

North Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children Board

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

ADOPTED & IMPLEMENTED BY BUSHFIELD ROAD INFANT SCHOOL

Taken from the North Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures

Identifying, Engaging and Tracking Children Missing from Education (CME)

1. Policy

1.1 Introduction

- The Children Missing from Education Policy and Procedures (CME) document is intended to inform LA officers, schools, governing bodies and other involved agencies about the policy and procedures to be followed in order to prevent children from going ‗missing from education'. It should be read in conjunction with LA advice and guidance on school attendance issues and particularly the Children and Young People's Plan, Behaviour Support Plan, the North Lincolnshire Guidance and Procedures for Safeguarding Children and the local Preventative Strategy.
- In the context of ‗Every Child Matters' and the Children Act 2004 North Lincolnshire LA acknowledges that ―education protects‖ and that it is a key responsibility of the LA and its schools to safeguard all the children resident in North Lincolnshire or attending its schools. The best way for the LA and its schools to ensure the welfare of all children is to ensure that they are all on a school roll and that children do not ‗slip' off school rolls and become ‗missing'.
- CME supports the Authority to fulfil its obligations in relation to S175 of the Education Act 2002. This imposed a duty upon Children's Services Authorities and governing bodies to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- All Local Authorities are required to make arrangements to enable them to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identities of children living in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. ‗Suitable education' is defined as ‗efficient, full-time education suitable to her/his age, aptitude and to any special needs the child may have'. Children who are not receiving a suitable education either through school, alternative provision or home education are often referred to as children who are ‗missing education'. (‗Suitable' education is defined in the revised Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, DCSF, 2009. www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-andpractice/IG002002).
- The Children Act 2004 (notably Sections 10 and 11) includes various provisions relating to safeguarding and promotion of welfare of children. LAs and their partners should position the duty of identifying and tracking children in education with effective enquiry systems as an integral part of their governance and strategic planning.

- More information about the implications of the Children Act 2004 can be found on the Every Child Matters website www.everychildmatters.gov.uk. This Act also places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and to share information. This principle underpins this policy and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure children are safely on school rolls.
- Clause 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (from February 2007) places a new statutory duty on local authorities for them to make arrangements to establish the identities of children missing from education in their area.
- This policy and procedures document supports and is a key part of North Lincolnshire's overarching multi-agency document – _Missing Children'.

1.2 Rationale

North Lincolnshire LA will embrace its statutory responsibilities by ensuring:

- That all pupils who go missing or are lost from schools in North Lincolnshire and move to other areas are speedily located and children are adequately safeguarded in the process
- All departments and agencies will work together and share information regarding children who may be missing education
- Support is given to other LAs to locate their own missing/ lost pupils.
- The Local Authority supports and encourages all independent and nonmaintained schools to notify the LA when children of compulsory school age leave the roll, and their destination wherever possible (the Singleton Report, 2009 (Rec. 4)).

This is best achieved if its procedures are underpinned by the relevant **statutory requirements** in relation to missing/lost pupils; that they interconnect with DfE's central s2s (school-to-school) Lost Pupils Database and are consistent with and support local child best practice in safeguarding children. To support this the school's designated Child Protection Co-ordinator should be made aware of any _children missing' to ensure that the procedures have been adhered to and the school's lead on attendance (acting for the Head Teacher) ensures that the electronic transfer of information has been undertaken.

The LA will therefore ensure that all North Lincolnshire schools:

- Are made fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to missing/lost pupils; and

- Are properly supported to meet these responsibilities.

The LA will closely monitor the operation of its missing/lost children procedures in order to ensure best practice with regard to safeguarding children. In addition, the Education Welfare Service will ensure attendance at regional meetings in order to exchange and develop good practice with neighbouring local authorities and address national guidance. Multi-agency meetings, to address both strategic and practice issues will meet on a regular basis.

2. North Lincolnshire CME Procedures (Annex D contains relevant forms)

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2.1 Children Missing From Education

The school should promptly take reasonable steps to contact the parents when a child leaves a North Lincolnshire school:

- without the school being advised by the parent which new school the child is to attend;
- 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

If the child has a Child Protection Plan (or has been the subject of a Child in Need plan) the school/Education Welfare Service must inform the referral management team at Children's Social Services.

Detail

- When a child is expected to join the school either at a normal time of starting (eg Nursery, Reception, Infant to Junior or Year 7) or at any time and s/he does not arrive the school should firstly try to make contact with the parents by phone or letter.

- If after **one week** no contact has been made the school should contact the **LA Admissions Team** to find out if the child had been registered

elsewhere. If the child's whereabouts cannot be determined having completed the checklist (Form CME1), this referral should be sent to the **Education Welfare Service** no later than the **tenth day of absence**. The Service will follow the procedures for 'missing' pupils.

- The pupil **should not be removed from roll** until the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) has ascertained the pupil's whereabouts and safety and has confirmed that the pupil is registered at another school or is being educated otherwise. Only then will the Education Welfare Officer confirm that the child can be removed from roll.
- If a pupil is absent for a prolonged period or fails to return from a holiday the school should follow the normal procedures for investigating pupil absence (ie telephone calls, letters, invitations to meetings at the school etc). If the child does not return to school the matter should be referred to the Education Welfare Service who will follow the procedures for 'missing pupils'. Remember, the pupil **should not be removed from roll** until the EWO agrees.
- If a pupil 'disappears' without any warning the school should immediately notify the **Education Welfare Service**. However, certain steps can be taken before this stage. A 'good practice guide' is provided at the end of these procedures. (**See Annex C)**
- There are strict rules on when schools can delete pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 1996 as amended. **See Annex B** – Deletions from Admissions Register.
- 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 school the name of the school should be indicated and the pupil's records should be sent to the new school **within 15 days.** Before a child's name is removed from the school roll the LA must be informed, that is, the school's assigned Education Welfare Officer.
- In order to protect vulnerable children and in line with best practice requirements **pupils should not be removed from the school roll until they are confirmed to have been admitted to a new school or advised to do so by the EWO. In the case of particularly vulnerable pupils the school should consider keeping the pupil on roll while investigations continue to be progressed.**

2.2 Removal from the school roll

Education at Home

In the event of a parent informing the school that s/he is removing the child to educate him/her at home the Principal Education Welfare Strategic Manager should be informed. The name will then be placed on the database and arrangements for the LA to satisfy itself that the education being provided is ‗suitable, efficient and full-time' in accordance with the Elective Home Education procedures. The LA is also mindful of the Ofsted Report 2010 relating to Local Authorities and Home Education (North Lincs. Policy and Procedures for Elective Home Education)

Special Needs Children in Special Schools

Although regulation 8(1)(d) effectively allows deregistration on demand, it does not apply to children who have been placed by the LA in special schools. Regulation 8(2) provided that in this situation a child cannot be deregistered without the LAs consent. This restriction is meant to protect the interests of more vulnerable children by ensuring that their special needs are met.

Detail

- If the pupil has moved or transferred and is on roll at another school the Admissions Team must be informed
- If the pupil is to be removed from roll for any other reason the Education Welfare Officer must be informed of the proposed deletion and given time to make appropriate enquiries about the child's whereabouts
- Pregnancy is not a reason for a pupil to be removed from the school roll. Schools, in liaison with their assigned Education Welfare Officer, must investigate fully all cases of non-attendance at school and should never remove a pupil from roll until this has been done. The EWO will advise when removal is appropriate
- Schools will need to monitor all deletions from school rolls by race, ethnicity, gender, SEN and disability to ensure that it is fulfilling its obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001)
- If a school learns of a school aged pupil without a school place (eg a sibling or friend of a current pupil, or a child on its waiting list) the school must inform the LA's Admissions Team

- If a pupil is a resident of another Local Authority it is the school's responsibility to notify the _home' Authority of any of the circumstances above
- Removal from roll for any reason other than those specified above is **illegal**
- Link Inspectors and Ofsted will monitor schools' compliance with legal requirements. As a result of the Children Act 2004 Ofsted has become more rigorous in this area and compliance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006 will form part Children's Services inspections. This is supported by the revised DCSF guidance (2009) for LAs to identify children not receiving a suitable education.

2.3 The Use of S2S and the Lost Pupil Database

If a school knows which school a pupil is moving to they should ensure that the Common Transfer File (CTF) is sent to the receiving school via S2S as quickly as possible. The new school may then apply for the full school record

Detail

- If the new school is unknown the CTF should be coded XXXXXXX (destination unknown) or MMMMMMM (moved to Independent Sector or out of country including Scotland) and uploaded onto S2S in the normal way. These records are then stored in a secure area of S2S known as the Lost Pupil Database. If a CTF file is rejected schools should recode the file MMMMMMM
- Schools should check S2S regularly to look for the CTF's of new pupils which have been sent to them. If a new pupil is admitted and the CTF is not available schools should request that the LA CMISS team manager search the Lost Pupil Database for the pupil's CTF which can then be forwarded to the school. Until a child/young person is located the local authority should maintain a record of their details
- Information and training on S2S and the LPD is available from the CMISS team. Schools can look up information on schools in England by using the DfE database http://www.edubase.gov.uk/EstablishmentFind.aspx. This will give the address and telephone number of the school as well as its DfE number.

Whenever a pupil joins or leaves a school then a common transfer file must accompany him/her.

2.4 Excluded Pupils

The Principal Officer (Schools) must be informed of all exclusions from school (both permanent and fixed term). It is expected that the —Improving Behaviour and Attendance Guidance on Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units
2008ll will be followed unless there is good reason to depart from it.

Detail

- From September 2007 regulations made under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 require LAs to ensure that suitable full-time education is made available to permanently excluded pupils from the sixth school day of exclusion. Schools are required to arrange fulltime education from the sixth school day of fixed period exclusion. Schools which have been part of the Behaviour Improvement Programme will be able to make full-time provision from day one of the exclusion
- If the exclusion is potentially permanent the school should notify the Principal Officer (Schools). North Lincolnshire has developed a protocol in order to prevent permanent exclusions and, therefore, the potential for pupils to _slip through the net'. Arrangements are in place to track pupils until they are placed in another appropriate provision
- Pupils who are on the roll of a PRU/short stay school are subject to the same regulations
- It is the school's responsibility to monitor the attendance of those pupils on its school register with alternative packages. It is also the school's responsibility to monitor and record accurately the quality of the education provided by alternative providers in conjunction with the LA
- Pupils who move into the area and have been previously permanently excluded will be considered by the Principal Officer (Schools) and the case may be taken to the Moderation Panel.

Note: If schools choose to disregard LA policies and processes it could result in pupils becoming lost to the system. Putting pupils on part-time timetables, unofficial exclusions or taking them off roll, when disregarding procedures, all put the child at risk and are illegal.

- The LA operates the Cross-Boundary Protocol for pupils resident in North Lincolnshire but educated elsewhere and vice versa. Pupils only revert to their home authority when the appeals process has been exhausted.

2.5 Education Welfare Service

When a child is referred to the Education Welfare Service by a school or other agency/body as being in danger of going missing from school, the case will be prioritised and caseworked until either the child is back in school or it is confirmed that the child is without a school place in which case the Admissions Officer will be informed.

Detail

- Regular truancy sweeps will be carried out and school-age pupils found out of school will be stopped and enquiries made as to their educational status. If necessary the pupil will be escorted back to school. If the child is found to be without a school place the child's details will be given to the Admissions Officer who will inform the CME officer and a check can be made on the Lost Pupil database
- The Education Welfare Service has a statutory duty to inspect school registers and ensure that they are being kept in accordance with regulations. As Ofsted identified that children go missing from alternative provision, there is a need to audit registers of alternative provision as well as schools. This will include regular monitoring of pupils who have been removed from roll to ensure that the appropriate legislation and guidance above is being followed and that no pupil is allowed to ‗disappear' from a school roll.
- The Education Welfare Service should receive notification of all exclusions, proposed ‗managed moves'/alternative provision as soon as possible after such decisions are being considered.

2.6 The Admissions Team

The Admissions Team has responsibility for:

North Lincolnshire has in place a set of agreed Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for admission to both primary and secondary schools either at natural points of admission or transfer i.e. first admissions to primary school, infant to junior

transfer, secondary transfer or in-year admissions. These schemes are in accordance with the relevant Admissions Legislation, Regulations and School Admissions Code and apply to all maintained schools and academies in North Lincs.

The admission of statemented pupils is covered under different legislation. This requires the authority to consult with the proposed school prior to naming it in part 4 of the statement. Admission requests of statemented pupils made through the Schools Admission Team are logged into the admissions system and referred onto the Special Educational Needs Team. If a parent/carer makes direct contact with the SEN Team for an admission or transfer, they will advise the School Admissions Team of such in order that it can be tracked through the admissions/transfer system.

- The School Admission Code requires all Local Authorities to have a Fair Access Protocol in place. The protocol contributes to ensuring that all children and young people have access to an appropriate education
- To contribute to the work of ensuring that all pupils are on a school roll and attending school, the Admissions Team works as follows:
    - to ensure that children in care are given priority over other children where schools are oversubscribed
    - to provide advice about admissions for families recently arrived from overseas
    - considers each request for a transfer of school, and in line with practice liaises with the Head Teacher of both schools to effect the transfer
    - contributes to the maintenance of an efficient pupil database which, following liaison with schools and parents as necessary, records the school places offered and those taken up or declined
    - follows-up and monitors of the outcome of admission referrals made to the Authority‘s schools and refers to the CME officer when a child fails to take up a place
    - can often be one of the first contacts regarding enquiries from other LAs about —missing‖ children, determining whether such children may be on the roll of a North Lincs. school, thus contributing to and strengthening the CME process.

2.7 The Diversity Service

(Traveller children will be supported by this Service and other vulnerable groups)

Traveller children are frequently identified as being —missing from schoolll. This can be for a variety of reasons but particularly because:

- They fail to make a successful transition at Year 6-7
- They live within families who frequently move from place to place within the North Lincolnshire area, across authority boundaries and, sometimes, to other parts of the UK
- They may live within families who are on the move in trailers, who camp illegally.

Children with no school place usually come to the attention of the DES (Diversity Education Service) through:

- Home visits made with regard to children who are in school
- Visits to illegal encampments
- Referrals received from other authorities with information about families that are known to have moved to North Lincolnshire
- Anonymous complaints/information from members of the public.

Note: All pupils from Travelling families have a ‗base' or main school. These pupils must be kept on roll during periods of planned seasonal travel. Their vulnerability is further increased when we consider that this group has the highest rate of absence and exclusion from school of any ethnic group (Pupil Absence and exclusions statistics 2008 and 2009 respectively).

The DES response to finding a child not on any school roll:

- Discuss with parents and facilitate an application for admission by providing appropriate advice
- When parents oppose school placement, inform the Education Welfare Service
- Make home visits accompanied by EWO/DES designated teacher where there are particularly difficult issues

- When parents opt for Elective Home Education, explain procedure and ensure that this is followed
- Support families who opt for Elective Home Education
- Inform the appropriate Education Welfare Service if the child is living outside the North Lincolnshire area
- Keep a record of children not on any school roll and inform the EWO.

2.8 Children in Care

- The Education of Children in Care Team promotes the educational attainment and progress of looked after children who are the responsibility of North Lincolnshire. The team is also able to offer limited help and advice with looked after children living in North Lincolnshire from other authorities.
- North Lincolnshire children in care are regularly tracked and monitored by the team, with school attendance being a major factor in this work.
- The team (in the context of CME) is able to help and advise social workers, designated teachers, foster carers and residential carers with regard to school attendance, and ensure that looked after young people are engaged with education.
- The team will facilitate the interface between schools and other agencies involved with the child particularly Children's Social Services and Health Services.
- If a child in care is believed to be missing the named Social Worker for the child must be informed immediately by the agency that has raised concern. (*Reference "Children and Families who go Missing" in the North Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures)*
- **Special Educational Needs/Out of Area/Residential** – Some children who live in North Lincolnshire attend schools out of this authority area. These schools should always report pupil absences to the SEN Team as a first point of contact and where appropriate this will be forwarded to the Education Welfare Service for further action.

2.9 Private Fostering Arrangements

If someone else is looking after a child who is not related to them for a period of 28 days or more, this could be a private fostering arrangement. The law says that if anyone is privately fostering a child or your child is being privately fostered, you must let the local authority know.

Advice and support will be available and notification will help to ensure the child is safe. Failure to inform the local authority is an offence. Further information is available at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/privatefostering.

2.10 The Children Missing from Education Officer

- The Principal Education Welfare Strategic Manager is the current named contact for the DfE and Children's Services for children missing from education
- It is the LA's responsibility to ensure that all school-aged children are in receipt of suitable and efficient education appropriate to their age, aptitude and ability whether at school or otherwise
- The CME officer is responsible for maintaining the database, identifying, tracking and following up pupils. This officer may also be involved in engaging notified pupils with the EWOs as part of that team and under the direction of the EW Service
- The CME officer will be the contact within the LA for all referrals and work closely with the CMISS Team to produce information and reports
- The CME officer will establish routes for raising awareness with partner agencies and updating them as the procedures develop and will be carried out through the EWS
- ContactPoint, was implemented across England during 2009, with the intention to help LAs to discharge their duty by recording the place where the child is being educated, where that is known. Where it is known that a child is being educated at home, that would also be recorded. However, at the time of writing it is the intention to bring this facility to an end as soon as is practicable and in the interim the operation will be scaled down

Tracking and Monitoring Pupils referred to the CME Officer as being without a school place

On receipt of the information regarding a pupil without a school place the Capita One database will be checked. If the recorded school is different from the last known school then the recorded school will be asked if the pupil is on roll.

If Capita One shows the pupil is out of school a check will be made with:

- The Education Welfare Service
- The SEN Section
- The Admissions Team
- The Referral Management Team at Children's Social Services
- The Diversity Service
- The Principal Officer (Schools)
- Other contacts as appropriate

To see if the child is known and what educational provision is being made.

If the pupil is not known to any of the above the CME officer will investigate the circumstances of the pupil being out of school (with support from the Admissions Team and the Education Welfare Service), and the pupil and parent's wishes for provision. The pupil will be logged on the _out of school database'.

- Every effort will be made to secure an appropriate school place and where necessary the case will be taken to a multi-agency panel. Legal action will be considered in order to ensure a child attends where there is little or no co-operation from the parent
- The EWO may make a referral to the multi-agency panel in order that appropriate provision can be identified
- In the event of a child being _missing' and not found the EWS Team Leader or CME officer will liaise with the Police, Children's Social Services and Health Services. It may be necessary to access information from the Inland Revenue to assist with enquiries about a child's safety and welfare. When the child is found these services will receive an update and a Child in Need referral will be considered
- The case will not be closed until the child is securely on roll in a school or other appropriate provision and the referrer has been notified
- As appropriate the CME Officer will follow any cross-boundary protocols to deal with cross border issues
- Reports will be compiled to provide information and statistics on _children missing education'.

Truancy Sweeps

Casual truancy can be the start of a pattern of poor attendance. This can lead to children missing education altogether, as well as placing children and young

people in situations that are unsafe. Partnerships between EWS and the Police are a key part of the work to reduce truancy. Truancy Sweeps can play a part in identifying pupils who are not on a school roll.

2.11 Other agencies

It is in the interests of other agencies for children to be enrolled in education and attending regularly, not only because of the welfare of the child but also in order that the agency can fulfil their duties. Other agencies or Services frequently come into contact with school-aged children – including those working in the voluntary sector. It is an expectation of _Every Child Matters' that any professional coming across a school aged child will ask where that child is registered at school. In the event of a child not being on the roll of a school other professionals should contact the Admissions Officer who will inform the CME officer. It is important that the referrer completes the Missing Children form which can be found at the end of this document. This provides a consistent approach.

In order to locate children and young people who are believed to be resident in North Lincolnshire it is necessary to develop a network of agencies with which information can be shared and to enable all agencies to fulfil their responsibilities. Data sharing agreements have been established with key partner agencies. Further information on information sharing can be found at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/informationsharing. Further information on ContactPoint, including scaling down procedures, is available at: www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/contactpoint.

Key partner agencies (other than schools)

- Strategic Health Authorities, Primary Care Trusts
- Police
- Youth Offending Team
- Housing

Others

- Inland Revenue
- Integrated Youth Support Services
- UK Borders Agency
- Refuge
- Voluntary and Community Organisations

- General public

ANNEX A

Guidance

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The legal basis for sharing information

- Current Child Protection legislation
- Section 27 of the Children Act 1989
- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 2004

Note: Lord Laming, in the Victoria Climbie Inquiry Report 2003 (paragraph 17.97) recommended that: ‗Frontline 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 of compulsory age. Gaps in this information should be passed on to the relevant authority in accordance with local arrangements'.

2. Why children go Missing from Education

Nationally Ofsted estimated that approximately 10,000 children are missing from school every day.

'Some children living in certain circumstances face more obstacles to achieving the five ECM [Every Child Matters] Outcomes and this can include not receiving a suitable education. Amongst these are (this list is not exclusive):

- children and young people under the supervision of the youth justice system
- children from families fleeing domestic violence
- children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation, house of multiple occupancy or bed and breakfast
- young runaways
- children in families involved in anti-social behaviour

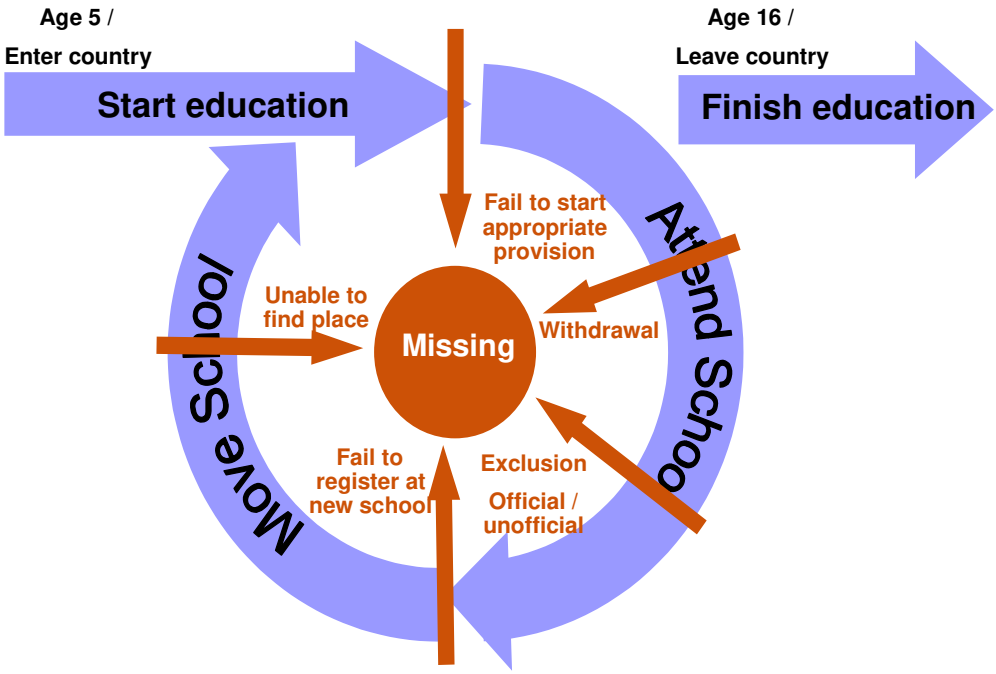
- children who are on the child protection register
- children affected by substance and/or alcohol misuse
- unaccompanied asylum seekers; children of refugees and asylum seeking families
- children in new immigrant families, who are not yet established in the UK and may not have fixed addresses
- children of migrant worker families (who may not be familiar with the education system)
- children of families who can be highly mobile, e.g. parents in the armed forces, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families
- children who do not receive a suitable education whilst being educated at home
- children who have been bullied
- children who have suffered discrimination on the grounds of race, faith, gender, disability or sexuality
- children at risk of sexual exploitation, including children who have been trafficked to, or within the UK
- children at risk of 'honour'-based violence including forced marriage or female genital mutilation
- looked after children/children in care; children who go missing from care
- children who are privately fostered
- young carers
- teenage parents
- children who are permanently excluded from school, particularly those excluded unlawfully e.g. for problematic behaviour or offending children whose parents take them abroad for a prolonged period
- children who were registered with a school that has closed, and have not made the transition to another school
- children of parents with mental health problems
- children of parents with learning difficulties
- children with long term medical or emotional problems.'

(From Ofsted Report August 2010)

It will be recognised that the factors listed above make children and young people _vulnerable' in every sense and that it is therefore particularly important that they are not allowed to slip below the _radar screen'. The diagram below illustrates the main ways in which children and young people _go missing' from education.

Certain groups of children are more likely to be affected by the factors listed above and include:

- Looked After Children
- Children in Need and/or Children in need of Protection
- Children who arrive in the country via asylum, refugee status or as EU nationals
- Travellers
- Children who have suffered bereavement, trauma, domestic violence or other adverse family circumstances
- Children with Special Educational needs



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 eg 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

3. The cost of 'missing out'

- The costs of missing out on education are very high indeed, both to the young people and their families and to society as a whole. The most obvious impact is, of course, on education itself. Pupils who do not attend the final year(s) of compulsory education are unlikely to leave with any qualifications at all and a fractured educational history can result in low levels of functional literacy and numeracy. Truants are more likely than non-truants to leave school with few or no qualifications. The latest Youth Cohort Study showed that 38 per cent of truants reported that they had no GCSEs, compared with 3 per cent of nontruants. Of those who had truanted, only 8 per cent obtained 5 or more GCSEs at grades A to C, as against 54 per cent of those who had not truanted in Year 11.

  It has also been shown that missing out on school can have a significant impact on other aspects of adult life:

Unemployment and homelessness - Like others with low qualifications, those who miss school are more likely to be out of work at age 18 and are more likely to become homeless. For example, over three-quarters of homeless teenagers in one Centrepoint study were either long-term non-attenders or had been excluded from school.

Crime - the most striking link is with crime.

- According to the Audit Commission, nearly half of all school-age offenders have been excluded from school; and a quarter truanted significantly
- Home Office research showed that truants were more than three times more likely to offend than non-truants. One study found that 78 per cent of males and 53 per cent of females who truanted once a week or more committed offences, and a Basic Skills Agency study of 500 convicted offenders in Shropshire found that 64 per cent said they were habitual truants
- There is evidence that sentencing of those who have truanted or been excluded is severe: one study showed that pupils who have a poor attendance record were much more at risk of a custodial sentence than those with more positive reports
- A six-month study by the Metropolitan Police found that 5 per cent of all offences were committed by children during school hours. 40 per cent of robberies, 25 per cent of burglaries, 20 per cent of thefts and 20 per cent of criminal damage were committed by 10 to 16 year olds

Other social difficulties:

- Involvement in prostitution and the sex trade
- Involvement with substance abuse (cigarettes, alcohol and drugs)
- Teenage parenthood
- Anti-social behaviour
- Mental health difficulties
- Physical health difficulties (especially from health issues linked to poverty)

4. Definition of a 'Missing Child'

- A child of compulsory school age who may be on a school roll or not, who is neither educated, nor being educated otherwise (eg at home, privately or in alternative provision), and who has been out of education provision for substantial period of time
- A pupil of compulsory school age who has stopped attending school - a referral should be made to the Education Welfare Service following the appropriate enquiries by the school. This must be done no later than the child having ten days of unauthorised absences

5. Relevant legislation

Clause 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (from February 2007) placed a new statutory duty on local authorities for them to make arrangements to establish the identities of children missing from education in their area.

Children Act 2004

Section 10 requires each local authority to make arrangements to promote cooperation between the local authority, each of their relevant partners and such other persons or bodies, working with children in the local authority's area, as the authority consider appropriate. The arrangements are to be made with a view to improving the well-being of children in the authority's area – which includes protection from harm or neglect alongside other outcomes. This section is the legislative basis for Children's Trust arrangements.

Section 11 requires a range of organisations to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions, and services provided on their behalf, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Section 12 enables the Secretary of State to require local authorities to establish and operate databases relating to the section 10 or 11 duties (above) or the section 175 duty (below), or to establish and operate databases nationally.

Section 17 enables the Secretary of State to require local authorities to prepare and publish a plan setting out the authority's strategy for discharging their functions in relation to children and relevant young persons. The Children and Young People's Plan Regulations (England) 2005 required local authorities to publish their first Children and Young People's Plan on or before 1 April 2006 and to review the plan annually.

Section 63 of the Children Act 2004 amended Schedule 5 of the Tax Credits Act 2002, meaning that the Inland Revenue now has lawful authority to provide local authorities with —… information, other than information relating to a person's income, which is held for the purposes of functions relating to tax credits, child benefit or guardian's allowance by the Boardll (extract from section 63(1)). This information can only be requested where it is needed in order for the local authority to fulfil their statutory responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Such enquiries will generally be made under section 47 of the Children Act 1989, which requires local authorities to make enquiries where they suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

Children Act 2004 guidance can be found at:
http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/guidance/

Education Act 2002

Section 175 puts a duty on all local authorities, maintained (state) schools, and further education institutions, including sixth form colleges, to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (children who are pupils and students under 18 years of age, in the case of schools and colleges). The same duty is put on Independent schools, including Academies by regulations made under section 157 of that Act.

Identifying children not receiving education is a key part of discharging the responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Local authorities should use the powers identified above and work with their partners to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to share information when identifying children not receiving education.

For more guidance on safeguarding children local authorities should refer to the *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010* document (Part 1 of which is statutory) and other guidance available on the Every Child Matters website
http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding

Education Act 1996

Section 7 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.

Section 14(1) provides that a local authority must make sure there are sufficient schools for providing education in their area. For these purposes, the schools must be sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide all pupils with the opportunity of appropriate education (section 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 (section 14(3)).

Section 19(1) requires every local 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 for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.

ANNEX B

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Deletions from Admission Register

8. —(1) 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) where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local education authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local education authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school;

(b) except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he has been registered as a pupil at another school;

(c) where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion;

(d) in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school;

(e) except in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered;

(f) in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence exceeding ten school days for the purpose of a holiday in accordance with regulation 7(3), that —

(i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted;

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and

(iii) both the proprietor and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is;

(g) that he is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;

(h) that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and -

(i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and

(iii) both the proprietor of the school and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is;

(i) that he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period;

(j) that the pupil has died;

(k) that he will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and the relevant person has indicated that he will cease to attend the school;

(l) in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school**;**

(m) that he has been permanently excluded from the school; or

(n) where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school.

(2) In a case not covered by paragraph (1)(a), (j) or (m), the name of a child who has under arrangements made by a local education authority become a registered pupil at a special school shall not be removed from the admission register of that school without the consent of that authority, or if that authority refuse to give consent, without a direction of the Secretary of State.

(3) The following are prescribed as the grounds on which the name of a pupil not of compulsory school age is to be deleted from the admission register;

(a) that he has ceased to attend the school, or, in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school;

(b) that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and —

(i) at no time was his absence during that period agreed by the proprietor;

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and

(iii) the proprietor of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is;

(c) that the pupil has died;

(d) where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the school; or

(e) that he has been permanently excluded from the school.

(4) For the purposes of this regulation—

(a) a pupil shall be treated as ordinarily residing at a place where the pupil is habitually and normally resident apart from temporary or occasional absences;

(b) "reception class" means a class in which education is provided which is suitable to the requirements of pupils aged five and any pupils under or over that age whom it is expedient to educate together with pupils of that age;

(c) children are to be regarded as having been admitted to a school to receive nursery education if they were placed on admission in a nursery class;

(d) the permanent exclusion of a pupil from a maintained school does not take effect until the proprietor has discharged its duties under regulations made under section 52 of the Education Act 2002[9], and—

(i) the relevant person has stated in writing that he does not intend to bring an appeal under those regulations;

(ii) the time for bringing an appeal has expired and no appeal has been brought within that time; or

(iii) an appeal brought within that time has been determined or abandoned;

(e) the permanent exclusion of a pupil from an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts does not take effect until the proprietor has discharged its duties in relation to a permanent exclusion under the agreement entered into pursuant to section 482 of the Education Act 1996[10] and

(i) the relevant person has stated in writing that he does not intend to bring an appeal;

(ii) the time for bringing an appeal has expired and no appeal has been brought within that time; or

(iii) an appeal brought within that time has been determined or abandoned.

ANNEX C

Good Practice Guide

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

- A timescale for taking steps to safeguard a child who is missing from school
- A description of the steps which can be taken; and
- A framework for consideration of relevant issues at each stage – with a view to helping practitioners to identify situations where a child is vulnerable to harm, or is being harmed, and in need of a specific safeguarding response.

Linked guidance and procedures

This Guidance should be used in conjunction with the North Lincolnshire Child Protection Procedures, as appropriate.

Principles

The principles which should be adopted by all agencies (including Local Authorities who are corporate parents), who are responsible for locating children who go missing from school, include that:

- The safety of the child is paramount
- Parents are the custodians of the welfare and well-being of their children when the children are not in school
- The primary objective is for local (and other) agencies to work together to locate and return the child to a safe environment
- Child protection procedures are triggered where there are any concerns that a child may be at risk of harm or suffering harm
- Agency actions under this guidance will link as appropriate with actions required under related protocols, (such as the North Lincolnshire LSCB safeguarding procedures which the DfE and Children's Services advocate as an example of good practice)
- Services will be put in place to ensure that when a child is found s/he receives the necessary ongoing support to enable her/him to live in a stable, safe environment and attend school

Acting to Safeguard a Child who is Missing from School

Enquiries into the circumstances surrounding a child who is missing from school can be effectively supported by schools adopting an admissions procedure which requires a parent/carer to provide documentary evidence of their own and the child's

identity and status in the UK, and the address that they are residing at. These checks should not become delaying factors in the admissions process.

Timescale

Schools and other agencies will always seek to engage parents and carers as partners in ensuring that their children are safe and able to attend school**.**

In the first four weeks that a child does not attend school, the school and other agencies will make enquiries and assess the child's circumstances and their vulnerability by following the Process Steps below. In some cases the situation will be resolved between the school and the parent/carer. For other cases the timescale for initiating a multi-agency response will depend on the school's view of the vulnerability of the child.

Concern for a child may be so high that a referral may be made to the Police immediately the child is found to be missing. Alternatively, information may emerge over the course of time which raises the level of concern about a child's welfare and a referral should then be made to Children's Social Services (the Education Welfare Service) is likely to already be involved by this stage).

The length of time that a child remains out of school could, of itself, be an alerting factor of risk of harm to the child. Accordingly if a situation is not resolved within four weeks, then **referrals should be made as appropriate following the guidance and procedures.**

Extended Leave of Absence

In very exceptional circumstances extended leave of absence may be authorised by the Headteacher, at which point a return date is set. In these cases the time line for enquiries starts from when the child does not attend school on the expected return date, not from the day the extended leave started.

Young people may become missing for reasons linked to **forced marriages.** Good practice would be for schools to check that pupils had return tickets when they were leaving for an extended holiday and to notify the EWS if the school had any concerns. Concerns may be raised about the possibility of a forced marriage when the young person is visiting another part of England. Education Welfare Services

have good links across the country and education welfare officers in another area would be alerted. Similarly, schools should also report concerns they may have if a child is taken off roll to be educated at home.

Recording Actions

Information known or received, people spoken to, decision and actions – and the reasons for taking them, should be recorded contemporaneously. If the child is subsequently reported missing to the Police, or is found to be a victim of crime, full records will be required**.**

Process Steps

Day One

When the school identifies that a child is not in school:

1. A staff member trained to do so, telephones the child's home to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent/carer (person with parental responsibility for the child) that the child is safe at home.
2. The results of this telephone call could be that:

a) There was no answer at the home

b) The person who answered was not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or safe

c) The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is concerned

d) The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is not concerned

In the case of a), b) and d) the staff member who made the telephone call should consider, with the school's Designated Teacher for Safeguarding Children, the degree of vulnerability of the child.

3. In the case of a), b) and c) the staff member who made the telephone call should advise the parent to:

4. Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searching for the child
5. Contact the family GP and Accident and Emergency Centres near where the child lives and goes to school, in case he/she has sustained an injury and been taken in for medical treatment
6. Contact the local Police station to inform them that the child is missing Schools will need to make arrangements for communicating with families who use English as a second language, e.g. schools may liaise with the Diversity Service or Children's Social Services to establish access to interpreters qualified and experienced in working with children and their families.

Assessing a Child's Vulnerability

Assessing vulnerability requires a combination of professional knowledge and experience of child welfare issues and knowledge of local circumstances. Considering the following questions could assist the process. If in doubt a practitioner should always consult with Managers.

Below is a list of some of the factors you may need to consider in making your assessment:

- Is there good reason to believe that the child may be the victim of a crime?
- Does the child have a formal child protection plan?
- Is the child looked after by the Local Authority?
- Is there planned or current Children's Social Services or Adults Social Services involvement? Eg s.47 enquiry about to start?
- Does the family have a FIP (Family Intervention Programme) worker allocated to them?

- Is there a person present in or visiting the family with previous convictions for an offence against children or other person suspected of previously harming a child?

The following questions will give an indication that the family may be avoiding contact and therefore the quicker the response the more likely they will be traced.
Delay may well exacerbate the risk of harm to the child for the child/young person.

- Has there been Children's or Adult's Social Services or Criminal Justice System involvement in the past?
- Is there a history of mobility?
- Are there immigration issues?
- Have the parents been subject to proceedings in relation to attendance?
- Is there a history of poor attendance?

The answers to further questions could assist a judgement whether or not to inform Local Authority Children's Social Services and the Police:

- In which age range is the child? – younger children are more at risk.
- Is this very sudden and unexpected behaviour?
- Have there been any past concerns about the child associating with significantly older young people or adults?
- Was there any significant incident prior to the child's unexplained absence? ▪ Has the child been a victim of bullying?
- Are there health reasons to believe that the child is at risk? eg
  - Does the child need essential medication or health care?
  - Was the child noted to be depressed prior to the child's unexplained absence?
- Has the child gone missing with their family?
- Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk? eg - Rites of passage or forced marriage planned for the child?
- Have there been past concerns about this child and family which together with the sudden disappearance are worrying? Eg
  - Is there any known history of drug or alcohol dependency within the family?
  - Is there any known history of domestic violence?
  - Is there concern about the parent/carer's ability to protect the child from harm?
- Has there been any change in the child/family's financial circumstances?
- Has the child additional needs?

1. **If the school can obtain no information about the child or family on Day One**, and there is reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm, Children's Social Services, the Education Welfare Service and/or Local Authority designated person should be informed, and reporting to the Police should be considered.

2. **If the judgement reached on Day One is that there is no reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm**, then the school may well delay further action.

Reasonable Enquiry

1. The process of _reasonable enquiry' suggests that it starts with the questions in above, and includes school staff checking with all members of staff who the child/young person may have had contact with, and with the pupil's friends and their parents, siblings and known relatives at this school and others. School staff should also make telephone calls to any numbers held on record or identified, sending a letter to the last known address, home visits by some school based staff and consultation with Local Authority staff.

2. If the above is unsuccessful, the school should then contact their Local Authority. The process of reasonable enquiry will then be conducted, in most cases by the Education Welfare Team and should include, assessing a missing child's vulnerability. The Education Welfare Service should make enquiries by visiting the child's home and asking for information from the family's neighbours and their local community – as appropriate. The Education Welfare Service should also check databases within the Local Authority, use agreed protocols to check local databases, eg check with agencies known to be involved with the family and with the Local Authority the child moved from originally, and with any Local Authority to which the child may have moved.

3. When making enquiries to another local authority in England, staff should telephone first and make contact with the correct person and then ensure that personal information is shared securely (secure messaging is available using s2s).

Days Two to Twenty-eight

1. If the judgement on Day One is that there is no reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm, and the school delays further action, the process of reasonable enquiry should be repeated and enhanced, including reviewing

the responses to the questions above, for up to four weeks. This should be undertaken jointly between the school and the local Education Welfare Service.

2. If the school has enough information to judge that the child is not at risk of harm, however the child has not attended for 10 days and the absence is unauthorised, the Education Welfare Service must be informed.

Child Missing from School for More than Four Weeks

If a child continues to be missing from school for four weeks and the Local Authority has exhausted enquiries and has been unable to locate the pupil and her/his family, under current Regulations, it is permissible for the child's name to be removed from the school roll and details of the child up-loaded to the DfE Lost Pupil Database when the school has been informed it can do so by the EWO. However, if concerns remain in relation to the safety of the child, the Education Welfare Service and/or the CME designated person should continue to pursue reasonable enquiries and missing person activity in accordance with local procedures.

If 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 school.

Mary Mayfield
Principal Education Welfare Strategic Manager
Revised September 2010

Approved by governors: Autumn 2011
Agreed by staff: Autumn 2011

CME 1

Appendix 1

Children Missing Education - Notification to Local Authority

NAME OF REFERRER	
ROLE	
ORGANISATION AND ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE	

NAMES OF CHILD/REN	DOB	YEAR GROUP	PUBLIC CARE?	STATEMENT?
1				
2				
3				
ADDRESS: **TELEPHONE:** **CARER/PARENTS NAME:**				
PREVIOUS SCHOOL(S) – MOST RECENT FOR EACH PUPIL LISTED ABOVE				
1				
2				
3				

IS/ARE THE PUPIL(S) OUT OF SCHOOL NOW? **YES / NO***

IS/ARE THE PUPIL(S) AT RISK OF GOING MISSING FROM EDUCATION? **YES / NO***

COMMENTS AND ACTION TAKEN TO LOCATE CHILD/REN (please attach any relevant documentation)

Completed by: **Designation:**

Date:

PLEASE COMPLETE INITIAL CHECKS BEFORE PASSING TO SCHOOL EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER or the EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE, CHURCH SQUARE HOUSE. Fax 296866 or forward electronically to: childrenmissingeducation@northlincs.gov.uk

CME2

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

This checklist MUST be completed by EWOs for pupils whose details have been passed over from schools as 'missing' and forwarding school/address is not known.

NAME OF EWO	
NAME OF SCHOOL	
NAME OF STUDENT	DOB:
EMS NUMBER	
LAST KNOWN ADDRESS	

	Date(s)	Response/Result
1. Has school checked possible whereabouts with staff and pupil?		
2. Visit to address(s) given by school		
3. Check with EWO colleagues/files		
4. Check with Admissions Section/ School meals		
5. Check with Housing Department/ Housing Association/Council Tax		
6. Enquire of Child Protection Register or CAF (if appropriate)		
7. Check with agencies known involvement eg Probation, Police, GP, Health Visitor, School Nurse, Social Services, Youth Services, etc		
8. Any other action taken		
9. Child untraced – school updated of current situation		

Once all the above checks have been completed and the child's whereabouts still remain unknown, notify the school, attaching a copy of this checklist. State that the child has not been traced and will be referred to CME officer. Send completed school checklist and the EWO checklist to CME officer.

Signature _____ Date ___/___/___

PUPILS CAN ONLY BE REMOVED FROM ROLL WHEN THEY ARE PLACED ON OUT OF SCHOOL REGISTER

CME 3 **Appendix 3**

MOVEMENT OF CHILDREN FORM

(For Schools not using SIMS)

School: ……

Month Ending: .....

NAME	DoB	LEAVING DATE	REASON FOR LEAVING	SCHOOL MOVED TO/UNKNOWN

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED FORM ON THE LAST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH TO THE EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE, Church Square House, Scunthorpe, DN15 6NL

Note: This form must always be returned even if it is a ‗nil' return or sent electronically to: childrenmissingeducation@northlincs.gov.uk