apply through your home Local Authority.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher
Cc. Pupil file
School Attendance Worker
Children's Social Care (for information if appropriate)

LEAVING SCHOOL FORM FOR PARENTS

If your child is leaving school fill in this form AND RETURN IT TO THE SCHOOL OFFICE. If you are not sure of the details of your move, please let us know as soon as possible, but fill in this form as fully as you can before you leave.

SCHOOL NAME _____

Why you need to complete this form:

- **Your current school is expected to transfer information to the new school.**
- The School and Local Authority have a duty to track your child's education.
- If you fail to provide details to either the school/local authority further checks will be carried out to determine your child's new educational provision which may include contacting Social Services and the police.
- These checks will be undertaken in the interest of safeguarding and to ensure every child is receiving suitable education as legally required by the Education Act 1996.

PUPIL DETAILS			
NAME:	DOB: / /	YEAR GROUP:	Last Day:
NAME:	DOB: / /	YEAR GROUP:	Last Day:
NAME:	DOB: / /	YEAR GROUP:	Last Day:
NAME:	DOB: / /	YEAR GROUP:	Last Day:

REASON FOR LEAVING	
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Address	Address Line 1 _____ Address Line 2 _____ Address Line 3 _____ County _____ Post Code _____ Local Authority _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Country	Address Line 1 _____ Address Line 2 _____ Address Line 3 _____ Country _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other, give details	

PARENT CONTACT DETAILS	
Father/Carer Name	_____
Mother/Carer Name	_____
Mobile Number/s	_____
Landline Telephone	_____
Email	_____

EXTRA CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE COMPLETE

We will only contact them if we need information and cannot contact you about your child's new school. Please choose a friend or relative who you will be staying in touch with and who is not expected to move in the near future.

Friend/Relative Name	
Relationship to You	
Mobile Number/s	
Landline Telephone	
Email	

SIGNATURE

Parent/Carer Name	
Signature	
Date	

ANY OTHER DETAILS

- *Please provide any other information if appropriate. For instance if you have applied for or accepted a new school place in your new area.*
- ***Please include old address.***

SCHOOLS USE ONLY – DATE FORM RETURNED TO SCHOOL OFFICE.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP



To be completed prior to removal from roll

When schools should use this form

- Where pupils have stopped attending, attempts to make contact have not been successful, and where the destination of the child is not known.

When should schools NOT to use this form

- Pupils who have stopped attending but who have not moved (eg parent still liable for council tax at the home address) are non-attenders NOT CME; they must remain on the school's roll and be dealt with as non-attenders.

When is it appropriate to take a pupil off the school roll?

- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence, after both the school and Local Authority have collaborated to tried to locate pupil and Reasonable Enquiry has been undertaken.
- This form should be returned to the LA CME team who have agreed off rolling after council tax and social care checks, and/or confirmed referral made to CME in new LA.

SCHOOL NAME _____

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE LEAD _____

PUPIL DETAILS		<i>Please attach school attendance certificate</i> <input type="checkbox"/>		Last date of Attendance	
NAME:		DOB: / /		/ /	
SIBLING DETAILS					
SIBLING NAME:		DOB: / /		/ /	
NAME OF SCHOOL: (if different)				More siblings? Continue in additional notes.	
PARENT CONTACT DETAILS					
ADDRESS					
FATHER/CARER NAME					
MOTHER/CARER NAME					
MOBILE NUMBERS					
LANDLINE TELEPHONE					
EMAIL					
ADDITIONAL and /or EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS					
FAMILY/FRIEND NAME					
CONTACT DETAILS					
ENQUIRIES MADE BY SCHOOL					
PHONE CALL 1	Date: / /	Tel:	Outcome:		
PHONE CALL 2	Date: / /	Tel:	Outcome:		
PHONE CALL 3	Date: / /	Tel:	Outcome:		
LETTER SENT	Date: / /				

ENQUIRIES MADE BY ATTENDANCE WORKER	
NAME OF ATTENDANCE WORKER	TEL:
Tribal Check	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Continue in additional notes.

Home Visit	Date: / /		
Anyone Home?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	Outcome:
		Card Left <input type="checkbox"/>	
Accommodation appears uninhabited	Bins Empty Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Post Piled Up Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Estate Agent Sign Outside Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> If Y Name/Tel of Estate Agent:
Information from Neighbours	House No. Details:		
Letter sent by attendance worker	Date: / /	Outcome:	

OTHER INFORMATION	
Was absence following a holiday?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Authorised <input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorised
Any previous long absences or holiday?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Authorised <input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorised
Known to Childrens Social Care?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Name of Social Worker:..... Social Worker Tel:
Any welfare/vulnerability concerns? E.g. domestic violence, SEN, temporary accommodation, mobility.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Give details:.....
Travellers?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Previous known destinations:.....
Asylum Seeker?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Friends/Facebook?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Indicated destination.....
Pupil Email Address	
Previous School Attended	
Any recent breakdown in relationships known eg in school between pupils, or between pupil or parent and school? Eg over different opinions relating to behaviour, exclusions or sen	
Ethnicity	

Please complete and sign Next Sheet

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SCHOOL SIGNATURE

Name:	Date: / /
Role:	

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE SERVICE WORKER SIGNATURE

Name:	Date: / /
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CME SIGNATURE

Name:	Date: / /
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