

Tameside Local Authority Guidance



Children Missing Education (CME)

Updated January 2016

Identifying and Maintaining Contact with Children Missing or At Risk of Going Missing from Education and Removing Pupils from School Roll

Introduction

Children who are not receiving suitable education are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk, and this can include engagement in anti-social or criminal behaviour, social disengagement, forced marriage & FGM, radicalisation and/or sexual exploitation.

Duty to Identify Children Missing from Education

Part 1, section 4 of The Education and Inspection Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities to have in place arrangements that will identify children in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. The duty applies to children of compulsory school age (5-16) who are not on a school roll and are not receiving suitable education.

The LA must put in place arrangements for joint working and appropriate information sharing with other agencies and LAs which come into contact with families and children. The following are the relevant agencies:

- All schools – including Maintained schools, Academies, Independent schools and Pupil Referral Units
- Health
- Police
- Youth Offending Teams
- Housing
- Children's Safeguarding Teams

Definitions for Child Missing from Education

The **national definition** of a child missing from education is:

"All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as 15 school days or more)"

Compulsory School Age

A child becomes 'Compulsory School Age' on either 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.

A child ceases to be of 'Compulsory School Age' on the last Friday of June during the academic year they become 16.

Identifying children at risk of going missing

Below is a list of children who are likely to go missing from education.

- Children at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Young people at risk of radicalisation
- Young people who have committed criminal offences
- Children living in women's refuges
- Children in homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation, houses of multiple occupancy or Bed and Breakfast accommodation
- Young runaways
- Children with long-term medical or emotional health problems
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees, or the children of asylum seeking families
- Looked after children
- Children from Gypsy/Roma/Traveller background
- Young carers
- Children from transient families, i.e. students who have experienced high levels of mobility between different education providers
- Teenage mothers
- Children excluded from school
- Children in private fostering arrangements
- Children informally excluded from school and those placed on long term part time timetables
- Children taken off roll following a lengthy absence due to an extended family holiday taken in term-time
- Children entering or leaving the independent schools sector
- EC nationals who have the right of abode in the UK – this now includes a significant number of asylum seekers granted status by other EC countries and who have subsequently moved to the UK
- Others who have come from abroad to live and/or work in the Borough
- Children who have particular social and behavioural difficulties and are placed in alternative placements. This means that by arrangement they do not attend their usual school full time
- Children who have low levels of attendance (Persistent absence)

How and why do Children go missing from education?

Children fall out of the education system and are at risk of 'going missing' due to a wide range of reasons and some examples of which are listed below:

- They fail to start appropriate provision and so never enter the system (e.g. preschool to Reception or they are new to Tameside and no school application is submitted)

- They fail to complete a transition to High school (e.g. fail to arrive at allocated school and are therefore not put on a school roll)
- They cease to attend, due to exclusion (e.g. illegal or unofficial exclusions) or withdrawal / removal from roll with no named destination.

Elective Home Education

- The law allows parents to arrange for their children to be educated at home rather than at school. The LA has a robust system in place for monitoring the education of children that are educated at home. Further information on this can be found on the Tameside website or via educationwelfare@tameside.gov.uk.

Local Authority Duty

The LA are committed to ensuring that

- There are secure pathways, procedures and monitoring systems in place to ensure that all children of compulsory school age are known and tracked.
- There are secure arrangements in place to share information when children of compulsory school age move into or out of the borough whether their whereabouts are known or unknown.

The Local Authority (Tameside) has a CME Tracking Officer, which schools, other agencies and organisations can contact regarding CME. Responsibilities include:

- Developing and monitoring a referral system for children out of school, at risk of missing education and those reported missing.
- Maintaining and updating the children missing education database and acting as a link with schools and other agencies.
- Working with schools, settings and other agencies to ensure that procedures and practice are in place to minimise the possibility of children and young people going missing from education
- Maintain procedures to track pupils who have been reported as missing education.

Duty of Schools (Including Academies, Independent Schools and Pupil Referral Units)

“Schools should put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage”

Extract from Keeping Children Safe in education - July 2015

All schools are required to inform the LA about the details of:

- All pupils admitted or removed from the roll of their school. This data is submitted via migration reports but schools may also need to inform the CME Officer (see Appendix 2)
- Any pupil who has been absent without school's authorisation for a continuous period of 20 days or more. This data will be collected by the Education Welfare Service periodically via a register audit.
- Where schools have any safeguarding concerns about any pupil, it is vital that they follow their safeguarding procedures; a referral to CME does not replace a referral to Children's Safeguarding.

Duty of Other Agencies

Staff from other departments of the Local Authority and external agencies who come across any children who they believe may not be accessing educational provision, are requested to contact the allocated school in the first instance. If this is unknown, they can contact the CME Tracking Officer via cme@tameside.gcsx.gov.uk.

These agencies may involve Housing Officers, Community Safety Officers, Police, Health Professionals, Children's Safeguarding professionals, etc.

Referral

Where schools are required to notify the local authority of a pupil who is CME (see off rolling document - Appendix 2), the CME referral form at Appendix 1 should be completed.

It is imperative that details of any actions taken to locate the pupil are detailed on the form e.g. home visits, enquiries with emergency contacts etc. If this information is not provided it may cause a delay in action being taken by the Local Authority.

Children Missing from Education Procedures

Below are the procedures to be followed by schools when the whereabouts of a pupil are unknown.

School Staff:

- 1) Check with the pupil's named emergency contacts/telephone numbers/text message/email, carry out a home visit if possible, write letters.
- 2) Check the pupil's records to see if there are any siblings at another school – if so, contact the school to make further related enquiries
- 3) Ask the friends of missing pupils for any information
- 4) If a voluntary aided school, check with the appropriate local faith leader

A record of actions 1-4 should be kept and noted on the CME referral form.

- 5) Where school have been unsuccessful at locating a family and after a period of no less than 10 school days, a CME referral form (Appendix 1) should be completed and emailed to cme@tameside.gcsx.gov.uk.

- 6) Where school have located the family but they are out of borough a CME referral form (*Appendix 1*) should be completed and emailed to cme@tameside.gcsx.gov.uk.
- 7) Once schools have been advised by the Tracking Officer to remove pupils from their school roll they should upload pupil information onto the DfE s2s (school to school) 'lost pupil' database.

Procedures for Children Who Fail to Attend Allocated Schools (Including Rec/Yr7)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state the following:

"A pupil is a pupil at the school from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or has been notified, that the pupil will attend the school."

In the event the pupil fails to arrive the following procedures should be followed.

- 1) Ensure that attempts have been made to contact parents by phone call and letter, these must be evidenced on any future referral.
- 3) Where parents have been contacted and have stated they are refusing to send the pupil to the allocated school it is the responsibility of the school to address the non-attendance (see Appendix 2). Parents should be advised to use the school appeals procedure where applicable.
- 4) If the school does not have a response from their attempts to contact parents after 10 days, a CME referral form (*Appendix 1*) should be completed and emailed to cme@tameside.gcsx.gov.uk. Pupils should not be removed from roll until advised to do so by the Tracking Officer.
- 5) In the case of Reception pupils that are not statutory school age, school should make every attempt to contact the parent / carer. If there is no response after 10 days a CME referral form (*Appendix 1*) should be completed and emails via cme@tameside.gcsx.gov.uk.

If there pupil has not been located after 20 school days, school should send a letter advising parents /carers that the pupil will be removed from school roll. This letter should be sent to the last known address.

The Tracking Officer will hold the pupil's details until such time that the pupil reaches statutory school age. At this point, enquiries will commence by the Tracking Officer to establish if the pupil has re-applied for a school place.

Parents of Summer born pupils are permitted to defer admission of their child until they are compulsory school age. This must be done with prior arrangements and schools will be notified to make special arrangements.

- 5) The Admissions Team is provided with results of all school appeals. Where an appeal was unsuccessful, checks are made to ensure that pupils attend the original placement.

Procedures for other Professionals

1) If an Officer from any other agency becomes aware that a family have moved out of the Borough and a pupil is missing from school, they should contact the school at which the pupil is registered in the first instance. If this is unknown the CME tracking Officer can be contacted on cme@tameside.gcsx.gov.uk.

Procedures for EWS:

On receipt of CME Referral form the Tracking Officer will:

- 1) Liaise with the School Admissions Team to check if a transfer or appeal application has been received.
- 2) Arrange for a home visit to be carried out by and Education Welfare Officer.
- 3) If the pupil is found to still be at the address, the case will be referred back to school for them to manage non-attendance (see Appendix 2).
- 4) If the family have left the property, the Tracking Officer will carry various checks to establish their whereabouts i.e. Children's Social Care, Council Tax records, housing, Youth Offending Teams.
- 5) If there is a suggestion that the family have moved to a different authority, even if no actual address is known, the Tracking Officer will notify the CME nominated person in the LA where information suggests the child may have moved to?
- 6) If after a period of no less than 4 weeks, the whereabouts of the pupil are still unknown, the Tracking Officer will contact school and advise they can remove the pupil from roll. The date of leaving may be backdated to the date the pupil last attended. Ensure school have posted child's CTF data to DfE s2s 'Lost Pupil database'.
- 7) At this point, the pupil will be recorded child as 'CME' on Admissions system and the case is held open until the whereabouts are known.
- 8) The Tracking Officer will:
 - carry out regular follow-up checks in an ongoing effort to try and ascertain the pupil's whereabouts,
 - notify the Police 'Missing Persons Co-ordinator' if pupils have not been traced within a period of 6 months,
 - liaise with other agencies as and when necessary, e.g. other LA's, other area schools, UK Border Agency, Children's Safeguarding professionals
- 9) Once pupil's whereabouts become known, and a school is identified, the Tracking Officer will update schools and School Admissions via CME Case Closure Form.
- 10) Once a pupil's whereabouts are known, the Tracking Officer will inform colleagues in Revenues Team and Childrens Social Care of new address and school (where applicable) and the case will be closed.