STEEL RIVER
ACADEMY TRUST

Children Missing Education Policy

Last review: September 2025

Review date: September 2027

Document Identification and Versioning

Document Reference	Reviewed & Updated By	Date	Comments
1.0	Andrew Joyce	July 2016	New Plan
1.1	Frances Golightly	June 2017	Annual review of Plan
1.2	Patsy Petrie	January 22	Review on behalf of Steel River Academy Trust
1.3	Patsy Petrie	January 23	Review on behalf of Steel River Academy Trust
1.4	Sandra Marsden	September 25	Review on behalf of Steel River Academy Trust

1. Introduction

Local authorities have a duty under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. New statutory guidance for local authorities on children missing education was published in September 2025. This revised policy takes account of the changes in that guidance.

2. Definition of a Child Missing from Education

CME includes children who:

- are in the process of applying for a school place
- have been offered a school place for a future date but have not yet started
- are receiving elective home education (EHE) that has been assessed as unsuitable
- have been recorded as CME for an extended period, for example where their whereabouts is unclear or unknown (for a period of 4 weeks or more).

CME are not children who:

- are receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school (for example, pupils who are electively home educated or attending alternative provision) which is suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have
- are EHE but the local authority has not had an opportunity to assess whether the education being provided is suitable
- are registered at a school, even if they are persistently or severely absent from that school

The purpose of this policy is to identify children who are not receiving a suitable education and ensure that all school-aged children in Redcar and Cleveland have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and that fewer children disengage from the education system.

Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

It is estimated that there are approximately 10,000 Children Missing Education in the UK. These children either fail to start in appropriate education provision or simply become lost from school rolls and fail to re-register at a new school when they move area. It is vital that services work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible.

3. Legislative Requirements

Section 436A of the Education Act "requires all local education 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 receiving a suitable education". Local authorities must also ensure that they 'monitor the numbers of children/young people in the authority who are not receiving an education, including those new to the area or the country'.

The Children's Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of the child and to share information. This principle underpins the local authority's policy for Children Missing Education, and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure children "do not slip through the net" and become missing.

4. Children at risk of missing education

Children can fall out of the education system and be at risk of going missing for a wide variety of reasons. Their personal circumstances or those of their families may contribute to disengagement from the education system if there are no systematic processes in place to identify them and ensure they re-engage with appropriate provision. These children are amongst the most vulnerable in the country.

Possible reasons why children may become missing from education include:

- Failure to register at school at age 5 or to make a successful transition;
- Failure to engage with education following exclusion or change in provision;
- Unsuccessful mid-year school transfer;
- Difficulty finding a school place following a change of address (possibly including asylum seekers/refugees who have relocated from another authority from outside the UK);
- Children from new immigrant families, who are not yet established in the UK and may not have a fixed address.

It is also recognised that children with poor school attendance are often vulnerable and at increased risk of becoming children missing from education. Some children who experience certain life events are more at risk of going missing from education, these include:

- Children who have been bullied;
- Children who experience periods of homelessness or periods in a refuge;
- Young runaways;
- Children from families with transience and residential mobility such as parents in the armed forces, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families;
- Family breakdown whereby parent/carers may move to another area;
- Children who have been permanently excluded from school;
- Disaffection resulting in parents withdrawing the pupil;
- Teenage mothers;

- Children whose parents withdraw them from school in order to home educate them but then fail to provide a suitable education;
- Children who are on the protection register;
- Children who are Looked After or in care;
- Children with long term medical needs;
- Children involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour who may be under the supervision of the Youth Offending Service;
- Children affected by substance and /or alcohol misuse;
- Children or refugees and asylum seeking families;
- Children who have been trafficked to or within the UK;
- Children who are privately fostered;
- Young carers.

5. Identifying a Child Missing Education

The local authority has a dedicated officer to support the development of procedures in this area in order to reduce the risk of children disengaging from the education system. The CME Officer is based within the Pupil Services Team enabling effective working links with School Admissions, Exclusions, Attendance & Welfare, Educational Psychology, Multicultural Service and Specialist Teaching Services.

The CME Officer will work in partnership with schools and key partners including Children's Services, Housing, Health, Looked After Children Team, Foundation for Jobs, Youth Offending, Traveller Education Service, Police and voluntary organisations to enable a multi-disciplinary approach to identifying children missing education.

All officers of Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council have a joint responsibility for children missing education. If an officer becomes aware of any child who does not appear to be accessing education they should make a referral to the CME Officer.

Anyone may make a referral to the CME Officer including members of the public. There are a number of ways a referral can be made:

- By completing a CME Referral Form (Appendix 2)
- Email cme@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk
- Telephoning 01642 837721

A referral and monitoring system for children not on a school roll, at risk of missing education and those missing (destination known or otherwise) has been established.

The CME Officer will manage and co-ordinate the referral process, maintaining and updating the CME database and act as a link officer with schools and other agencies or authorities, referring or tracking pupils out of school. The CME Officer will ensure that the referral procedures outlined in this document are understood and followed.

6. The Role of the Local Authority

Officers within the Pupil Services Team have direct involvement with the local authority's procedures for monitoring and safeguarding children deemed vulnerable, exploited, missing or trafficked (VEMT), through the LSCB VEMT sub-group and operational groups. This ensures that concerns around child sexual exploitation or other VEMT risk factors for children (including those CME or at risk of CME) will be identified and referred in a timely manner for appropriate interventions.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Local Safeguarding Children Board Child Protection Procedures.

This policy is intended to inform local authority officers, schools, academies, governing bodies and other agencies about appropriate procedures for identifying and maintaining contact with children missing from education and those at risk of going missing from education.

This policy sets out how Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council fulfils its statutory duties in relation to children missing education and will also ensure that:

- Schools, academies, services and partner agencies are informed about their role in assisting the council in identifying children missing education;
- Robust multi-agency systems are in place to identify and track children missing education, or at risk of becoming so;
- Mechanisms available to re-engage pupils with education are clear.

A range of procedures and processes have been identified to limit the opportunity for children to go missing when they fall out of the education system, including:

- Identify and locate children missing education through working with other services and agencies;
- Ensure all CME referrals are recorded on a central register and monitored regularly;
- Re-engage those who have been missing with appropriate education;
- Identify children missing education through liaison with other local authorities and access to national databases;
- Develop existing systems to identify those at risk of becoming CME;
- Awareness raising through publicity.

7. The Role of Schools and Academies

If a child leaves a Redcar & Cleveland school without school receiving notification from the parent/carer as to which new school the child is transferring to, the school should immediately notify the Attendance & Welfare Team.

If the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan or at any stage during enquiries, if information comes to light that raises child

protection/safeguarding concerns a referral should be made to Social Care and/or the Police.

Schools should not remove any child from their roll without completing a CME01 (Appendix 1) to ensure that all children removed from the school register are, in accordance with Regulation 8(h)(iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

The CME Officer monitors pupils who have been removed from roll to ensure that the legislation is followed and that no pupil is allowed to go missing from education.

The CME Officer tracks pupils removed from roll to ensure that they are admitted to another school or alternative education provision either within Redcar & Cleveland or another area.

7.1. Steel River Academy Trust's procedures for Reporting CME to the Local Authority

- School along with AWO will make every effort to contact a child who is not attending school.
- Initially a phone call will be made to all contacts on ARBOR. Then a home visit will be carried out within 48 hours of a child being absent. If we are still unable to make contact with the family we would visit the home again, we would put a calling card though the door to make contact with school.
- If all these attempts are failed, a referral to the Local Authority will be made by school after a child has been absent for 10 school days. School will include all evidence of trying to contact the family.
- School complete a weekly return to Paula Harland at the Local Authority for CME even if this is Nil.

8. Working with Key Partners

All offices of Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council and other partners have a duty to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information. In order to achieve the strategic aims of the CME Policy all partner organisations in Redcar and Cleveland will work in collaboration to ensure early identification and intervention regarding children who are not receiving education.

CME 01 - Appendix 1

CHILDREN THOUGHT TO HAVE LEFT THE AREA CHECKLIST

This checklist is to be completed by the AWS team/School Attendance Officer in all cases where it would seem that a child has moved from the area, and the school at which the child is currently registered has not been informed of either a new address of school.

Name of child:…….

School:……

		Date(s)/times	Action by	Response/result (Where appropriate name person/s)
1	All possible whereabouts checked with staff & pupils			
2	Pupil's emergency contact numbers checked			
3	AWS/School Attendance Officer to check with any known extended family and neighbours			
4	Central EMS database checked (via School Admissions/CME Officer)			
5	Checks made with other agencies involved with pupil e.g Social Care, Children's Services, Police, GP, Health Visitor, School Nurse.			

If, after completing the above checks, the child's whereabouts are still not determined please complete CME02 (CME Referral) and forward, along with a copy of this form to the CME Officer.

Please return to:
CME Officer, Cooper Centre, South Bank. TS6 6SU.
Email: cme@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

CME02 – Appendix 2

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION REFERRAL FORM

This form should be completed by professionals undertaking an assessment or who are aware of a child of compulsory school age who does not appear to have a place at a school or other provision arranged by the Local Authority. For additional help and guidance please contact the LA's CME Officer Tel: 01642 837721

Child's Forename:		Child's Surname:	
Date of Birth:		Gender Male/Female	
Name of parent/carer:			
Relationship to child:			
Address:			
Telephone No:			
Mobile No:			
School:		Year Group:	
Child's previous address if new to area:			
Reason for referral:			
Are other professionals involved with the family. Is the child looked after or do they have a Child Protection Plan?			
Contact Name:	Agency:	Contact number:	
Do you know if this child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs / Education Health Care Plan?			
PLEASE COMPLETE REFERRER DETAILS OVERLEAF:			

Name of referrer:	
Agency:	
Position held:	
Date of referral:	
Contact telephone number:	

Name:……. (referrer)

Signed ……..

Date: ……

Once completed please post or email to CME Officer

Post: Cooper Centre, Beech Grove, South Bank. TS6 6SU

Email: cme@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date referral received:	
Date referral recorded on CME register:	
Date acknowledgment sent to referrer:	