

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)

Guidance and procedures

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Definition of Children Missing from Education

The Department for Education (DfE) defines a child missing education as a child who is not on a school roll and has been out of education for more than 4 school weeks. The term Children Missing from Education (CME) therefore refers to all children of compulsory school age who are neither registered at a school nor educated otherwise (i.e. home educated or privately educated.)

This policy does not relate to children identified as '*Children Missing from Care*' and/or '*Children Missing from Home and Care*', as there are separate policies for these.

Why Children go Missing from Education

Children go missing from the education system for a number of reasons including the following:

- They fail to start school at Reception entry, hence never entering the authority's

system

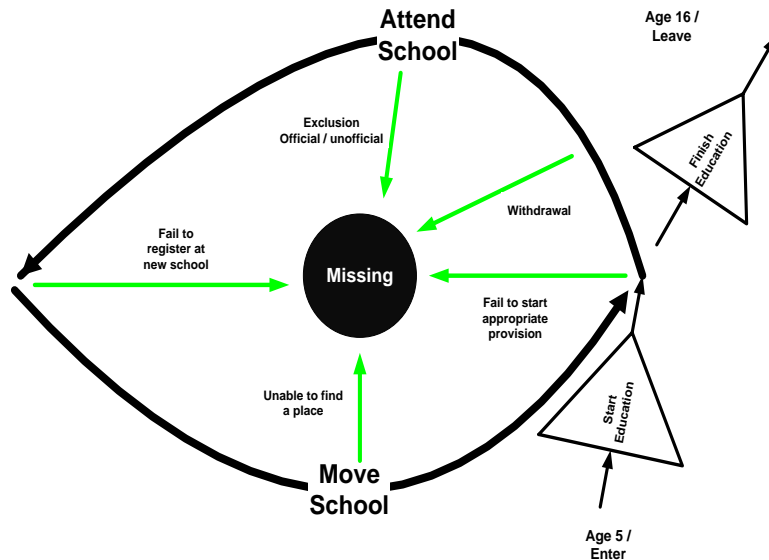
- They fail to complete transition at:
Key Stage 1 to 2 (Infants to juniors); or
Key Stage 2 to 3 (Primary to Secondary)
- Medical reasons or emotional health problems
- They are young carers
- They are withdrawn by parent/carer
- Parents do not inform us that they are being Elective Home Education
- Children who are in homeless families and living in temporary accommodation, bed and breakfast, or multiple occupancy
- Children living in women's hostel
- They transfer between local authorities and do not 'appear' in the receiving authority
- They may be from transient and Gypsy/Roma/Traveller families
- They may be transient families i.e. students who may have experienced high levels of mobility
- Arrival in the country via asylum, refugee status or as EU nationals
- Permanent excluded children who do not obtain a new school place
- Failure to attend alternative provision or work placements
- They cease to attend for an unknown reason
- Young people who have committed criminal offences or are at risk of anti-social behaviour
- Children entering or leaving independent schools sector
- Children at risk of sexual exploitation
- Children at risk of forced marriage.

It is to be noted that personal circumstances of the child or those of their families may contribute to the withdrawal process and the failure to make a transition, e.g. parents/carers escaping domestic violence, families moved quickly under the police witness protection scheme.

Children can go missing when they don't enter or fall out of the education system and there is no systematic process in place to:

- Identify those children
- Ensure that once identified they engage or re-engage with appropriate provision

The following flowchart illustrates the main ways in which a child can fall out of educational provision and hence become missing:



There are also other circumstances by which a child could go missing. Most cases are relatively minor whereby the child returns home quickly, or is not believed to be in any serious danger even if they are found or do not return. However, there are more serious cases, such as being abducted by his/her parent, abductions by a stranger or abduction that later results in homicide. It is therefore essential that when any child goes missing from education, the case is approached in a sensitive and structured manner.

Identifying and Engaging Stakeholders

In paragraph 17.97 of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report, Lord Laming recommended that: “Front line staff in each of the agencies which regularly come into contact with families with children must ensure that in each new contact, basic information about the child is recorded. This must include the child’s name, address, age, the name of the child’s primary carer, the child’s GP and the name of the child’s school if the child is of school age. Gaps in this information should be passed on to the relevant authority in accordance with local arrangements”.

It is necessary to raise awareness amongst all stakeholders about how to inform the local authority about children missing from education, in order to ensure that agencies e.g. health and housing apply this principle consistently. It is often the case that another agency is aware of the arrival or the existence of a child living in the area but not in education, before the local authority is aware.

Key Stakeholders in respect of Cumbria are:

Cumbrian Schools, Early Years providers, School Admissions Team, Learning Difficulties and Disability Team, Early Intervention Teams, Elective Home Education Advisor, Access to education, Children Looked After, Fostering and Adoption teams, Young People’s Centre and Children’s Centres, Pupil Referral Units, Alternative Education Providers, Independent Schools, Further Education Institutions, Identified Work Placements, Cumbria Safeguarding Hub Team, Child Protection Teams, Local Safeguarding Children Board, Authority and Private Housing Providers, Homeless Hostels, Domestic Refuges, Asylum and Refugee Support Groups, Accident and

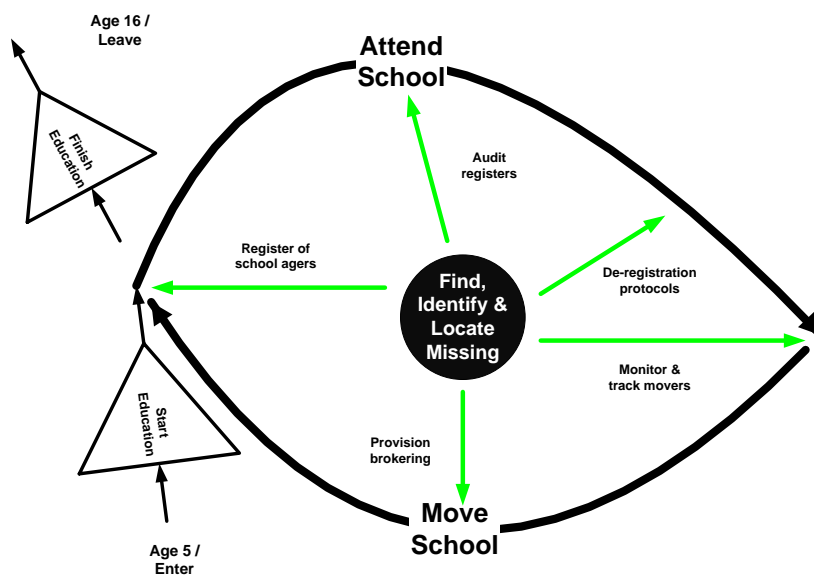
Emergency Departments, Various Health Services, Benefits Agency, Police, Youth Offending Service and Voluntary Organisations.

In order to ensure all children in Cumbria are receiving an education it will be necessary to regularly raise awareness with all stakeholders of the importance of missing children and remind agencies of the need to notify the local authority if they suspect a child is missing from education. This will identify children at risk who have entered Cumbria. This process will need to be repeated annually if not termly due to inevitable staffing changes.

Reducing the Risk of Children Going Missing from Education

This guidance also identifies procedures to reduce the risk of children falling out of the education system and going missing.

The following diagram shows how some of the key features can help reduce the likelihood that children will fall out of the system, and when they do, that they will go missing.



Action when New Pupils arrive in Cumbria

When pupils arrive in Cumbria all schools must inform the Local Authority of any direct incoming casual/in-year, admission/transfer applications, in order that they can be registered and monitored through the School Admissions system. In the case of a child with Education Health Care Plan where the parent/carer makes direct contact with the Learning Difficulties and Disabilities Team, they will advise the School Admissions Team of the formal request in order that the application can be logged through the School Admissions Team statistics and be entered onto the ONE. The formal process of consultation with the preferred school as set out in the SEN Code of Practice will be followed.

Once on the school's admission register all receiving schools must complete and upload the child's Common File transfer (CTF) from the S2S DFE secure website this will help the authorities track child's admission into school.

Action when Parent/Carer informs that Pupils are leaving current Cumbrian Schools to a known destination and identified education provision.

When a pupil leaves a Cumbrian school/education provider the school/provider, the statutory requirements for schools is to:

- (1) Inform the Authority by completing the Gains and Losses sheet (destination known) or the CME 1 referral if (destination unknown).
- (2) Upload the pupils file to the DFE School 2 School (S2S) secure website.
- (3) Check the S2S website to ensure that the file has been downloaded by the receiving school.

If it is not downloaded within 2 school days, the school should make enquiries as to the whereabouts of the family. If on enquiry, the pupil is not located a referral should be made to the Access & Inclusion Officer(CME) in your area who is based in the Access & Inclusion Team.

If the parent/carer has elected to home educate the child, the school must inform the Access & Inclusion Business Administrator on 01946 506200, sending a copy of the letter of withdrawal from the parent.

The school should still inform Children's Service in writing of their intention to remove the child from roll and the date that will happen. Further information can be found in Cumbria Children's Services Elective Home Education in Cumbria Information for Young People, Parents and Carers. See

<http://www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/schoolsandlearning/lis/homeed.asp>

School Enquiries and Referrals to Access & Inclusion Officers (CME)

It is the responsibility of all schools to check if pupils have made transitions and if they have not arrived to ensure their whereabouts is established.

- Child does not appear at entry to Reception.
- Child does not appear at the allocated school at transition from Infant to Junior School (Key Stage 1 to 2) or Primary to Secondary School (Key Stage 2 to 3).
- Child does not appear at the allocated school following casual/in-year admission or transfer.

If a child fails to make a transition or fails to arrive at school then the school should contact their Access & Inclusion Officer (CME), complete CME1 referral form, within 10 days of non arrival or SOONER if there are ANY safeguard concerns. The Access & Inclusion Officer (CME) will follow the "Missing Pupils procedures".

It is the responsibility of all schools to check if pupils have made transitions and if they have not arrived to ensure there whereabouts is established.

Other Referrals to the Access & Inclusion Officers (CME)

- Children not attending alternative provision (which is their only provision.)
- Children permanently excluded from school that have moved to Cumbria and fail to take a place at the Pupil Referral Unit or alternative school or provision.
- Children removed from a school roll who have no other provision in place and remain in the area
- Children found on an Attendance Awareness raising event who have no education in place.
- Children placed in the domestic refuge from outside of the area who have no provision.
- Children educated other than at school i.e. elective home educated, where monitoring contact is lost or the education provision is deemed to be inappropriate. (Refer to Elective Home Education in Cumbria September 2015).

Children who are found in Cumbria

It is the responsibility of all officers in the Local Authority to notify the Access & Inclusion Officer (CME), of any information received from another authority or agency regarding a child who may be missing from education, who it is believed is residing in Cumbria.

An enquiry to the Access & Inclusion Officer (CME) can come from other partner agencies or voluntary organisation or from a member of the public. A CME 1 form ([Appendix 1](#)) will be completed. www.cumbria.gov.uk follow link for children missing education.

The Access & Inclusion Officer (CME) will take the following action if necessary;

1. Check with School Admissions team
2. Check will housing associations/ estate agents and other housing providers
3. Home visit/ visit locality
4. Check ICS and social care records
5. Check with Youth offending team
6. Check with safe houses and refuges in the area
7. Seek out local knowledge i.e. community groups
8. Input information onto the ONE system
9. Contact health /police other partner agencies
10. Carry out any investigations which may ascertain the families whereabouts
11. Contact previous schools and authorities
12. Contact other area in the country and make enquiries in Scotland to locate children missing from Cumbria.
13. A check of the School 2 School website will be made by the S2S administrator Linda Hodgson 01946 506200 for all enquiries in Cumbria and she will respond to inquiries and messages on the S2S site, advising CME Officers as required.

If the pupil cannot be traced and there are concerns about the child's welfare then police, social care and the child benefit service will be contacted..

Depending on the information received from other agencies, the case may need further investigation and may need further monitoring.

Once this information has been placed on the Out of Provision/ Missing Children Database, a referral will be made to the Access & Inclusion Officer (CME) in the locality to undertake further investigation.

If the child is traced, the officer will liaise with the parent/carer and the School Admissions team to secure educational provision.

If the child is not traced within two months, the Access & Inclusion Officer (CME) will advise the S2S administrator using a CME2 form (Appendix 2) the child will then be uploaded to the S2S site as "Lost". S2S Administrator will advise the informant.

See Cumbria Missing Pupil Procedure (Appendix 3)

Asylum Seekers

Families who have travelled to the county from outside the UK need to have appropriate documentation to be able to remain here. The first professional to come into contact with the family should request to see the passport for the child and the leave to stay document or application. The document should be photocopied and the numbers noted. If there are concerns about the validity of the documentation or concerns regarding the information received then contact should be made to the Home Office, Asylum Team.

Support for the families can be accessed from the Asylum Support Customer Contact Centre on 03001 232241

<mailto:public.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk>

See Flow Chart Enquiries to Children Missing Education - Appendix 4.

There are 4 Access & Inclusion Officers (CME) based in the Local Authority Access & Inclusion Team who can be contacted.

Carlisle

Isobel Graham
Children's Services
Cumbria House
117 Bothergate
CARLISLE
CA1 1RZ
isobel.graham@cumbria.gov.uk
Tel: 01228 221430

Allerdale and Copeland

Janice Ogilvie
Children's Services
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Whitehaven.
Cumbria,
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Furness

Margaret Williams
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4th Floor Craven House
Michaelson Road
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Tel: 01229 407418

East and South Lakeland

Laura FitzGerald-Park
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South Lakeland House
Lowther Street
Kendal
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laura.fitzgerald-park@cumbria.gov.uk
Tel: 01539713457