

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

POLICY

Approved by: Children's Executive
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**Date of Reviews: September 2014, January 2015, September 2015 and
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Version: 4

1. INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to inform Local Authority (LA) officers, schools (including academies and any other educational establishment), governing bodies and other involved agencies about Wigan LA's policy to prevent children missing education. The procedures adopted to meet the requirements of the policy are detailed in a separate document – "Procedure for Children Missing Education"

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

It is a key responsibility of the LA and its schools to safeguard all children resident in Wigan or attending Wigan schools. Children not receiving a suitable education are vulnerable and can be at significant risk of a range of negative outcomes (e.g. Child Sexual Exploitation, crime and disorder, underachieving, becoming NEET etc) that could have long term damaging consequences for their life chances. The best way for the LA and its schools to track the welfare of all children is to ensure that they are all on a school/alternative provider's roll or that they are suitably home educated.

Section 11 of The Children Act 2004, places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children. In addition to this, section 436A of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school, and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

Such principles underpin this policy and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure children are on school/alternative providers rolls or that they are receiving a suitable education other than at school – this includes Elective Home Education.

2. DEFINITION OF A 'CHILD MISSING EDUCATION'

The definition of Children Missing Education refers to all children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision). The Wigan Partnership has taken a broader definition to include children and young people who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more) or whose offer of education is less than full time.

For the purpose of this policy, Children Missing Education will be considered as the following:

- Children persistently absent from school
- Children that have been permanently excluded
- Children who have particular social and behavioural difficulties and have personalised plan which means that they do not attend school full time
- Children with medical or mental health needs which prevent them accessing education full time
- Children with complex needs and no suitable school place is available
- Children who have been electively home educated where the provision is unsuitable

- Children who have been removed from a school roll without a known destination
- Children that are new to the area and require a school place. Specifically:
 - children new to the country
 - children that have not taken up a school place within 20 school days of it being offered
 - children new to area and not secured a school place within 20 school day
 - Children Looked After placed in or out of Borough with no suitable educational placement
 - Those who are pregnant or are young parents of compulsory school age
 - children who are returning from custody and a school place has not been found for them
 - children from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background and alternative provision has been made

3. CURRENT ARRANGMENTS FOR CHILDREN NOT IN RECEIPT OF FULL TIME EDUCATION

Exclusions:

The Pupil Inclusion Team have systems in place to monitor fixed term and permanent exclusions and challenge schools where appropriate.

The following is monitored:

Any exclusions that are 6 days or over to ascertain provision.

Any exclusions over 15 days in a term to ensure that schools are following guidance and having disciplinary committee meetings.

Manually import all incoming exclusion data from schools and highlight areas of concern.

Compare exclusion and attendance records for patterns which may indicate illegal exclusion and challenge as appropriate.

Monitor exclusions data and provide annual summary report to senior management

Reduced Timetables:

Schools are required to inform the Inclusion Service of any pupils who are placed on a part time / reduced timetable and the reasons for this. This is recorded centrally and regularly monitored through contact with the school. Information is shared with other teams and agencies in line with our Privacy Notice to ensure that investigations can take place, any updates are provided, and concerns can be raised. Where appropriate we will contact schools to challenge and offer support.

Attendance – Schools have a responsibility to monitor a child’s attendance and investigate any unexplained absence. They should inform the MAST of the details of pupils who are regularly absent from school or have missed 10 school days or more without permission. It is also important that pupils’ irregular attendance is referred.

Independent schools (in and out of the borough) / free schools - A central list has been compiled to detail schools within and outside the borough that our children attend. This includes independent schools, free schools, UTC’s and out of borough special schools. The Inclusion Service make contact with all of the schools to raise attendance, pupils on roll and CME duties.

Children attending Alternative provision:

The Inclusion Service maintains a central list of any pupils that are accessing off site alternative provision (e.g. mechanics, construction, fishing, hairdressing, mechanics, online learning etc).

Schools are asked to notify the team when a pupil is placed on alternative provision and again when a pupil is removed from alternative provision so that records are accurate and discussions can take place regarding other arrangements for the pupil.

In addition to this a LA approved provider list will be established for January 2020.

4. CHILDREN REMOVED FROM ROLL FROM A WIGAN LA SCHOOL

Wigan schools regularly share their school MIS data regarding pupils on roll with the Local Authority. This data is imported into the Capita One V4 MIS system. On a weekly basis the Inclusion Service extracts a list of pupils taken off roll from a Wigan school and will take action to identify those pupils where no destination has been provided. The team will also access the data on a termly basis to ensure that any students taken off roll where the entry has been back-dated are also identified.

The circumstances in which a school may delete compulsory school-age children from their registers are limited. Schools are obliged to comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Next Steps - Please refer to "Procedure for Children Missing Education"

5. CHILDREN ARRIVING INTO WIGAN LA FROM OUT OF BOROUGH

Next Steps - Please refer to "Procedure for Children Missing Education"

6. THE CME GROUP

Decision makers from the following services/agencies make up the CME Group

- Pupil Inclusion
- Complex safeguarding team
- Ethnic Minority Achievement Service
- Startwell Services
- Health Services
- Housing
- School Organisation
- Youth Offending /Targeted Youth Support Service
- Special Educational Needs and Disability
- Social Care
- Virtual School Team
- Attendance Service

Members of the CME group have entered into a Data Sharing Agreement which has been approved by the local authority's Data Protection Officer and Legal Department and complies with GDPR

CME Meetings are held every 8 weeks which takes the form of a Team around the School. The CME lead alongside colleagues from across the partnership explore the cohort profile and themes that are preventing these children meeting outcomes. Partners come together to proactively plan and address inequalities children missing education may face. The vulnerable children's list is shared with partners prior to the meeting and those that require further action to reduce risk, grip the case and prevent drift are raised for discussion.

Alongside this the CME group completes a multi agency audit of CME cases across the risk stratification on a termly basis to quality assure the work and understand where systems are creating barriers for children and young people accessing education and implement an audit action plan This is understood in the context of the wider data dashboard on CME.

Outside of the CME meetings the CME lead from the Inclusion Service maintains the CME list of cases and meets with lead professionals as a group or individuals to ensure pace, review risk categorisation and advise on best practice. The CME lead will also agree whether all attempts to locate the child have been exhausted will be placed on the CME dormant on the Capita ONE MIS system. The Inclusion Service will also check the list on a termly basis and at the end of each academic year to see if any children have returned to education within Wigan.

Stuck cases that remain CME despite assertive challenge and support from the professional network are escalated to the Service Manager – Inclusion. The Service manager will map the case with colleagues who know the case well, alongside decision makers from across the partnership. using a Signs of Safety approach and through the lens of contextual safeguarding.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Procedure for Children Missing Education