



## **Safeguarding response to children who go missing in education**

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At Synergy Schools we understand all children, regardless of age, ability or special educational needs, are entitled to an appropriate and full-time education. However, there are many factors in the life of a child or that of their family that can affect school attendance.

Children missing education (CME) is defined as those who are of a compulsory school age, but are either not registered at a school or else not receiving suitable education in place of a school setting.

CME may be at a significant risk of:

- not meeting their academic potential and underachieving
- becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training) in later life
- being victims of harm, abuse or exploitation
- involvement in criminal or gang-related activity.

There is also a higher proportion of children recorded as missing education when there is a link to poverty, deprivation or involvement with social services.

Within our federation of schools, we have an understanding of the factors that affect CME and the roles and responsibilities of professionals ensuring the best outcomes for children and young people.

### **Children especially at risk of missing education**

There may be many reasons for a child missing education, it is important to consider the circumstances of individual cases. We are aware some factors may place a child at higher risk, and we recognise this within our monitoring procedures. Children at higher risk include:

- children at risk of abuse or neglect
- children of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller (GRT) families
- children of service personnel
- children who go missing or run away from home or care
- children who are supervised by the Youth Justice System
- children of new migrant families



## Roles and responsibilities

Within our schools we recognise that we all play a part in supporting CME and work closely with parents and other agencies to fulfil our responsibility.

Parents have a responsibility to:

- ensure that their children, of school age, are receiving a suitable full-time education
- notify a school where a decision is made to home-educate a child
- if home educating a child with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, provide suitable education that meets the special educational needs of the child.

Schools have a responsibility to:

- follow their safeguarding duty in promoting the welfare of children and investigating any unexplained absences
- maintain an accurate register of student admissions and enter students onto it on the date agreed for them to attend the school
- notify the local authority within five days of adding a child's name to the admission register and provide the information held on the register about the child
- where a child fails to attend school on the agreed date, make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child and consider notifying the local authority
- monitor student attendance through daily registers and take steps to address poor attendance
- inform the local authority of any students that fail to attend school regularly, or miss 10 school days or more without permission
- remove a child from the admission register where they have not returned to school after 10 days following an authorised absence, or is absent for 20 consecutive days without authorisation and reasonable joint enquiries between the school and local authority have failed to establish the child's whereabouts
- inform the local authority when a child's name is going to be removed from the admission register for any of the grounds set-out in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006)
- arrange full-time education for students who are excluded, from the sixth day of fixed-term exclusion.

Local authorities have a responsibility to:

- have arrangements in place to be able to identify children in the area who are not registered at a school or being otherwise suitably educated
- act promptly to support a child who is not in suitable education to return to full-time education or access an alternative provision
- appoint a person whom schools and other agencies can contact to make a referral about a child who is missing education
- consider the reasons for CME and how to promote effective safeguarding of children
- have arrangements for sharing information with other agencies to ensure effective joint working and contribute to wider work designed to improve outcomes of children
- work with schools to make reasonable joint enquiries into the whereabouts of a child who is missing from education

- make a referral to children’s social care (and the police where it is suspected that a crime has been committed) where there is a concern for a child’s welfare.

### **At Synergy Schools we follow this procedure when a child is missing from education**

At Synergy Schools we follow the North Yorkshire Council Children Missing in Education Protocol. Our school procedure is as follows.

- Class teacher informs School Office (daily checks carried out on the attendance register)
- School Office makes contact with the child’s parents/ carers to find out the reason for absence
- Reason for absence is then reported on school information system (e.g. ScholarPack)
- School Office informs class teacher of reason
- If reason for absence is a concern (e.g. persistent absentee/ poor attendance record or potential safeguarding concern), or School Office is unable to make contact with the parents/carers, School Office and Class teacher will inform either the Head of School, the Executive Headteacher or a member of the senior Leadership Team. They will then choose the appropriate course of action with guidance from the NYCC CME Protocol.

### **Elective home education**

Parents have a right, under Section 7 of the Education Act (1996), to home-educate their child, so long as it is suitable to their age, ability and needs. Parents should notify the school when they are choosing to home-educate their child. This should normally be in writing and the school must delete the child’s name from the admission register and inform the local authority.

### **When there is a concern**

Information sharing between parents, school, the community, and local authority is crucial to ensure that children are kept safe and are receiving the education they are entitled to. When we are concerned about a child missing from education, we will notify the NYC CME Co-ordinator:

01609 532477

[CME.Coordinator@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:CME.Coordinator@northyorks.gov.uk)

### **Further Resources**

NYC Protocol - [Link](#)

One Minute Guide - [Link](#)

Missing Child Procedures – NYES Hands Service - [Link](#)

[NYSCP \(safeguardingchildren.co.uk\)](http://www.nyscp.org.uk)

**Reviewed March 2024 – No changes advised by NYC**

