



Directorate of  
Children and Families

# **Children Missing Education Process**

## Document Identification and Versioning

Document Reference	Reviewed & Updated By	Date	Comments
1.0	Andrew Joyce	July 2016	New Process
1.1	Frances Golightly	June 2017	Annual Review
1.2	Angela Henderson	Sept 2020	Review

## **Children Missing Education (CME) Process**

The CME Process will be followed by the CME Officer once a CME referral is received by the local authority. The CME Process has been designed and developed in line with the guidance for local authorities to identify children not receiving education.

This process is in line with the agreed protocol developed by the North East Regional CME Forum in order that processes are regionally consistent.

### **Step 1 – Receive CME Notification**

Enabling factors:

- Dedicated officer to whom notifications are made
- Role of CME Officer established with clear responsibilities
- Common referral process agreed with key stakeholders
- Stakeholders are aware of the notification process.

In line with the principles of the local authority's CME Policy it is the responsibility of all agencies to alert the CME Officer where there is a concern that a child is not on a school roll or receiving education through an alternative provider.

Information about children not receiving education can be received from officers within the local authority, other agencies, the general public and other local authorities outside of the Redcar & Cleveland area.

A common referral process has been agreed with stakeholders. A single point of contact has been established within the local authority area to ensure data is collated and monitored centrally. CME referrals can be made by completing and submitting the Children Missing Education Referral Form, or by phone or email to the CME Officer. Referrals can be made by Council staff, representatives of other organisations or by members of the public.

### **Step 2 – Log details onto the CME Database**

Enabling factors:

- CME database on Capita One with clear protocols for access by appropriate professionals
- Regular monitoring of the status of children on the database.

When the CME Officer receives a CME notification the details of the child and family will be entered onto the database. This will include the reason for the referral and the date of referral. Where there are gaps in the information provided, further enquires will be made by contacting the referring agency. Information held on the database will be updated on a regular basis. All referrals will be held on the CME database until the child is found and successfully re-engaged in education. The CME Officer will send an acknowledgment letter to the referring agency once enquiries are complete. If

enquiries are not completed within a 10 day period the referring agency will receive a progress update.

### **Step 3 – Investigate Child’s Educational Status**

Enabling factors:

- Access to school rolls
- Access to Elective Home Education database
- Access to other relevant centrally held databases, such as Capita One

The CME Officer will investigate the referral and establish if the child is / or has been previously registered at a school in Redcar & Cleveland. If during the investigation process the CME Officer ascertains that the child is already registered at a school but there are concerns around attendance, the CME Officer will make a referral to the Attendance & Welfare Service and established attendance procedures will be followed.

The CME Officer will have access to a number of centrally-held databases to support the enquiry process and if there is no evidence of the child receiving education, contact with will be made with parents as a matter of urgency.

### **Step 4 – Locate Child and Parents**

Enabling factors:

- Effective collaboration between partners
- Local information sharing protocols agreed with partners.

In order to locate children believed to be missing education, the CME Officer will work collaboratively with schools, services and agencies and share information in line with locally agreed information sharing protocols. Other agencies may become aware, before the local authority, of the arrival or existence of a child missing education. The CME Officer will raise awareness amongst partner agencies about how to notify the local authority of such children according to the agreed CME procedures.

Where appropriate the CME Officer will liaise with the following:

- Children’s Social Care
- Admissions Team
- Routes to Employment
- Inclusion Team
- Health/PCT
- Choice Advice Service
- Police
- Attendance & Welfare Service
- Housing
- Accident & Emergency
- SEN Case Worker
- Other Local Authorities
- Health Visitors

In the first instance the CME Officer will contact parents by telephone; enquires may be followed up by a home visit if necessary through liaison with Choice Adviser or Attendance & Welfare Service.

## **Step 5 – Determine Child’s Needs**

Enabling factors:

- Initial assessment of need
- Early Help Assessment (EHA) (formerly known as the Common Assessment Framework or CAF)
- Access to specialist services.

The home visit will enable officers to establish communication with the child and family, check the home circumstances and offer advice, guidance and support to parents. The outcome of the home visit may be straightforward, whereby a referral is made directly to the Admissions Team to secure a placement through the normal admissions arrangements.

## **Step 6 – Identify and Access Available Provision**

Enabling factors:

- Access to information about availability of school places
- Directory of alternative provision
- In-Year Fair Access Protocol.

Once the initial assessment is complete and if mainstream education is deemed to be appropriate, the CME Officer will refer the case to School Admissions to determine whether the child will be re-integrated under normal admission arrangements or through the In-Year Fair Access Protocol.

The CME Officer will work closely with the Admissions Team and the Choice Adviser to secure a school place under normal admission arrangements if appropriate.

## **Step 7 – Track and Reconcile Movements**

Enabling factors:

- Effective monitoring at transition from primary to secondary school
- Improved use of S2S and Lost Pupil Database by schools
- Effective sharing of information between LAs.
- Weekly team/caseload meetings

The local authority’s Choice Advice Service works closely with the Admissions Team and primary schools to ensure all children have been allocated a primary and secondary school place and therefore do not drop out of education at this key transition points. The Choice Adviser will pursue parents of Nursery and Year 6 pupils for whom the Admissions Team do not receive a timely application.

The CME Officer and the Attendance and Welfare Team continue to support schools and will work jointly to ensure schools are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to missing/lost pupils and promote the use of the central S2S and Lost Pupil Databases.

If a child is believed to be living or attending school in another local authority, the CME Officer will contact the CME lead in the relevant local authority to determine whether the child has been taken on roll elsewhere. Firm procedures are now in place to ensure that children who move to other authorities are monitored carefully until the CME Officer is satisfied that they are registered at a new school.

Officers report on current CME cases each week in weekly team meetings. Officers follow up this weekly meeting with discussions with School Admissions and Attendance Welfare to update and review enquiries.

A further weekly caseload meeting is held with all Inclusion Team officers as well as a representative from SEN and Education Safeguarding officer. All vulnerable pupils are discussed at this meeting (exclusions, CME, EHE) and officers allocated where appropriate. These close links provide an opportunity for wider conversations across other teams and enables officers to identify best practice or address concerns, including escalating if necessary.

Briefing notes are prepared each term for AD of Education and Skills so that there is scrutiny and oversight of complex cases.

### **COVID response:**

All schools continued to complete weekly returns. They reported some movement of families and this monitored in line with procedures. Attendance and Welfare continued with home visits

### **To Develop:**

Any long-term CME pupils are reported at VEMT.

Police referral system when all other avenues have been explored