

Parsons Down Partnership of Schools Children Missing Education (CME) Policy May 2015

Parsons Down Partnership of Schools has chosen to follow the West Berkshire Children Missing Education Policy. The document follows.

IDENTIFYING AND MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH CHILDREN MISSING OR AT RISK OF GOING MISSING FROM EDUCATION

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1. Introduction

This policy is intended to inform Local Authority (LA) Officers, Schools, Governing Bodies and other involved agencies about the policy and procedures to be followed in order to identify and maintain contact with children missing education and current developments for identifying those at risk of going missing from education. This policy should be read in conjunction with current legislation and guidance listed in Appendix A and B

The Policy is offered with the aim of providing a minimum standard of safety for children who are registered with West Berkshire schools, and who are or go missing from school, and give rise to concern that they may be classified as missing, whereabouts unknown.

The term “Children Missing from Education (CME)” refers to all children of compulsory school age who are neither on a school roll, not being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more).

The policy has been designed to support the Local Authority (LA) to meet its statutory duties relating to the provision of education and the safeguarding and welfare of children and should be used in conjunction with Berkshire Child Protection Procedures. It relates to current Legislation and Related Guidance (see Appendix A).

2. Why Do Children Go Missing From Education?

Children can fall out of education in a number of ways. They can:

- Fail to start appropriate provision and, therefore, never enter the educational system
- Cease to attend following a period of official exclusion from school
- Cease to attend because of unofficial exclusion
- Are withdrawn by their parents¹, sometimes after a dispute with the school
- Live a lifestyle which involves travelling, such as a Travellers, gypsies or migrant workers’ children
- Be from the mobile or transient population within the UK such as refugees, and asylum seekers
- Fail to complete a transition between providers, i.e. at a point of transfer between key stages; unable to find a school or not attempting to find a school following a house move and/or moving between Local Authority areas
- Becoming a missing family or child
- Become caught in a variety of complex barriers to education including bullying, family crises such as eviction, homelessness, bereavement or being a carer
- Cease to attend due to long-term medical conditions or disabilities
- At risk of sexual exploitation, including children who have been trafficked to, or within the UK
- At risk of ‘honour’ based violence including forced marriage – particularly 15-16 year old girls from Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi families
- At risk of female genital mutilation.

¹All references to include carers and a single parent.

3. Minimising the risk to children who are missing education

To limit the opportunity for children to go missing when they fall out of the education system West Berkshire Council has a range of processes and procedures including:-

- Procedures to identify and locate missing education through regular truancy sweeps.
- Monitoring and tracking children missing education
- Monitoring children educated by their parents
- Identifying children who are 'travelling' through liaison with Ethnic Minority and Traveller Advisory Service (EMTAS)
- Multi-agency agreement on procedures to be adopted when children go missing or run away from home or from the care of the Local Authority
- Policy/procedure for 'Hard to Place' pupils dealt with by our Pupil Placement Panel.
- Ongoing monitoring and tracking of children excluded from School
- Monitoring of pupils' transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3
- Regular truancy patrols in the community by Police and Education Welfare Officers.
- Monitoring of 'Looked After Children' through the work of the Life Chances Team
- Multi-agency meetings, Primary Pupil at Risk Panel (Primary PAR), to discuss children of concern e.g. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and vulnerable groups.

4. Notification Routes

The Education Welfare Service/Principal EWO manages the process of children known to be missing from education. The Assistant Education Welfare Officer maintains updates and tracks pupils on the West Berkshire missing pupil list.

The details of any pupil who has been out of education provision for four weeks or more should be given to the Assistant EWO. This is currently:

Carole Beswick-Lisle
West Street House
West Street
Newbury
RG14 1BZ

Tel: 01635 519797

Any statutory or voluntary agency from within West Berkshire should notify the Education Welfare Service Asst EWO, if they identify any such child. The preferred method of notification would be in writing using the form Appendix D (also email). Notifications may also come from many other sources including other Local Authorities and information from members of the public. CAFs may also be used.

5. Multi-Agency Meetings

Pupil at Risk (PAR) Panel

Meets regularly for primary age pupils in West Berkshire will discuss any of the cases where there is concern raised about a pupil missing education.

Pupil Placement Panel (PPP)

Helps to find school places for pupils who are hard to place or hard to keep in school.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Multi agency meetings are held regularly, usually fortnightly, and considers the best outcomes for those who are at risk of CSE.

6. Identifying Available Provision and Places

Pupils identified as needing a school place may be referred to the Pupil Placement Panel (PPP). This meeting is held at least fortnightly and places pupils in schools. Referrals are made and sent to the PPP co-ordinator based at West Street House.

7. EHE

Children withdrawn from school to be home educated by their parents. (Known as Elective Home Education in West Berkshire). Parents have a legal right to home educate their children but they must prove that the education is 'suitable' and 'efficient'. If the education is not satisfactory action is taken to ensure the child receives appropriate education. Guidance notes are available on the West Berkshire Council website: <http://info.westberks.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=27794>.

8. The Role of Schools

Schools use a range of strategies when a pupil is absent from school which usually starts with a first day contact. Other actions will include letters home, meetings and referral to EWS. In addition to referring patterns of absence below 80%, school staff should notify their named Education Welfare Officer if a pupil has 10 or more consecutive days of unauthorised absence from school. If there are particular concerns about the child a referral to the EWS will be much sooner than this. The EWS keeps a database on missing children. Pupils who are missing from school for 10 or more consecutive days and their whereabouts are unknown should be reported to the schools named EWO who will ensure that their details are added to this database and appropriate actions taken.

Transition times – Nursery, Reception, Yr 7

When a pupil is expected to join the school either at a normal time of starting (Nursery, Reception or Year 7) or at any time if a pupil does not arrive, the school should firstly try to make contact with the parents by telephone or letter. If after one week no contact has been made the school should contact Admissions Dept to find out if the child has been registered elsewhere. After two weeks the school should inform their Education Welfare Officer who will follow the procedure for 'missing pupils'. The Notification of a child without a school place form should be used, - Appendix D. The pupil should not be removed from roll until the Education Welfare Officer has ascertained the pupil's whereabouts and safety and has confirmed that the pupil is registered at another school or is being educated otherwise.

Pupils who disappear

If a pupil 'disappears' without any warning the Schools Designated Person for Safeguarding Children should notify the Education Welfare Service and the Local Authority Lead Officer for Child Protection. Where a pupil has a statement of SEN, the SEN team should be notified. Notifications should always be followed by written confirmation within 48 hours, - Appendix D. The Local Authority staff will follow the West Berkshire, Education Welfare Service guidance on Missing Pupils. Procedures for missing/lost pupils - Appendix B. See also Appendix C

Removal from the school roll

There are strict rules on when schools can delete pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 9 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 as amended (see Appendix C).

When a pupil is deleted from the Admission Register the school must clearly indicate the date and the reason for the removal from roll. In the event of a pupil moving to another known school the name of the school and the leaving date should be indicated in the releasing schools (SIMS) system. An electronic Common Transfer File of the pupils' records should be generated and sent to the new school within 15 days via s2s. (a secure DCFS database which holds details of missing pupils) If a child's name is removed from the school roll the school's named EWO must be informed.

In the event of a parent informing the school in writing that a child is being withdrawn to home education, the school should inform the Education Welfare Officer who will ensure that contact is made with the parents by letter, and the local procedures are put in place for monitoring the situation.

The school should inform their named Education Welfare Officer when a pupil has 10 or more day's consecutive unauthorised absence. The school should email the full details to their named EWO. This will follow a range of actions taken by school staff when a child is absent from school.

9. The use of s2s (a secure DfE database which holds details of missing pupils) and the Lost Pupil Database

If a school knows which school a pupil is moving to the school should ensure that the Common Transfer File is sent to the receiving school via s2s as quickly as possible. The new school may then request additional information e.g. Personal Education Plan. More information about this system can be found in Appendix B.

When a child who is known to the Education Welfare Service moves to another Local Authority, the Education Welfare Officer should contact the local Education Welfare Service to monitor the placement.

Reasonable enquiries by the Education Welfare Officer should include assessing a missing child's vulnerability. The Education Welfare Officer should make enquiries by visiting the child's home and asking for information in the community as appropriate and check with any agencies known to be working with the family.

If a child continues to be missing from school for four weeks and the Education Welfare Officer has exhausted enquiries and has been unable to locate the pupil and their family it is permissible for the child's name to be removed from the school roll and details of the child uploaded to the DfE Lost Pupil Database. Where there are concerns for a pupil a referral is made to CAAS (Contact, Advice and Assessment Service) following the school's safeguarding procedure.

When the Education Welfare Service or any other agency becomes aware the child has moved to another school, the service should ensure all relevant agencies are informed so that arrangements can be made to forward records from the previous schools.

10. Looked After Children

It is important that LAC are monitored carefully to ensure that they are in continued receipt of education. The LACES team monitor school attendance very closely. EWO are aware of LAC at their schools and discuss them at their consultation meetings. If a LAC is missing then the Education Welfare Service must be made aware that they are LAC so that Social Care staff can be informed.

11. The involvement of other agencies

All agencies who become aware of a pupil missing from Education should inform the Education Welfare Officer, so that the procedures for missing/lost pupils can be followed.

12. Child Protection Concerns

If there are any Child Protection concerns then the Child Protection Procedures must be followed. The Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures can be found at <http://berks.proceduresonline.com/index.htm> or email child@westberks.gov.uk.

Date Agreed: May 2015

Review Date: May 2018

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Chair of Governors

APPENDIX A

Legislation & Guidance

Legislation

There are various statutory duties upon LA's and parents (supplemented by guidance) relating to the provision of education and the safeguarding of the welfare of children and which may be relevant to children missing education. The principal provisions are as follows:

- Section 14(1) of the 1996 Education Act provides that a local education authority must make sure that there are sufficient schools for providing education in their area. For these purposes, the school must be sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide all pupils with the opportunity of appropriate education (s.14(2)). "Appropriate education" means, broadly education which is desirable in view of the pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes and the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school (s.14(3)).
- Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act provides that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Furthermore Section 437 (1) of the 1996 Education Act provides that if it appears to a local education authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they must service a notice in writing on the parent ("a school attendance order") requiring him to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education.
- Section 19 (1) of the 1996 Education Act requires every local education authority to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not be any for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them. For these purposes, "suitable" education is defined as "efficient education suitable to the age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs to the child (or young person) may have". (s19(6)).
- Moreover, section 19 (4A) of the 1996 Education Act provides:

"In determining what arrangement to make under subsection 91) in the case of any child or pupil, a local education authority shall have regard to guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State".

s.175 of the Education Act 2002 (which came into force on June 1 2004) imposes a duty upon LEAs and governing bodies to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. For these purposes, "functions" includes the power and duties of LEAs and governing bodies.

Related Guidance

From September 2007 schools have been required to arrange full-time education for pupils excluded for a fixed period from the sixth day of an exclusion and local authorities likewise from the sixth day of a permanent exclusion. This information can be found on the Department for Education website.

Guidance for LEAs for schools on monitoring attendance is contained within <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-behaviour-and-attendance-in-schools>

Safeguarding Children

The Children Act 2004 includes various provisions relating to safeguarding and promotion of welfare of children, including:

- A duty upon each children's services authority to promote co-operation between it and various other bodies to improve the well-being of children so far as relating to (amongst other things) education and training;
- A duty upon various bodies (including children's services authorities) to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and
- Provision for the Secretary of State to put into place information databases for the purposes or arrangements under s.175 of the Education Act 2002 or (a) and (b) above, and a frame work for the sharing of information contained in such databases for such purposes.

If there are any Child Protection/Safeguarding concerns then the Berkshire Local Safeguarding Children Boards – Child Protection Procedures 2014 must be followed. These can be found at www.westberks.gov.uk

APPENDIX B

West Berkshire EWS Procedures for missing/lost pupils

Transfers between schools within West Berkshire

If a pupil leaves a West Berkshire school and the parent indicates that he/she is transferring to another school or educational establishment within West Berkshire LA the original school should use the **Anycomms system** to transfer the pupil's Common Transfer file (hereinafter CTF file) to the new school. Schools are familiar with the Anycomms system but if further advice is needed they should contact the Education IT helpdesk on 01635 503040 or MIS@westberks.gov.uk. This transfer should take place within 15 days of the student leaving.

Transfers to schools outside West Berkshire

If a pupil leaves a West Berkshire school and the parent indicates that they will be starting at a school in a different local authority the pupil's CTF file should be sent to the new school using the **s2s system**. All schools have information about this system but if further advice is needed they should contact the Education Systems Data Officer or email jpuffett@westberks.gov.uk. This transfer should take place within 15 days of the student leaving.

Children starting on Elective Home Education, Children transferring to Independent Schools, Children who leave to go to schools outside England and Wales.

If a school has written confirmation that a pupil has left for any of the above reasons, the pupil's name should be removed from the school roll and their CTF file sent to the s2s Database using the code 'MMMMMMMM'. If need be these files can be recovered in the ways outlined below for the Lost Pupils Database.

The EWS should be informed of all pupils removed from a school roll who have not registered with another school.

Procedures to be followed where pupils leave a school and parent fails to provide information where they are going

1. Actions by school

Should a child leave a West Berkshire school without the school being advised by the parent of a forwarding address or which new school the child is to attend or when the child is believed to have gone on an extended holiday or when a child has not returned from an extended holiday when expected, the school should take the following steps:

- i) Promptly take reasonable steps to contact the parents, by writing to the last known address, and by writing to or telephoning additional contact persons to see if they have relevant information
- ii) Immediately notify the Social Services Referral and Assessment Team (0845 601 4726) should the child be on the Child Protection Register, or should there be child protection concerns.
- iii) Inform their Education Welfare Officer of any pupils who have 10 or more consecutive days of unauthorised absence

2. Actions by Education Welfare Officer (to be completed within 3 weeks)

EWO should make reasonable efforts to try to identify the child's current whereabouts. These will include

- Home visiting and contacting neighbours if appropriate.
- Contacting the extended family
- Checking West Berkshire Admissions and Capita One
- Checking West Berkshire Admissions and EMS
- Making enquiries with other Local Authorities where it is thought they may be.
- Making enquiries at the schools attended (or previously attended) by siblings or close relatives
- Checking with Housing Association/Authority and other agencies if appropriate
- Informing the Assistant Education Welfare Officer so information can be placed on s2s and further enquiries made.

3. If all these enquiries fail

After four weeks of non attendance the school should remove the child from its roll. The school should then create a **“lost pupil” common transfer file (CTF) with ‘XXXXXXXX’** as the destination. This CTF should be immediately uploaded onto the DCFS s2s secure site where it will be held in the **Lost Pupils Database**.

The Education Welfare Service should add the pupil's name to the West Berkshire EWS database for such children. This database is kept by the EWS SSO and reviewed and updated each term.

4. If child subsequently registers at a new school

If a school is contacted about a child whose file has previously been sent to the Lost Pupils Database

- **either** the school should create a new file and send this to the receiving school and request the LEA (Karen Pottinger, Principal Education Welfare Officer kpottinger@westberks.gov.uk) to download the CTF from the lost Pupils Database and delete it ;
- **or** the receiving school should request its own LEA to download the original CTF from the Lost Pupils Database

5. If a child joins a West Berkshire School without a CTF file and details are not provided of the previous school

The receiving school should contact the Carole Beswick-Lisle, Assistant EWO, cbeswicklisle@westberks.gov.uk and request a search of the Missing Pupils Database for a matching record using names, former names date of birth and gender etc.

Further information on the transfer of CTFs can be found on the Department for Education website.

APPENDIX C

Deletions from a schools Admission Register

The following are prescribed as the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age shall be deleted from the admission register –

- a. the school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order;
- b. the School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority;
- c. completion of compulsory school age;
- d. permanent exclusion;
- e. death of the pupil;
- f. transfer between schools; and
- g. pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
- h. failure to return for an extended family holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil;
- i. a medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age;
- j. in custody for more than four months;
- k. 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority on school have tried to locate the pupil; and
- l. left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.



APPENDIX D
CHILD MISSING EDUCATION (CME) FORM

Notification of a child
Without a School Place
Has been out of any education provision for 4 weeks or more
Has been missing from school for 10 or more consecutive days and
Whereabouts are unknown

Date _____

The child/young person named below is believed to be without a school place

Name _____ Gender F/M
DOB _____
Address _____

Is parent/carer aware of the notification? Yes / No

Details of person completing this form
Name _____

Address _____

Agency / School _____

Tel No _____

Email _____

Date last attended school _____

Name of school last attended _____

Please provide any additional information on a separate sheet

Once completed this form is to be returned to:

Education Welfare Service
Assistant Education Welfare Officer

West Berkshire Council
West Street House
West Street
Newbury
Berkshire
RG14 1BZ

Tel: 01635 519797
e-mail: cbeswicklisle@westberks.gov.uk