

# **Children Missing from Education Policy**

**Early Help & Family Engagement  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Wing A  
Riverside House  
Main Street  
Rotherham  
S60 1AE  
Tel: 01709 254193**

**Email: [cme@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:cme@rotherham.gov.uk)**

## Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Definitions.....	4
3. Reasons why Children may become Missing from Education .....	4
4. Migrant Worker and Asylum Children .....	5
5. School Admissions Team .....	5
6. Moving to Rotherham .....	5
7. Information for Schools.....	6
8. The Process of Referral and Removal from Roll of Children Missing Education .....	6
9. The s2s and Lost Pupil Database .....	7
10. Movement of Children.....	7
11. Rotherham Children Missing from Education Pathway .....	8
12. Working with Key Stakeholders .....	8
13. Information Sharing .....	9
14. Notification and Referral .....	9
15. Process following Children Missing Education Pathway notification:.....	9
16. Monitoring and Review .....	9
17. Information Systems .....	10
18. Relevant Legislation .....	10
19. Deletions from the School Admission and Attendance Register.....	11
APPENDIX A.....	13
APPENDIX B.....	

## 1. Introduction

The Early Help & Family Engagement Service is committed to ensuring that all children living in Rotherham are given the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

There is a duty on Local Authorities to make arrangements to identify Children Missing from Education in their area; in addition the Secretary of State issued updated guidance in 2016.<sup>1</sup> Local Authorities have a statutory duty to comply with this guidance.

The duty applies to all children and young people of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than at school. This includes children and young people who are educated at home, in private education or in alternative education provision. It does not apply to children and young people who are registered at a school but failing to attend. The duty to identify children missing from education reinforces existing duties placed upon schools to monitor attendance for pupils registered at their school.

*'If a child or young person is receiving an education, not only do they have the opportunity to fulfil their potential, but they are also in an environment that enables local agencies to safeguard and promote their welfare. If a child goes missing from education they could be at risk of significant harm.'*<sup>2</sup>

This policy sets out how the Local Authority and partner agencies will ensure that all children missing from, or at risk of going missing from education are identified, tracked, monitored and supported.

**This policy does not replace any Child Protection Procedures. All existing procedures and reporting, referral and recording mechanisms in relation to child protection must be followed at all times.**

Local Authorities must have: *'A named individual responsible for receiving information about children of compulsory school age in their area who may not be receiving a suitable education at school or otherwise...'*

The Children Missing Education function is responsible to ensure that stakeholders are aware of the notification and referral process for children who are missing education.

Local Authorities must have robust measures in place both to identify quickly when a child or young person is not receiving a suitable education, and to follow through with effective tracking and enquiry systems.

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<sup>1</sup>

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

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

## **2. Definitions**

Government guidance defines Children Missing from Education as ‘*A compulsory school age child, who are neither on a school roll, not placed in alternative provision by the Local Authority and who is not receiving a suitable education at home.*’

*Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from age five when a child should attend school from the start of the term commencing on or after his fifth birthday--. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen*

A child or young person will also be deemed as missing from education:

- If they move out of the area without providing the name of a receiving school
- If they move into the area without a school place

If a child/young person has been reported as having moved to another authority and it has been confirmed by that authority that the child/young person is resident in their area and is on roll at a school in that authority, the pupil can be removed from the roll of the Rotherham school on the last day of attendance.

## **3. Reasons why Children may become Missing from Education**

There are a number of reasons why a child or young person ceases to engage with or goes missing from education, below are some examples.

- Failure to start appropriate provision and therefore never enter the educational system (children who leave a pre-school provider but give no destination school may be particularly difficult to locate owing to the fact that they are not of statutory school age)
- Cease to attend educational provision for example exclusion or withdrawal from school
- Fail to complete transition between phases of education e.g. KS1 to KS 2 or entry into Secondary school
- Are part of highly mobile, transient families
- Personal reasons including disengagement on the part of pupils or parents.

In addition to the above, there are groups of children/young people who are deemed to be vulnerable and therefore could be at increased risk of missing education. These include:

- Young people who have committed or are victims of crime
- Children residing in refuge accommodation/victims of domestic abuse
- Children of homeless families or those living in temporary accommodation
- Children living in multi-occupancy, overcrowded housing
- Children who go missing from home/care
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- Children who have been trafficked into and around the UK

- Looked after children
- Children who are privately fostered
- Children with Gypsy, Roma or other Traveller backgrounds
- Young Carers
- Children from transient families
- Teenage parents
- Children who are officially or unofficially permanently excluded from school
- Children who are vulnerable due to being sexually exploited

#### **4. Migrant Worker and Asylum Children**

Rotherham has a community of EU migrant children and families. These families are highly transient, therefore comprehensive information, including accurate contact information, about the child and parent or guardian should be maintained for every child. Any Children Missing Education referral should include all information held about the child and parent/carer.

#### **5. School Admissions Team**

Rotherham has a central admissions system. The Admissions and Transfers Department will monitor first admission, infant and junior transfer and junior to secondary transfers. Any child who does not arrive at the school where they are expected should be referred to the Early Help Service immediately Email: [cme@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:cme@rotherham.gov.uk) in order for the child to be located as soon as possible. Should the child not be found a referral should be made to the Children Missing Education Officer.

Where a request to move schools within Rotherham is made via an internal transfer, the child will remain on the roll of the original school until they start attending their new school.

#### **6. Moving to Rotherham**

Children who reside in another Local Authority whose parents wish for them to attend a Rotherham School should make an application to their home authority.

Parents can apply for a place at the school of their choice. The place will either be approved or refused. Parent's/carer's have the right of appeal where a refusal for a school place has occurred. If parents wish to lodge an appeal against this decision, contact should be made with the Admissions Department.

Where approval is given, the parent is responsible for contacting the school to arrange an appointment for admission within two weeks of receipt of the letter. Should no contact have been made by parents, schools should contact the Admissions Department within 4 weeks.

Once an admission meeting has taken place, an agreed start date will indicate the day on which the child is expected to start attending. This is the day on which the child's name is placed on the school roll.

The Children Missing Education Officer will liaise closely with the Admissions Team regarding places for children identified as missing education.

The protocols detailed in this policy will help to ensure that once a child or young person is identified as CME, suitable provision will be provided at the earliest opportunity.

## **7. Information for Schools**

Schools have a duty to monitor attendance through registration and to inform the Local Authority where the attendance of an individual is causing concern; this involves a referral to the CME officer in Early Help where:

- **The child fails to attend without explanation**
- **The child is expected to start at school but does not arrive**
- **The child does not return from a planned holiday (authorised or unauthorised)**
- **The child leaves the authority without a destination.**

If the school has been unable to contact the parent where the child is missing or at risk of becoming CME, the process of notification and referral should begin at the earliest opportunity. Referrals to the CME Officer will be accepted following the completion of the CME Referral and school must have made adequate attempts at trying to locate the child and family, such as through home visits and calling the family members/liasing with other relevant schools etc. Schools responsibilities are available in the update guidance from September 2016.

Please note that children will only be placed on the out of school/CME register after **20 school days** unauthorised absence, unless there is evidence to show the child is elsewhere (Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006).

**Children referred as Missing from Education should only be removed from the school roll on the advice of and following consultation with the Children Missing Education Officer and authorisation from the service.**

## **8. The Process of Referral and Removal from Roll of Children Missing Education**

1. School will carry out initial checks and complete the Referral to CME as appropriate. Care should be taken to include all information held relating to contact, what checks and enquiries have been made, emergency telephone numbers and the last date the child attended school.
2. This form once completed should be passed by school to the Early Help Service Email: [cme@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:cme@rotherham.gov.uk)

3. If these checks fail to locate the child, the referral should be sent to the Children Missing Education Officer. Only when the checks have been completed will the pupil be removed from the school roll.
4. Pupils will be tracked by the CME Officer once the pupil has been removed from the roll of the Rotherham school.

The Children Missing Education Officer will ensure that a letter is sent to the school confirming receipt of the referral and that the pupil's details are on the central database (One). The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (as amended) governs the transfer of information from school to school when a pupil changes schools. Regulation 10(3) provides that: 'The Headteacher of the pupil's old school shall send the information (the common transfer information and educational records) within **fifteen** school days of the pupil ceasing to be registered at the school.

## **9. The s2s and Lost Pupil Database**

The School to School s2s website is a secure platform which is operated by the DfE on behalf of all maintained and independent schools in England and Wales. It was set up to enable schools to post standardised data about individual pupils (such as assessment results and attendance) to the website, for retrieval by the pupil's new school or by a Local Authority. The specified format of this data is termed an electronic Common Transfer File (CTF) and is a statutory requirement on schools.

The file can be imported into the schools management information system and means that they do not have to input data they receive via the website, which in turn means improved efficiency, accuracy and speed of data transfer. The CTF should be used both at the normal transfer time, and when pupils leave the school during the year, School Administrators should have a password to use s2s.

## **10. Movement of Children**

The number of pupils on a schools roll at any one time will vary. In Rotherham, schools are requested to report on pupil movement on and off the school roll. This report should be submitted to the Children Missing Education Officer on the last Friday of every month.

This movement of children analysis enables the CME Officer to ensure that any pupil who is removed from the roll of a school, arrives at their intended school safe and well. The Movement of Children Form should clearly show the destination school and the destination address for all pupils removed from roll. Where parents have advised that the family is emigrating, information should be submitted to the CME Officer via the Movement of Children Form as these pupils may need to be classified as CME if follow up checks by school/CME officer do not verify that the child is at school in the country of destination.

If a pupil leaves a school without a destination school identified, that pupil is deemed to be CME and the referral procedures should be followed. This pupil should not be classified as a leaver on the Movement of Children Form. This pupil can only be shown

as an official leaver if/when an agreed de-registration date has been sent by the CME officer.

The Early Help Service is available to speak to schools about the process if there are queries or concerns related to children missing from education.

**Movement of Children Forms should be sent electronically to [cme@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:cme@rotherham.gov.uk). Paper copies will not be accepted. Only pupils that have left or joined the school should be included in the return.**

## **11. Rotherham Children Missing from Education Pathway**

See Appendix A

## **12. Working with Key Stakeholders**

The Early Help Service works in partnership with key stakeholders within Rotherham to ensure positive outcomes for children and young people. The continued development of inter agency work, information sharing and clear referral routes will ensure that every effort will be made to engage vulnerable children and young people.

**Relevant Partner Agencies include:**

- **Police**
- **UK Border Agency – Immigration Services**
- **Health – School Health, Accident and Emergency, GPs.**
- **Housing and Homeless Organisations**
- **Voluntary and Community Groups**
- **Children’s Social Care**
- **Schools and other educational establishments**
- **Youth Offending Team**
- **Other Local Authority services**
- **External Local Authorities**
- **Members of the Public**

The Early Help Service will ensure that all key stakeholders are aware of the procedures for referral of children who are missing or at risk of going missing from education. Details of how to refer and contact details for Rotherham’s Children Missing Education Officer can be found within this document.

If a professional receives information about a child who is not on the roll of a school or is not receiving education, they should bring this to the attention of the Children Missing Education function which is located within the Early Help Triage Team in First Response.

Copies of this document will be made available on the Local Safeguarding Children Board Website

### **13. Information Sharing**

In order to effectively identify, track and engage children missing from education, it is necessary to share information with appropriate agencies. Information sharing is carried out securely, fairly and is compliant with legislation that protects data and personal/sensitive information.

Services offering support to vulnerable groups should be aware of the need to identify children missing from education and notify the Children Missing Education Officer accordingly.

### **14. Notification and Referral**

It is important that staff across organisations in Rotherham are made aware of referral procedures to the Children Missing Education and the raising of awareness around this is a shared, multi-agency responsibility. **A referral form (CME 1) is attached as Appendix B.**

### **15. Process following Children Missing Education Pathway notification:**

- Referral logged on central database (out of school register)
- Checks made on available authority and partner databases
- Enquiries made with other agencies and stakeholders supported by information sharing protocols and agreements.
- Checks made with agencies known to be involved with the family
- Checks made to specific prospective host Local Authorities where intelligence is available that a family may have moved there.
- Request for a safe and well visit to be made to the address where appropriate by the Early Help Locality Team for that area.
- When a child is located the CME Officer will report the outcome to the referrer
- Tracking will continue to take place until the child is placed on the roll of the school, in alternative educational provision, or located and if in another authority, responsibility for the child's education is taken by that authority.
- NB Where concerns exist relating to the safety and welfare of any child missing from education, referral to other agencies such as Police and Social Care are made immediately.

### **16. Monitoring and Review**

An annual report is provided to the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board. This report summarises trends and performance around CME.

There have been significant updates to the monitoring of CME in Rotherham and a quarterly scorecard will be made available for relevant boards for scrutiny/information and shaping future responses.

## **17. Information Systems**

Rotherham uses Capita ONE as the Local Authority database for CME. And cross matching of data across Liquid Logic informs the scorecard.,

Use of s2s as a secure site for the transfer of Common Transfer Files can be monitored by the Local Authority centrally, enabling reports to be submitted on use and speed of access by individual schools. A report can also be generated to identify the number of pupils entered onto the Lost Pupil database by the Local Authority.

## **18. Relevant Legislation**

**Children Act 1989** provision of services for children in need and their families and others. Under the terms of Section 17 of the Act, every child under the age of 18 years is entitled to a full assessment of his/her needs and, if approached, social services have a legal duty to carry out this assessment and can be challenged if they fail to respond to any request for a section 17 child-in-need assessment. Section 17 places a general duty on social services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children 'in need' living in the area and to ensure appropriate services is provided for those children.

### **Children Act 2004**

**Section 10** requires each Local Authority to make arrangements to promote co-operation 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 Local Authority consider appropriate. These arrangements should be made with a view to improving the wellbeing of children in the authority's area – which includes the protection from harm or neglect alongside other outcomes.

**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 meet 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 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 Person's Regulations (England) 2005 requires Local Authorities to review the plan annually.

**Section 63** of the Children Act 2004 amended schedule 5 of the Tax Credits Act 2002 enabling the Inland Revenue 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 Board*'. 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.

**Section 47** Councils with Social Services responsibilities are required to conduct enquiries in accordance with section 47 of the Children Act, 1989, when they receive information that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm

### **Education Act 1996**

**Section 7** provides that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

**Section 8** provides that compulsory school age starts on the relevant day on or after a child's fifth birthday and ends on the specified day of the school year in which the child's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday falls.

**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 that 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.

### **Education Act 2002**

**Section 175** puts a duty on all Local Authorities, maintained schools and further education institutions (including sixth form colleges), to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children (pupils and students under the age of 18 years in the case of schools and colleges). The same duty is expected of Independent Schools, including Academies under section 157 of the same Act.

Identifying children not receiving a suitable 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 partner agencies to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to share information when identifying children not receiving education.

## **19. Deletions from the School Admission and Attendance Register**

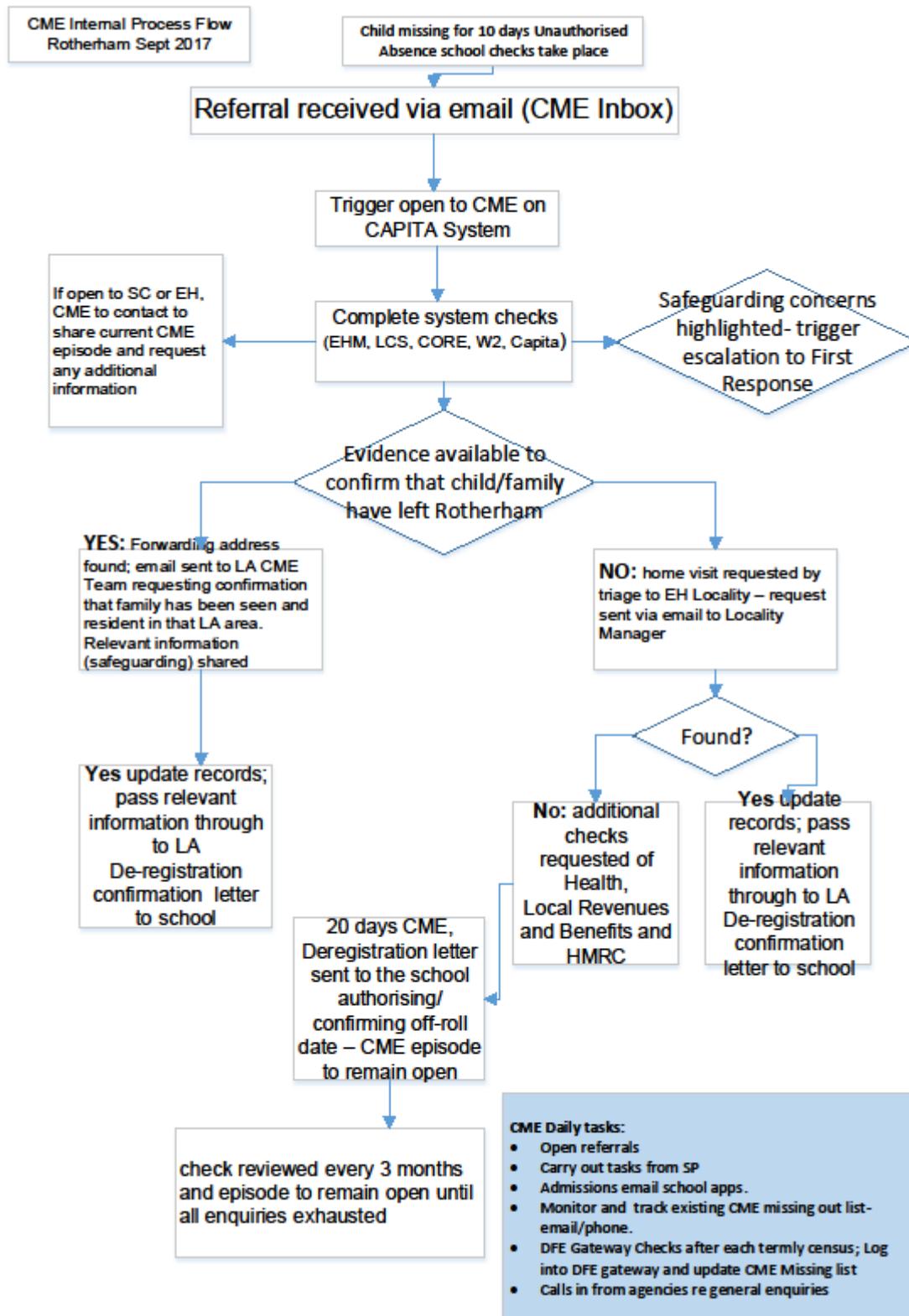
Deletions from the admission and attendance registers must be made in line with the provisions of Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006/1751). The name of the pupil of compulsory school age may only be deleted from

the attendance register of the grounds named in this regulation. Under Regulation 12(3), schools must also inform the Local Authority of deletions of compulsory school age pupils who are:

- Ceasing to attend school
- Being withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Unlikely to return to school whilst of compulsory school age, as certified by the school medical officer
- Being in custody, although schools are asked to discuss this with the Education Inclusion Officer at the Youth Offending Service
- Being permanently excluded

In consideration of the duty on all Children's Services to safeguard the welfare of children and young people (Section 11 Children Act 2004), the expectation is that both the school and the Local Authority will put in place procedures to track the whereabouts of the child and to record that they have been completed before deleting them from the register. The type of procedures may include the appropriate checking with neighbours, relatives, private or public landlords and other stakeholders who may be involved. If there is a reason to believe that the child or young person may be at risk of significant harm Local Safeguarding Procedures should be followed

## APPENDIX A



**Children and Young People's Services**

Early Help & Family Engagement  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor Wing B, Riverside House  
Main Street  
Rotherham  
S60 1AE  
Tel: (01709) 254193  
Email: [cme@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:cme@rotherham.gov.uk)

Ref: Children Missing Education (CME)    Named Contacts:    Julie Friend – CME Operational Lead  
Michelle Dennis – CME Officer

**FAO: The Head Teacher, School Attendance Officer or relevant person responsible for CME**

Dear Colleague,

In order to ensure that schools are supported by the local authority, please find attached the CME Referral Form and procedure to be followed in regards to Children Missing Education.

Please note that it is the schools responsibility, as per Pupil Registration Regulations (2006), to inform the Local Authority of any child who has 10 school days of continuous absence (or sooner if you have evidence that the child is missing from education.) The enclosed checking procedures will support thorough investigation routes for children missing education.

Every school should carry out the functions contained within the **School Checklist** and if all checks have been carried out, (including a home visit) and it is confirmed the family are no longer living at the address then please submit the completed checklist direct to [CME@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:CME@rotherham.gov.uk)

By following these procedures Missing Children can be located and tracked more effectively and so adherence to the protocol is important. This process is complimentary to Rotherham's safeguarding children procedures and does not replace the responsibility to report concerns to the MASH if there are concerns about a child. ;

**Children who have been referred to the Early Help Service as Children Missing Education should remain on school roll and can only be removed from roll when authorised by the Early Help Service. Confirmation of this will be communicated by way of a de-registration letter.**

Please note that children will only be placed on the CME register after 20 days unauthorised absence unless there is evidence which places the child elsewhere and this has been confirmed.

Yours Faithfully,

Julie Friend  
Senior Practitioner  
Early Help & Family Engagement

Name of School:

Name of pupil & DOB:

Address:

New Address:

Ethnicity:

Attendance:

%

EHCP: YES/NO

Date Last Attended School:

Parents **full** Name & contact no:

Emergency Contact Details (include relationship to the child):

Name of siblings / DOB / School

### Checklist of actions taken to support activity around CME

	Action	Date & Who by?	Comments
<b>S C H O O L</b>	Telephone calls to be made to all known contact numbers (including extended family) and correspondence to be sent to the family		
	Check with all staff that know the child/ren as well as siblings and peers		
	Colleagues from other schools (of siblings) to be contacted and checks made to ascertain whereabouts.		
	Record any current or previous concerns about the child's wellbeing.		
	Any other relevant information		
<b>A C T I O N</b>			

Checklist completed by:

Date: .....

Please complete all of the above checks and record as much information as possible regarding the outcome of your enquiries and submit to [CME@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:CME@rotherham.gov.uk)

Rotherham Council has a designated Children Missing from Education Officer. If you have any concerns regarding a young person, please contact:

Children Missing from Education Officer  
Riverside House  
Main Street  
Rotherham  
S60 1AE

Tel: 01709 254193

Email: [cme@rotherham.gov.uk](mailto:cme@rotherham.gov.uk)