

## Children Missing Education (CME)

### Best practice guidance for schools

#### Transition to the reception year in school

##### Introduction:

All children of non-statutory school age have the right to health and early years services to help them achieve their full potential. All professionals within early years services should seek to engage families to ensure that no child slips through the net.

The safeguarding of children in Leicestershire is of the highest priority and, to ensure that children and families who fail to engage or disengage from services are located, response needs to be quick. All agencies have a responsibility to share appropriate information, work together and ensure all reasonable efforts are made to locate children and their families.

Recent national and local serious case reviews indicate there is no room for complacency. It is vital every professional is even more vigilant of the signs that may indicate a child is at potential risk – this includes identifying children who go missing from early years services and/or education.

##### **Purpose:**

**This good practice guidance is intended for reception teachers in schools. It outlines the processes, steps and procedures which are recommended as good practice in Leicestershire during a young child's transition to school.**

**Whilst guidance is already available for schools regarding the attendance of children of statutory school age, this guidance has been developed to ensure clear processes are in place for all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). There is no national guidance for children of non-statutory school age, but this advice has been developed in line with the statutory guidance for local authorities on children missing education (DfE 2015).**

**In being aware of and following this guidance you are helping to keep children safe and ensuring that they receive an appropriate education.**

**These processes and procedures do not replace safeguarding procedures. If you have reason to believe a child is at risk of significant harm you should contact First Response in accordance with the LSCB procedures.**

In your role as reception teacher, you should be aware of and give consideration to the following suggested processes, steps and procedures:

- Gather as much information as possible on each child and their family from the outset – from the family themselves, early years provision and the “Inwards Allocation List” which is sent to school from School Admissions
- Where possible, use the information in the “Inwards Allocation List” to inform feeder settings /early years providers which children you are expecting to start school in September. Early years providers may then be able to identify children who have not been allocated a school place
- If children do not attend settling in sessions prior to starting school, contact the family (addresses and contact details are on the “Inwards Allocation List”) and, where relevant, contact the child’s feeder setting/early years provider (these details are also on the “Inwards Allocation List”). Work with the child and family to:
  - establish reason(s) for non-attendance
  - raise awareness of the importance and benefits of attending settling in sessions
  - overcome concerns, misconceptions or barriers - e.g. the family may benefit from an accompanied visit to school
- If a family notifies you that their child will not be attending your school despite being on the list, ensure:
  - both you and the child’s parents/carers are clear about the reasoning behind this (e.g. wishing to delay starting school, appealing against the school place offered, etc.)
  - parents/carers are advised to contact School Admissions on 0116 305 6684 if there are any uncertainties or remaining questions
  - the child’s early years provider is made aware where relevant
  - you call School Admissions on 0116 305 6684
- If a family notifies you before September that they intend to home-school their child, be aware of the following:
  - unless the child has SEND, parents/carers of non-statutory school age children do not legally have to notify anyone – but practically it is much better if they do

- Leicestershire County Council prefer that parents call Pupil Services on 0116 305 2071 /email [homeeducation@leics.gov.uk](mailto:homeeducation@leics.gov.uk) / send a letter to:  
Pupil Services  
Room 100B  
County Hall  
Glenfield  
Leicester  
LE3 8RF  
to outline their intentions
- practitioners should support parents/carers if necessary to notify the LA
- call Pupil Services (0116 305 2071) and School Admissions (0116 305 6684) if you have any reason to believe that the LA are not aware
- If a child on your school's list doesn't attend school during the first days of term:
  - check possible whereabouts with family, siblings, staff, early years provider
  - contact any known extended family and/or emergency contact
  - contact School Admissions (0116 305 6684) and Pupil Services (0116 305 2071)
  - consider visiting the family's last known address – check for visible signs of property being occupied, check with neighbours
- If there are concerns regarding attendance later on in the academic year but the child is still of non-statutory school age:
  - Follow the procedure above if the absence is unexplained
  - Ensure you have a clear log of absences – write a report on a monthly basis (i.e. last day of each month). This will not be reported to the local authority via the monthly PME data return until the child is of statutory school age but you should have a clear history of all children's attendance
  - If concerns remain, you should consider filling out a Referral for Pupils Missing out on Education (PME) – see Appendix 1 of this document – and/or contact Pupil Services (0116 305 2071)
  - If there are significant and immediate concerns, contact First Response ( 0116 305 0005)


Key questions to consider when gathering information on children and families:

- Have there been any concerns regarding the attendance of the child at previous early years provision, including any unexplained absences?
- Is there a history of the family moving on suddenly without any explanations as to why?
- Are there reasons why the family are less likely to engage with pre-school services? e.g. looked after children, gypsy/traveller background, living in women's refuge or temporary accommodation, family with a transient lifestyle, migrant children, etc.
- Is there any school or local authority intervention in relation to older siblings' attendance?

Top tips:

- Routinely record and amend children's details at every opportunity and remind parents/carers to inform practitioners of any changes of addresses, contact details, etc.
- Keep records of and look for patterns in non-attendance; record actions, decisions made, conversations, agencies contacted, etc. when trying to locate children and their families
- Do everything possible to work with families, early years provision and other agencies (e.g. school nurse, family outreach worker) to share relevant information and to support in the search should a child be missing from education
- Do what is reasonable in terms of searching and timescales

**Appendix 1**

<b>Referral Checklist for Pupils Missing out on Education (PME)</b>			 <b>Leicestershire County Council</b>
Name of Pupil (s)		Address (Last Known)	
AKA		Parents'/Carers' Names	
Date of Birth		Telephone No.	
Gender		Email	
Ethnicity		School/College	
SEN & Disability			
Child in Care?		Date Last Attended	
Any Additional Information  (E.G. additional addresses, information surrounding SEN/Care etc)			

<b>Action to be Taken by Referrer</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Outcome (Include date completed)</b>
Check possible whereabouts with staff, siblings, friends & other pupils	
Contact any known extended family and/or emergency contact numbers	
Complete a visit to last known address (Check visible signs of property being occupied, checks with neighbours etc)  Please include any additional & relevant information about the child or family (E.g known agencies with involvement & names of contacts)	

**Please complete the table below. Indicate as appropriate and mark whether the indicators are current or historic.**

No	Vulnerabilities, Warning Signs & Risk Indicators (for the child and/or family)	Yes or No?	Current or Historic (C/H?)
1	History of Local Authority Care (LAC)		
2	Goes Missing from Home/Care		
3	Exclusion and/or unexplained absences from school (or not engaged in education, employment or training)		
4	Social and/or Learning difficulties		
5	Low self-esteem / Self-harm requiring medical treatment / Eating Disorders / Emotional Health Issues (Including anxiety related issues, suicidal thoughts)		
6	History of Being Bullied or Being a Bully		
7	Drug and/or Alcohol Misuse (or a history of)		
8	Involvement in Criminal Activities (Possible offending patterns in the family)		
9	At Risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) (known or suspected)		
10	Whereabouts Unknown (or unclear) - whether day or night		
11	Displaying Inappropriate Sexualised Behaviours		
12	Aggressive Behaviour Towards Others (sometimes leading to fixed term exclusions)		
13	Breakdown of Living and/or Family Relationships (sometimes leading to staying out overnight)		
14	Gang Member or Association		
15	History of abuse/neglect		
16	History of domestic abuse/violence		
17	History of mental health difficulties		
18	History of sexual, physical and/or emotional abuse		
19	Isolated from peers/social networks (not mixing with their usual friends)		
20	Evidence of Poverty and/or Deprivation		
<b>Based on the above indicators, if there are any safeguarding concerns or worries, have you considered a referral to Social Care? Yes/No</b> <b>If so, have you gained consent from parents? Yes/No</b>			

## Referrer Assessment

*(The Vulnerabilities, Warning Signs & Risk Indicators above should help inform your professional judgement when completing the final section of this referral form)*

### What do you think is working well?

*Include protective factors:*

- People, situations & actions that contribute to the wellbeing of the child & to plans about how they could be made safe
- Actions already being taken to make sure the child is safe

### What are you worried about?

*Include risk factors, whether they are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.*

- Harm – actual hurt, injury or abuse (likely) caused by adults in the past or present
- Risk taking behaviour by the child

### Professional Judgment

*Please use your professional judgement to reflect upon the indicators you have ticked above and consider the health, welfare and safety of the child in question*

### What do you think needs to happen next?

*This is the initial plan and should include what outcomes you are hoping are achieved and by when*

## Referrer's Details

Name		Position/Title	
Contact Details		School/College or Agency	
Signature		Date Completed	

Please password protect the completed form and email to [cme@leics.gov.uk](mailto:cme@leics.gov.uk)