



**THOMAS ALLEYNES HIGH SCHOOL  
UTTOXETER**

## **Thomas Alleyne's High School**

### **Children who go missing in education policy**

Approved/reviewed by	
Learning & Standards September 2021	
Date of next review	September 2022

## **Introduction**

Children missing education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 requires that all staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding and these should be explained to them as part of staff induction. This should include the safeguarding response to children who go missing from education. This will be included in the safeguarding professional development (CPD) plan for staff for the academic year and is part of the Safeguarding level 1 training.

[Keeping children safe in education 2021 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/)

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a key duty on local authorities and requires effective joint working between agencies and professionals. When a child goes missing or runs away they are at risk. Safeguarding children therefore includes protecting them from this risk. Local authorities are responsible for protecting children whether they go missing from their family home or from local authority care.

All professionals working with children, as well as the wider community can help by remaining vigilant to children's safety and wellbeing. The law states that all children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing from education, particularly persistently, can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation. It is important the school's response to children missing from education supports identifying such abuse and also helps prevent the risk of them going missing in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as on a child in need or child protection plan, or as a looked after child), where going missing from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

[Children missing education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education)

The DFE defines CME as:

'All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in an alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period (usually four weeks or more)

## **Children with missing episodes from home/care**

- Any Child may benefit from Early Help, but all school and college staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for a child who frequently missing/goes missing from care or from home.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure all staff are aware of the early help process and understand their role in it. For our district earliest help is accessed via the referral pathway to Harvey Girls. Parental consent is needed. For the next tier, the Early Help Team referral can be made by school. Again, parental consent is needed for this tier of help.
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- *Definition from statutory guidance: Missing child:* a child reported as missing to the police by their family or carers.
- Since April 2013 police forces have been rolling out new definitions of ‘missing’ and ‘absent’ in relation to children and adults reported as missing to the police. These are:
  - *missing:* anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another; and
  - *absent:* a person not at a place where they are expected or required to be. The police classification of a person as ‘missing’ or ‘absent’ will be based on on-going risk assessment.
- In all cases of a known missing episode, we will call first response (0800 13 13 126) if no social worker is working with the family or the social worker. Each episode and correspondence will be added to MyConcern by the DSL or delegated person by the DSL.
- Where relevant (i.e. there is an associated risk of CSE or CCE), MACE VMAP matrices will be completed by the DSL and submitted to the VMAP team to support intelligence gathering. These will also be uploaded to MyConcern.
- Safe and well checks are carried out by the police as soon as possible after a child reported as missing has been found. (as per statutory guidance). However, to support a pupil’s well-being, the DSL or delegated person by the DSL will support the pupil in school and do a well-being meeting in school. Following this any necessary multi-agency information sharing may be required and in all cases, the DSL will share this at the safeguarding board to support contextualised safeguarding.

### **Children missing in Education**

- We will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child’s whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.
- We will monitor pupils’ attendance through their daily register and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils’ poor attendance is referred to the local authority. Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.
- When a child is expected to join a school and does not arrive, for the first 10 school days the school will make our own enquiries. This should include trying to contact the parents/carers by telephone or letter, and we will also contact the School Admissions Team to establish if the child has been registered elsewhere.
- We have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this we will investigate any unexplained absences.
- For absence of between 10 and 20 school days, we will investigate as per the list below to establish the reason for the unknown absence and lack of information:

As per the statutory guidance for Children Missing in Education

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550416/Children\\_Missing\\_Education\\_-\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

- When the whereabouts of a child is unclear or unknown, it is reasonable to expect that the local authority and the school will complete and record one or more of the following actions:
  - a. make contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours using known contact details;
  - b. check local databases within the local authority;

- c. check Key to Success or school2school (s2s) systems;
  - d. follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies e.g. those of housing providers, school admissions, health services, police, refuge, Youth Justice Services, children's social care, and HMRC;
  - e. check with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and/or the Border Force;
  - f. check with agencies known to be involved with family;
  - g. check with local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known;
  - h. check with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved;
  - i. check with the local authority where the child lives, if different from where the school is;
  - j. in the case of children of Service Personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS); and
  - k. home visit(s) made by appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessment and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s) and relatives.
- The guidance states that this list is not exhaustive or prescriptive, and so local authorities and schools should treat each case on its individual merits and use their judgement, ensuring they have taken into account all of the facts of the case. It should be recognised that the type of reasonable enquiries required to try to locate a child will differ from case to case and additional enquiries to those suggested in this section may be necessary.
- We would use our educational welfare officers at VIPEducation to support our enquiries.
- The DFE documents Keeping "Children Safe in Education 2018" and "Working Together to Safeguard Children - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children", originally published in March 2010, and revised in 2013, 2015 and 2018 says:
  - "There is a Children Missing Education (CME) named point of contact in every Local Authority. Every practitioner working with a child has a responsibility to inform their CME contact if they know or suspect that a child is not receiving education. To help local agencies and professionals find children who are missing from education and identify those that are at risk of going missing from education, guidance was issued in July 2004, identifying and maintaining contact with children missing, or at risk of going missing, from education."
- If after 20 school days (four school weeks) the child has not been located, the school will complete and submit a CME Referral Form to [cme.referrals@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:cme.referrals@staffordshire.gov.uk) and it is at this point that the Headteacher should take the child off the school roll. School will contact:
  - Children Missing Education, Staffordshire County Council, Families First, Faraday Road, Stafford ST16 3NQ Telephone: 01785 278999 or 895966  
Email: [cme.referrals@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:cme.referrals@staffordshire.gov.uk)
- Dependent on the level of concern, the Education Safeguarding Advice Service can also be consulted by emailing [esas@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:esas@staffordshire.gov.uk) or telephoning 0800 13 13 126 (option 3).
- When a child is deleted from the school's admissions register, we will update their school management information system and clearly indicate the date and the reason for removal from roll. On the "i" tab next to "Reason for Leaving" the new school's name should be given together with its seven-digit school identifier number (schools in England and Wales) or the school name and locality (schools in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man, Channel Islands, Gibraltar or Armed Forces Schools abroad). We will refer to this guidance (see [CME webpage](#)) and notify the LA accordingly depending on the reason.
- Where a pupil leaves a school without a known destination, (which will have been referred to CME as above) the school should also upload the child's records to the secure area of s2s known as the Lost Pupils Database. Any school then admitting the child without previous school history can request their LA to search the Lost Pupils Database for the child's records.

- The Common Transfer File must also be completed, and coded XXXXXXX (destination unknown) or MMMMMMM (moved to independent sector or out of England and Wales).

**References:**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/307867/Statutory\\_Guidance\\_-\\_Missing\\_from\\_care\\_3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care_3.pdf)

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550416/Children\\_Missing\\_Education\\_-\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/Education-welfare/Children-missing-from-education-policy.aspx>

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Education/Education-welfare/Children-missing-from-education.aspx>

[Keeping children safe in education 2021 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)