

We grow, we care,



We learn, we share.

BEECHES

INFANT SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Date Adopted: September 2018

Review Date: September 2019

Chairperson's Signature:

Beeches Infant School

Attendance Policy

Rationale

Beeches Infant School bases its Attendance Policy on the Guidelines set out by Birmingham LA.

Whilst the legal responsibility for regular attendance rest with Parents, the Governors and staff at Beeches Infant School share with them and the LA responsibility for encouraging good attendance and improving poor attendance.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards at least 96% attendance and above for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Aims

- To maximise attendance of all pupils.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with Beeches Infant School.
- To monitor and support pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents/carers to improve their child's attendance.
- To implement an effective system of rewards and sanctions.
- To promote effective partnerships with other agencies.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Targets

- Beeches Infant School is required by law to maintain records and publish specified information on the attendance of pupils.
- Beeches Infant School agrees to an overall attendance and persistent absence target with the Governors.
- Class teachers are provided with feedback on pupil attendance, as appropriate in line with data analysis.
- Weekly assemblies will reward attendance the class with the best attendance being awarded the weekly cup.
- Attendance percentages will be recorded on the Attendance Board in the hall and announced to parents via the weekly Newsletter.

Roles and Responsibilities

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Governors

- To monitor progress towards annual targets for overall attendance and persistent absence.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance policy.
- To provide a named Governor for personal development behaviour and welfare.

Head Teacher

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately record individual pupils, groups and whole school patterns.
- To feedback attendance data to Governors and provide information for them to evaluate the success of the Attendance policy and practice.
- To make the judgement whether an absence that has not been requested is authorised or unauthorised.
- To support the Deputy Head Teacher, if needed, in meeting with parents to discuss, support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- To consider leave in term time requests and follow procedures in LA guidance.
- Where the authenticity of illness is in doubt the head teacher will no longer authorise any absence for medical reasons. The parents will be informed in writing of this intention.

Deputy Head Teacher

- To closely monitor whole school, individual pupils and group attendance and report to the Head Teacher concerns that arise.
- To follow the FAST track on attendance process, where children have been identified with a safeguarding vulnerability.
- To follow the Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice Process) where there has been 10 days of unauthorised absence taken within a period of 12 months. To take legal action in the form of issuing a penalty notice. This will only apply when a child has reached statutory school age ie the term after a child is 5 years old.
- To discuss and disseminate to Extended Leadership Team and class teachers the attendance of pupils whose attendance is causing concern.
- To complete half termly attendance data.
- To write to Parents/Carers when concerns arise regarding attendance and punctuality.
- To arrange meetings to discuss persistent absence (below 10%) with parents as required and set targets for those experiencing difficulties.
- To work alongside pastoral team to implement agreed action plans with children who are persistently absent.
- To support the Parents/Carers in improving attendance for their child.
- To support a pupil when attendance has become an issue or they are being reintegrated back to school after a prolonged absence.
- To manage reward systems in place and prepare and organise the following:-
 1. Weekly attendance data for assemblies.
 2. Termly data for Attendance Assemblies prizes, badges and certificates.

3. Provide Head teacher with attendance data to publish in school newsletter.

- Half termly check the Electronic signing in system and write to Parents whose children have more than 6 lates in one half term, this will include late morning starts and late collections from school. An attendance printout and information on impact of missed education will be sent attached to the letter.
- Half termly target and write to parents of pupils with 90% and less attendance, to include attendance printout.
- To identify high focus vulnerable group for Persistent absence and lateness and monitor for improvement.
- To follow up unexplained absences when school has not been informed. A text message will be sent on each day of absence. To work in partnership with other school staff and/or other agencies if attendance or punctuality is an issue, discuss specific cases half termly with pastoral team.
- To maintain and update Attendance Board.
- Organise reward systems of badges and prizes for good or improving attendance each term. Those achieving attendance of 98% and above will receive the gold award for attendance and receive a certificate and badge. For 96% and above the class will receive the silver award and be awarded a certificate.

Class Teacher

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each pupil in their class, completing the register accurately twice daily by the designated times of 9 a.m. and 12.45 (EYFS) 1pm (KS1). Any pupil arriving after 9 a.m. will be marked as Late.
- To open class doors promptly at 8.50 a.m. and close at 9 a.m.
- To promote good attendance and punctuality by being an exemplary role model.
- To follow up with parents the reason for an absence and liaise with Deputy Head Teacher/office staff.
- To discuss attendance below 92% directly with the parent.
- Discuss any attendance concerns directly with the parent, DHT to alert class teachers with half termly attendance figures below 92% with a letter. Those with figures below 95% to be discussed at parents evening.
- To notify the Deputy Head Teacher should a pupil's attendance cause a concern or concern is raised regarding the reason given for an absence.
- When requested by the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher to organise work to be sent home for pupils in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period in line with Birmingham LA guidelines.

Office Staff

- To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of attendance in CMIS.
- To use persistent absence spreadsheet to identify groups of pupils within attendance bands 95% and below, 92% and below to enable DHT to analyse vulnerable groups.
- To prepare attendance reports when requested to do so by the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher.

- To ensure the first day text system is in place * (School should be informed on a DAILY BASIS or of the expected day of return) and that Parents/Carers are being contacted on the first day of absence. If parents fail to contact school on day 2 a phone call enquiry will be made, **'Safe and well checks will be conducted on the 3rd day of unauthorised absence'** in liaison with parent support worker.
- On the advice of the head teacher request parents to provide medical evidence to support a period of absence if there are concerns.
- Using the **'children with a safeguarding vulnerability'** pupil list the school office staff will report to DHT/ Parent support worker, any unauthorised absence immediately, who will then conduct a safe and well check.
For this vulnerable group; safe and well checks will be made on **day 2 of an illness absence and on the first day of any unauthorised absence. Vulnerable children inc (CP, CiN, EH and HF attendance)*
- To co-ordinate and record written requests for any leave of absence during term time.
- To coordinate paperwork for legal processes.

Parents should

- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time - 8.55am and is collected on time- 3.15pm. If a child is collected late, beyond 30 minutes we reserve the right to place a child in our after school care facility at the cost of the daily rate of £8.50 for each child.
- Not book holidays in term time.
- Make sure that that their child attends regularly and contact the school office to explain any absence on the first day of absence and as requested.
- Work with the DHT and pastoral team to address any concerns where absence is falling below national expectations 96%.

Reasons for Absence

Absences will be classified by the Head Teacher as to whether they are authorised or unauthorised. Birmingham LA has listed the following as authorised absences:-

1. Temporarily educated in another establishment.
2. Court appearance.
3. Bereavement.
4. Exclusion for medical or behavioural reasons.
5. Illness or medical treatment.
6. Day of religious observance.

No other reasons are considered appropriate and a child should attend school if these conditions are not met.

Leave in term time

Leave in term time will not be authorised as outlined in current Birmingham LA statutory procedures *Appendix 1. The head teacher will only consider exceptional circumstances as identified in the guidance.

The Local Authority reserves the right, in line with the Birmingham Code of Conduct, to follow the legal process and issue Penalty Notices where Parents/Carers remove their children from school during term time without the authorisation of the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors. **20 sessions of unauthorised absence (10 days) within a 12 month period will qualify for a penalty notice.**

We follow the Local Authority procedure for safeguarding pupils who have 20 sessions of unauthorised absence, and carry out reasonable enquiries with advice from the 'Left School No Trace team' LSNT.

Any Safeguarding concerns will be reported directly to Children's social care.

Emergency procedures when a child is not collected from school

We follow local authority emergency procedures in response to parents who are not present to receive their children from school or an activity at the expected time. *Appendix 2

Whilst a senior member of staff will make every effort to contact the parent/ carer or named emergency contact.

In the first instance after 30 minutes following the agreed time for collection from an after school activity or the end of the school day a child will be placed in our after school care facility at the cost of the daily rate. If the child has not been collected or received after 1 hour a phone call will be made to the Children's Advice and Support Service. (CASS)

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Attendance data will be checked regularly by the Deputy Head Teacher to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include pupils with incomplete weeks; Monday to Friday absences; lateness; periods of extended absences; periods of unauthorised absences and all pupils with attendance below 90%. This data will be discussed at half termly with the SLT.
- The Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher will discuss regularly the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance.
- The Head teacher will feedback attendance data to the Governors and provide information for them to evaluate the success of the policy and practice.

Children Missing in Education

We follow guidance from Birmingham City Council and work jointly with the CME team in respect of pupils on roll at school who are absent from school and their whereabouts is unknown.

This might include

- A child who is not at their last address: and
- Has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or:
- Has left school suddenly and their destination is unknown. (Appendix 3)

Review

This Attendance Policy was reviewed in Autumn 2018. In accordance with the School Policy Review Plan it will be reviewed in September 2019, except where Government or Birmingham LA changes necessitate an earlier review or where a request has come from Governors or the Head Teacher.

Policy Approved: _____ Sept 2018

Next Review Date: _____ Sept 2019

Term Time Leave (Pupils)

(Updated) Guidance for Schools and Academies

Birmingham City Council

February 2017

With Reference to the Statutory Instrument 2006 No. 1751

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016

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Term Time Leave (pupils)

Please note that this is general guidance and relates to children of compulsory school age only.

1. Introduction

From 1st September 2013, amendments to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** made clear that **Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** apply to all maintained schools, academies, studio schools, free schools and independent schools.

From 1st September 2016, further amendments were made to the Regulations relating to removal from roll.

Term time holidays continue to cause significant concern and debate. While there are many different views, the direct correlation between attendance and attainment is undeniable. Absence from school interrupts teaching and learning and compromises progress. Birmingham City Council therefore seeks to support Birmingham schools and academies in reducing the amount of education lost to pupil leave of absence in term time.

Birmingham City Council strongly discourages pupil leave of absence during term time.

The expectation is that such leave would only be authorised in the most exceptional circumstances.

Birmingham City Council's Penalty Notice 'Code of Conduct', which governs the issuing of the Local Authority's penalty notices in relation to pupil absence, can be found via the link below.

<https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/5116/birmingham-city-council-absence-code-of-conduct-2016>

2. Making the decision following an application for 'Term Time' leave

When parents request permission to take their children out of school during term time where there are exceptional circumstances, an application form should be completed and submitted to the school at least two weeks before they are due to leave.

Parents must contact the school and allow the school to consider their application before booking flights or leaving the country, even when unforeseen events occur (e.g. family bereavement)

It is essential that all schools operate a formal process of application, interview and contract.

Please Note: A recommended letter of application and an agreement / contract form can be found via <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/school-attendance>

Head Teachers may, on rare occasions, make a judgement that there are genuine and exceptional circumstances pertaining to an application to take a pupil out of school during term. **Head Teachers should not operate a blanket ban on all term time leave and should consider each application on its merits.** Examples of exceptional circumstances could include:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)
- leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time
- leave of absence already granted by a previous school or local authority (granted within the last six months and supported by documentation from the previous school)

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interests of the pupil nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. School and school relationships can provide pupils with stability and care during difficult times.

If leave is granted, the Head Teacher is the person who determines the number of school days a child can be away from school.

Please Note: Parents should be informed by the school of the law regarding term time leave. Schools may use the letter '**Spotlight on Attendance - A very important message for all parents**' <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/school-attendance> for this purpose. Information for parents/carers clarifying their legal responsibilities regarding attendance and highlighting the impact of absence during term time should be made available each year to all parents/carers, through new parent and pupil induction, as part of parent evenings and in the school's prospectus.

Head Teachers are within their rights to turn such applications down and refuse authorisation for parents/carers to take their children out of school during term time.

Schools should record the number and frequency of absence taken for this purpose throughout a pupil's school career in order to assess the potential impact on a pupil's education of any proposed further term time leave.

Head Teachers should also take into account the following circumstances:

- the pupils current absence record

- the number of previous similar requests
- the year group the pupil is in
- proximity of major tests/exams
- the time of the academic year proposed
- the duration of the absence and its impact on continuity of learning

If the school decides not to agree to the request and the parents/carers take their child/ren on unauthorised leave, the 'Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process' should be followed in the first instance.

Where children do not attend school, but unauthorised leave in term time is suspected (parents have not made a request for example) the usual school absence procedures must be followed. Schools must then follow the Children Missing Education procedures, for safeguarding purposes, jointly making reasonable enquiries to try to locate the pupil. cme@birmingham.gcsx.gov.uk

Please note: *In circumstances where the parents/carers do not apply for authorisation prior to departure, retrospective authorisation of leave in term time by the Head Teacher is not permitted under the regulations*

3. Penalty Notices

Where a child has unauthorised term time leave but does not meet the criteria for 'Spotlight', schools can use an 'add on' legal process, the 'Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process'. Guidance and the letter templates are available on the website:

<https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/school-attendance>.

This process enables the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice for removing their child from school for an unauthorised leave of absence in term time.

If the Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process is followed correctly, parents may be issued with a penalty notice for taking their child on two weeks unauthorised leave in term time with no previous unauthorised absence.

Parents may also be issued with a penalty notice for taking their children out of school for a week of unauthorised leave as long as there are at least 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence over the previous 12 calendar months. This could include registration codes 'O', 'G' or 'U'.

For pupils who have taken unauthorised leave in term time for four weeks or more, penalty notices may not be issued as cases may proceed straight to court. In these cases, schools should continue to follow the usual Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process. Decisions as to whether a penalty notice is to be issued or the matter proceeds straight to court lie with the Education Legal Intervention Team.

Please note: The 'Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process' should not be used in isolation but as an additional programme to 'Spotlight'. Penalty Notices for unauthorised Leave in Term Time absence may not be issued for schools who do not use 'Spotlight' to tackle high levels of other unauthorised absence. ('Spotlight on Attendance' Campaigns are a preventative initiative that aims to raise individual and whole school attendance by creating awareness, giving parents/carers clear guidance and promptly using legal action to prevent further unauthorised absence in cases of serious concern).

4. Absence Coding

For the purposes of registration codes, leave in term time granted in exceptional circumstances should be coded as 'H' and counts as authorised absence. Where leave in term time has not been agreed or for the days taken in excess of an agreement, it should be coded 'G' and count as **unauthorised** absence.

5. Taking Pupils Off Roll

Pupils may not be removed from roll just because they have taken unauthorised term time leave and may only be deleted from the Admissions register if the grounds for deletion outlined in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments are met.

From 1st September 2016, The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 amended the grounds upon which children can be deleted from the Admissions register.

In addition, the Regulations now require schools to inform the Local Authority of all circumstances in which a pupil is removed from the register. Schools should use the Pupil Movement Form which can be obtained from the School Admissions link and send the form to their School Admissions contact. (or in the case of independent schools or alternative providers direct to Pupil Tracking at PupilTracking@birmingham.gov.uk)

In most cases of unauthorised leave in term time the 'Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process' should be used rather than deletion from roll.

For further advice about deletion from roll, please see the 'BCC Deletion from Roll' guidance

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/5477/deletion_from_roll_guidance_amendments_2016

6. CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME)

On 1st September 2016 new statutory guidance on CME came into effect. The actual document, 'Children missing education, Statutory guidance for local authorities', which highlights the CME responsibilities of local authorities and schools, is available

for download at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

In respect of pupils absent from school without authorisation whose whereabouts are unknown, the guidance clarifies that the local authority must carry out reasonable enquiries into the pupil's whereabouts with schools jointly. It is vital, therefore, that schools refer any pupil whose whereabouts is unknown promptly, and no later than five days from the first day of absence, to the Children Missing Education Team at cme@birmingham.gcsx.gov.uk so that they can carry out their enquiry in tandem with yours

Schools are encouraged to call the CME team for guidance and support during the 'reasonable enquiry' phase as invariably, CME Officers will be able to conduct background checks on the pupil during those crucial first five days of absence. Deletion notices are issued by the CME team where a referral has been accepted and investigated but the pupil's whereabouts remain unknown and reasonable enquiries have been exhausted. The deletion notice signifies compliance with the Pupil Regulations section 8 (1) (h), '20 days unauthorised absence and both the local authority and the school jointly have tried to locate the pupil'.

Useful Links

BCC guidance and procedures

Birmingham City Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/5116/birmingham_city_council_absence_code_of_conduct_2016

Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process

<https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/school-attendance>

'Deletion from Roll' Guidance

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/downloads/file/5477/deletion_from_roll_guidance_amendments_2016

Department for Education guidance (including statutory guidance) and useful information

Children Missing Education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

Keeping children safe in education - Statutory guidance for schools and colleges

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

School attendance - Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-for-children-with-health-needs-who-cannot-attend-school>

The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4 - 2013/14 academic year

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/absence-and-attainment-at-key-stages-2-and-4-2013-to-2014>

Appendix 2

Emergency Procedures when a child is not collected.

Responding when parents are not present to receive their children from school or an activity at the expected time.

Published: 01/04/16

Introduction

At the end of a school day, or of an activity for children arranged by a school/setting, the children concerned will transfer back to the care of their parents or carers. Some older children will be of an age and ability to make their own way home, but parents will often need to make arrangements for the collection of their children due to their age, ability, the time or location of the activity. Most will be collected by a parent/carer, whilst some will be transported to their home for the transfer of responsibility to take place there.

These arrangements are well established and understood by parents and carers and generally work extremely well. However there are occasions when events prevent parents or carers arriving on time to collect their child. In most of these cases the delay is minimal. In other cases the parent will notify the school or organisation and agree new arrangements.

This guidance is concerned with the cases where the arrangements to hand back responsibility fail, and contact with the parents cannot be made, or when parents cannot make arrangements within a reasonable period of time.

This guidance details the arrangements for dealing with children not collected from school/settings at the end of the day or from any activity at the agreed time and for parental absence when children are transported home at the end of the school day or after an activity. Included in this process are those children who are not collected on time but where the parents repeatedly notify the school of a significant delay. This process has been endorsed by Directorate for People Children's Social Care, the Police and Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board.

The guidance is provided for use by:-

- Schools/Academies;
- Nurseries;
- After School Provisions;
- Children's Centres;
- Residential Settings;
- Youth Groups;
- Sports Groups; and
- Any other organisation or setting providing a service for children or young people where there is an expectation for the child to be collected at the end of a session.

For this guidance to have best effect practitioners in schools and other organisations should be aware of it, and they should in turn inform parents/carers of children attending the school or activities.

Process

- When a child is uncollected from school or from another activity, the safety and welfare of the child will be the paramount consideration in determining appropriate action.

- Parents should be required to provide the school or organisation with their contact details - names(s), address (es), home, work and mobile telephone numbers. Parents should also provide the contact details, and methods to prove identity as required, of at least two other relatives/carers who can be called when the parent/carer cannot be contacted or in the event of an emergency. The school/organisation must keep this record up to date, and ensure that key staff are informed of any changes.
- Only one parent/carer (who has personal responsibility for a child) should be authorised to make changes to the contact details. The school/organisation should note this clearly on the child's record.
- The school/organisation must make clear to parents/carers in writing the normal finish times for the school/activity, the arrangements for children to be collected at the end of the school day/activity, or for their transport home. Any changes should also be notified to parents/carers in writing. This should include notification of any additional financial charge for the use of after school facilities.
- The school/organisation must also make clear that if a child is not collected at the end of the school day/activity, they will notify Children's Social Care, and the period of time that the school/organisation is prepared to wait before involving them.

Procedure

Whenever a parent fails to collect a child from school or an activity at the expected time, or a parent/carer is not at home to receive the child from school transport services:

1. This will be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher or a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). A nominated member of the school staff will then make every effort to contact the parent/carer or the named alternative carers (including where known, other settings that siblings attend to see if they are experiencing the same problem).
2. The DSL will maintain a record of incidents where parents do not collect a child from school or other activities, or are absent when the child is transported home. Any child welfare concerns arising out of such an incident(s) will be dealt with in accordance with the child safeguarding procedures of the school/organisation.
3. The school should organise a rota to allow that at least two staff should stay until responsibility for the child is handed over.
 - 3.1 School Transport will maintain an office rota to cover 'drop off' times to ensure a contact point to ensure that all children have been successfully transferred back to parents care
4. If the school offers after-school clubs or commission's childcare arrangements placing the child into these facilities whilst waiting may be considered. However, consideration should be given to information sharing requirements and minimum staffing levels. If these after-school facilities are normally charged for parents should be charged for use at a daily rate charge.

5. If the child has not been collected/received, and it has not been possible to contact a parent or named carer, 1 hour after the agreed finish time for the school day/activity, a phone call should be made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0121 303 1888. MASH will act in a coordinating role in the first instance and will need the following information:

Brief circumstances of incident, and arrangements in place mapped against the 'Right Services Right Time' threshold model.

- i. Child's details
 - ii. Name(s)
 - iii. Date of birth
 - iv. Address
 - v. Gender
 - vi. Ethnicity
 - vii. Religion
 - viii. Language spoken
 - ix. Special dietary needs
 - x. SEN/behavioural difficulties/medical needs/
- Parent/Carer Contact Details
 - i. Parent/carer/alternative carer details
 - ii. Name(s)
 - iii. Address(es)
 - iv. Home/work/mobile telephone number(s)
 - Any current or previous child protection concerns*
 - Any previous incidents of not being collected from school
 - Details of GP/Health Visitor (optional).

*If the child has an allocated social worker, the school will contact the social worker, or the allocated team manager via Children's Information and Advice Service (CIAS) (303 1888 option 2) instead of contacting the MASH.

6. Where a child has been placed in after school provision, or has not been pick up such provision timescales and contact numbers need to reflect the time the 'non-collection' will occur. In this circumstance:

6.1 If the child has not been collected / received, and it has not been possible to contact a parent or named carer, 30 minutes after the agreed finish time for the after school club

6.2 A phone call should be made to the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 0121 464 9001

7. Note that the CIAS switchboards close at 5.15 p.m. (4.15 Friday) after which the Emergency Duty Team must be contacted. The contact details for CIAS and the Emergency Duty Team are as follows:

**Children's Information and Advice Service-
Emergency Duty Team-**

**Tel No 0121 303 1888
Tel No 0121 464 9001**

8. MASH will give advice and may carry out appropriate checks and make further attempts to contact the parent/carer. If there are any concerns about the welfare of the parent/carer, MASH will, on a case by case basis ask the local police to visit the home address.

9. If an appropriate relative or carer is located, he/she will be asked to ensure that the child is collected / received from the school/organisation. If there is a genuine reason for the relative or carer being unable to do this, MASH will liaise with school/organisation about possible arrangements for the child to be taken to the address though this will occur only under exceptional circumstances.
10. In making decisions, Social Care Services and the school/organisation will prioritise interim care arrangements that best meet the child's personal and emotional needs.
11. If the combined attempts to contact a parent or appropriate carer by the School or MASH remain unsuccessful 1½ hours (by 17.00hrs) after the normal end of the school day/activity, Social Care Services will normally make a decision to assume care of the child and arrange for him/her to be taken to a place of safety.
 1. For children with health care requirements it is expected that the health care plan will include a risk assessment and plan to meet the needs of a child not picked up or dropped off at home by home-to-school transport.
12. By 17.15hrs MASH will confirm the arrangements with the school/organisation and with those caring for the child at that time, before the MASH closes and also hand this information over to the EDT team. The Emergency Duty Team will continue to liaise with the school/setting as appropriate until an appropriate placement is identified.
13. Plans for transporting the child will take into account staff availability out of hours, the need for adequate insurance cover, appropriate gender balance, in car safety, and any information about special needs or behavioural difficulties etc. provided by the school/organisation. Where possible, two adults should be present. If there is a shortage of staff, or adequate arrangements a mini cab could be used with a suitable escort.
14. The school/organisation will send a letter to the parent/carer notifying them of the incident and of the arrangements that were made to care for the child. *(An example of this letter can be found at [Appendix A](#)).*

Children Transported Home from School/Activity

Children transported from school generally have special educational needs the contact with Children's Social Care should be made to the Children with Disabilities Team [via CIAS](#).

15. Where arrangements are in place for a child to be transported home from school or an activity, the school/organisation must ensure that the driver/guide has an emergency telephone number for making contact in the event of problems.
16. The school should also provide a brief précis of the child's health and emotional needs. These should be stored in a sealed envelope and only opened if the child is placed as part of an interim arrangement.
17. If there is no response at the home address, the guide or driver will immediately inform the school/organisation (if still available), who will agree the initial action to be

taken. The school must also inform the Education Transport Service (if the school is no longer available the guide must inform the Education Transport Service).

18. The guide or driver will leave a proforma (see Appendix B) at the child's address with the school's contact details.
19. If there are other children in the same vehicle that need to be taken home then this child will remain in the vehicle whilst this is done.
20. In the meantime, the school/organisation or Transport Assist (the Education Transport Service) will contact MASH via CIAS or if after 5.15pm the Emergency Duty Team - See 7 -12 above. The school/organisation/Transport Assist will notify the guide/driver of action agreed with MASH.

Concerns about the child's welfare

21. The Head Teacher/Senior member of the Leadership Team should meet with the parent on the next working day and outline the actions that the school had to take and why. This will include informing the parent of any arising financial issues and agreeing a payment plan
22. Where more than one incident occurs, repeated episodes on late collection with notification or where there are reasons for concern regarding the ability of parent(s)/carer(s) to collect/receive their child, the Head Teacher will:
 1. Initiate a discussion between the school/organisation and the parent will identify a strategy for addressing these concerns.
 2. Where agreement cannot be reached with parents or in cases where there are child protection concerns, a referral to MASH will be completed and Social Care Services will be invited to contribute to identifying the strategy for addressing the concerns and safeguarding the child.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

Policy and procedures for when children go missing from school.

Guidance for:-

All Birmingham schools, including academies and free schools, and partner agencies Birmingham

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1. Introduction

Birmingham City Council (BCC) is committed to ensuring that every child of compulsory school age is receiving an excellent full-time education which will give them the opportunity to build their own futures. Parents/carers have a duty to ensure children are receiving suitable full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

If a child is not in school, they are at significant risk of underachieving, becoming victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Children may not be attending or may leave school for a number of reasons, but if they are still of compulsory school age, then parents, schools and local authorities have a responsibility to ensure the continuity of their education.

The purpose of this policy is to set out clear & robust procedures for schools, academies, free schools, Birmingham City Council and partner agencies to follow, in order to try and locate children who are absent from school and their family whereabouts is unknown.

2. The legal framework

The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Article 2 of protocol No 1 states:

“No person shall be denied the right to education”

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 requires all local authorities to make arrangements to establish the identities of children of compulsory school age in their area who are not registered pupils at a school, and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

Regulations 8(f) and 8(h) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, place a duty on schools and local authorities to jointly carry out reasonable enquiries to try and locate pupils absent from school whose whereabouts are unknown.

3. Definition – Children Missing from Education (CME)

This policy refers ‘to any child of compulsory school age who has been registered at a formally approved education setting, e.g. school, academy, alternative provision, independent school or elective home education, and has been out of education provision for a period of time.

The Birmingham City Council Children Missing *from* Education (CME) team works jointly with schools in respect of pupils on roll at school, who are absent from school and their whereabouts is unknown’.

This might be:

- A child who is not at their last known address and:
- has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or:
- has left school suddenly and their destination is unknown.

This policy does not cover those children not receiving education due to a family not taking up an offer of a school place from the School Admissions Service. For such cases, please refer to Birmingham School Admissions,

Telephone: 0121 216 3621 (**for schools & professional partners only**).

Email: www.birmingham.gov.uk/schooladmissions

This policy does **not** refer to children who are missing from view or absent from Home or Care. When a child goes missing from the home, or from care, or where the school has significant safeguarding concerns for the child, the school must refer these children immediately to the Childrens Advisory Support Service (CASS), and/or to the Police.

There is a separate policy that outlines the procedures for Social Care practitioners. (See the Birmingham City Council, Missing from Home or Care, Practice Guidance for Children's Services, 2016).

4. Roles and responsibilities:-

i) Parents/carers role

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving efficient full-time education. Some parents may elect to home educate their children and may withdraw them from school at any time to do so (unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order). Where a parent notifies the school in writing of their intention to home educate, the school must inform the local authority using the Birmingham City Council EHE referral form, before deleting the child from its admission register. (See the Birmingham School Noticeboard, and search for 'Elective Home Education' for the corresponding Service Policy dated April 2016 for further guidance).

Telephone: 0121 464 7215

Email: home.education@birmingham.gov.uk

Children with special educational needs and have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan can be home educated. Where the EHC plan sets out special educational provision that the child should receive at home, the local authority is under a duty to arrange that provision. Where the EHC plan names a school as the place where the child should receive his or her education and the parent chooses to home educate their child, the local authority must assure itself that the provision being made by the parent is suitable to the child's special educational needs and this must be reviewed annually.

Telephone: 0121 303 5489 or 303 4175

Email: senar@birmingham.gov.uk or mycareinbirmingham.org.uk

Parents have a responsibility to inform the school or Local Authority of their child's new school destination and home address if they are moving to a new school, at any time during the period of statutory education.

ii) Schools' role and duties

Schools have safeguarding duties under **section 175 of the Education Act 2002** in respect of their pupils and in respect of this they should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have the same safeguarding duty under **section 157** of the Education Act.

Schools must monitor pupil attendance through their daily register and should address poor attendance whenever this occurs. Any child whose whereabouts are known but continues to have unauthorised absences, should be assessed to determine if they have additional needs and require support such as an FCAF, referral to Early Help, or to the school nurse or CASS, etc. If there are no additional needs and the parent does not consent to additional support, or support has been put in place and it has not impacted on attendance, the school should place the child on the 'Spotlight on Attendance' program. Further information on the Spotlight on Attendance program can be accessed by contacting EWSHeadofficeadministration@birmingham.gov.uk.

Schools must also arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a **fixed period** exclusion. If the pupil is permanently excluded, the Local Authority will arrange provision from the sixth day onwards.

Telephone: Exclusions Team 0121 303 2685

Email: exclusions@birmingham.gov.uk

If a child is absent from school and their whereabouts is unknown, schools have a duty to carry out a reasonable enquiry **jointly** with the local authority to ascertain the whereabouts, which might be a result of:-

- The family moving within the city but the parents fail to inform the school of the house move or transfer to a new school.
- The family move out of the city and relocate to a new area within the UK but parents fail to inform the school.
- The family relocate abroad and fail to inform the school of their destination.
- The family is displaced as a result of 'crisis' e.g. domestic violence, homelessness.
- Parent/school disagreement and parents withdraw the child from school.
- Family separation.

In these instances, all schools should ensure the following actions are taken and recorded:

- Call the CME Team to conduct 'background checks' on the family
- Consider the likely reason for the absence – has the family been granted leave of absence or is the school aware of an extended trip abroad; has the child been absent due to sickness or unavoidable cause? If not:
- Make a first day of absence call to the parents to establish the reason for the absence and to confirm the child's whereabouts.
- Check with all members of staff who the child may have had contact with.

- Check with the child's friends, siblings and known relatives at this school or other schools.
- Make enquiries with other professionals who have been involved with the child.
- Make telephone calls to any numbers held or identified.
- Conduct a visit to the last known address of the child within the first five days of the child's absence.
- If possible, enquire of neighbours about the location of the family.
- Send a letter to the last known address and record the outcome.
- Refer the child to the BCC 'CME' team within the first five days of the child's absence and inform BCC's CME officer telephone: - 0121 303 4983, and complete the 'Missing Pupil' referral form (Appendix B) which can also be downloaded from the Education Noticeboard. Completed referral forms should be sent as an email attachment to the secure address; cme@birmingham.gcsx.gov.uk

iii) Local Authority role and duties

Birmingham City Council has procedures in place to prevent children at risk of becoming CME.

When the CME Officer receives referrals from schools, they will undertake a joint enquiry with the school to try to locate the family and ensure the child is in receipt of a suitable education.

The CME Officer will ensure the referral is checked to see if the child/family is known to Children's Social Care (CSC) by accessing the 'CareFirst' database. If known to CSC, the CME Officer will contact the named CSC officer to alert them to the child's missing education status.

The CME Officer will assess all referrals to ensure that the school's reasonable enquiry is underway and that any safeguarding concerns identified by the school are clearly noted and have been promptly referred to the CASS and/or the Police.

Any significant safeguarding concerns highlighted within the referral but not reported to CASS and/or the Police by the school or referrer will be actioned immediately and appropriately by the CME Officer and will be discussed with the Head Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Lead of the referring school to ensure that such concerns are appropriately escalated in the future.

After the initial checks, all referrals will be flagged on BCC's Central Pupil Database, 'Impulse,' as 'child missing' and a note to this effect will be placed on the child's record. This will enable any Birmingham professional accessing the child's education record to be alerted to the child's current status and prompt them to share any appropriate intelligence on the child's current whereabouts with the CME Team.

An email confirming receipt of the referral will be sent by the CME Officer to the referring school.

5. Procedures following completion of joint reasonable enquiries

The CME Team will complete a series of checks to try and locate the child and ensure the child is in receipt of a suitable education. These checks include:

- Checking the Central Pupil Database “Impulse” for information on the child’s destination.
 - Checking the Birmingham City Council Data Warehouse. The Data Warehouse allows access to the Electoral Register; the list of Birmingham City Council Housing Tenants; and various other Council services and will ascertain if the parent/carers are still registered at last known address.
 - Checking with the Home Office Intelligence/UK Borders Agency in respect of suspected family movements abroad where necessary.
 - Checking NHS and GP records via access to the Child Health Service database.
 - Accessing DfE databases; including Key to Success’ and School to School (s2s),
 - Using social networking sites such as ‘Facebook’ to try and locate the parents/carer of the pupil.
 - Undertaking home visits to locate children and families if necessary.
 - If at any stage of the enquiry into a child’s whereabouts schools or BCC have concerns for a child’s safety, an immediate referral must be made to CASS by completing and submitting a ‘Request for Support’ referral form to:
- secure.cass@birmingham.gcsx.gov.uk (secure email), **or:**

For advice on particular cases, CASS can be contacted on 0121 303 1888 or out of hours on 0121 675 4806.

The School and the CME Team will aim to complete their joint enquiry as quickly as possible and will inform any other associated professional of the outcome.

Upon completion of the reasonable enquiry the CME Team will confer with the child’s school to confirm the outcome.

The vast majority of children are found with their families and are in receipt of suitable education. A collaborative agreement will be made between the school and the CME team on the appropriateness of removing the child from the school roll. This is essential, to safeguard against premature/illegal deletions from roll.

Where the child/family are not found, and the risk assessment indicates no obvious safeguarding concerns, the case will remain ‘open pending further enquiries’ in the archive system and will be systematically uploaded to the BCC Data Warehouse to alert key partners with system access, including the Police, to notify the CME team of any information which may confirm the current whereabouts of the child.

Contacts:

- CME Officer – Karen Prosser at:-
Telephone: 0121 303 4983
Email: cme@birmingham.gcsx.gov.uk

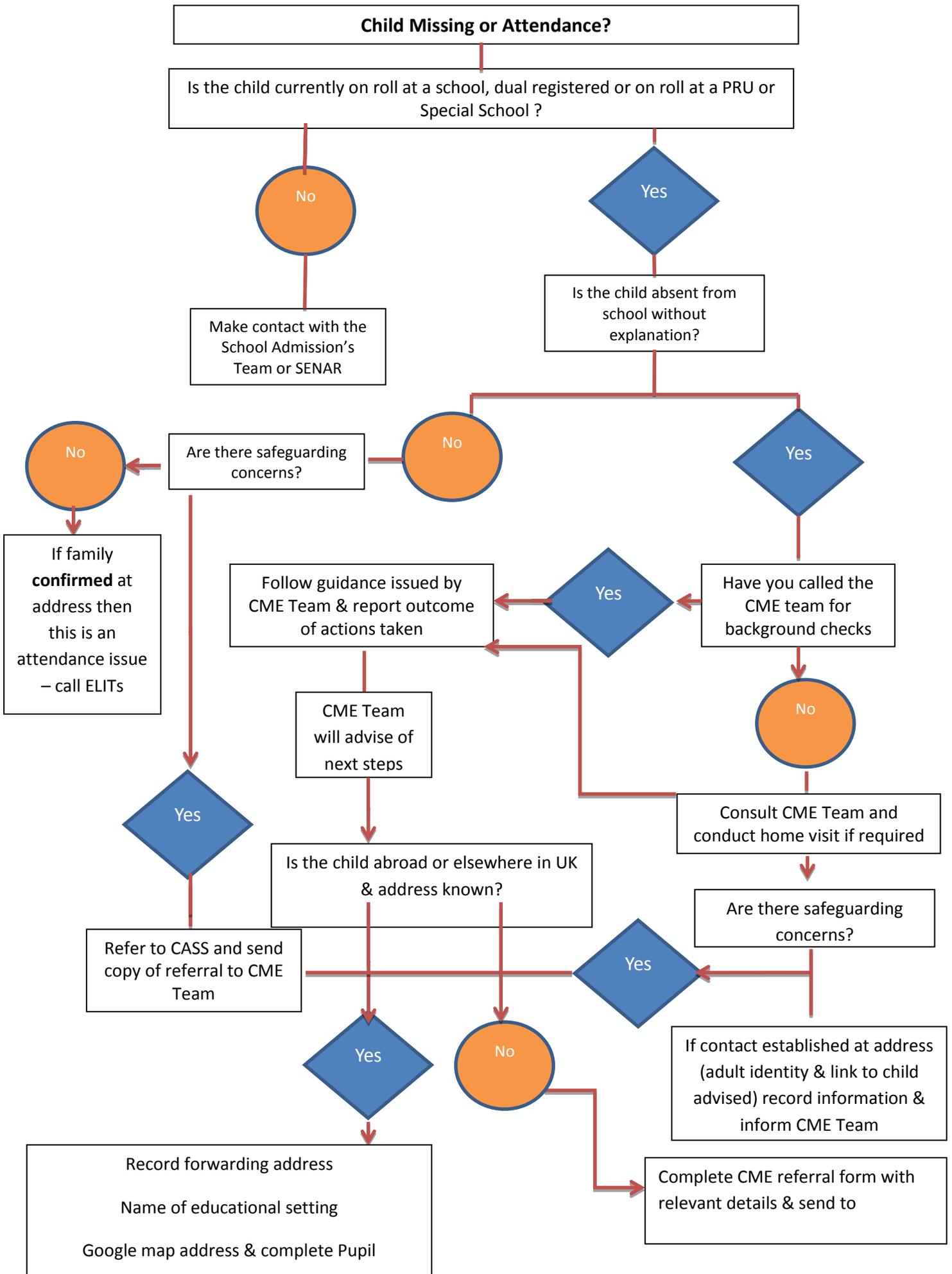
- CME Team (Normal office hours)
Telephone: 0121 303 4983.

Email: cme@birmingham.gcsx.gov.uk
- School Admissions
Telephone: 0121 303 1888 for general enquiries

Email: www.birmingham.gov.uk/schooladmissions
- Education Legal Intervention Team (ELITs)
Telephone: 0121 464 8979.

Email: EWSHeadofficeadministration@birmingham.gov.uk.
- CASS – Telephone: 0121 303 1888.
Email: secure@cass.birmingham.gcsx.gov.uk
- SENAR - Telephone: 0121 303 5489 or 303 4175

Email: senar@birmingham.gov.uk or mycareinbirmingham.org.uk



Children most at risk of becoming CME

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education and the list below presents *some* of the circumstances that may lead to children becoming CME (it is not exhaustive):-

1. **Pupils at risk of harm/neglect** - Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected schools should follow local safeguarding children procedures. Local authority officers responsible for CME should check that a referral has been made and, if not, they should alert children's social care. If there is reason to suspect that a crime has been committed or the child's safety is at risk, the police should also be involved.
2. **Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveler (GRT) Families** – Research has shown that many children from these families can become disengaged from education, particularly during the secondary school phase. It is therefore vital that schools inform the LA when a GRT pupil leaves the school without identifying a new destination school, particularly in the transition from primary to secondary so that they can attempt to facilitate continuity of the child's education. Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly and their children can be at increased risk of missing education. Local authority Traveler Education Support Services (TESS), where these exist, or named CME officer within the LA, can advise schools on the best strategies for ensuring the minimum disruption to GRT pupils' education, for example dual registration with other schools or the provision of electronic or distance learning packages where these are available.
3. **Families of Armed Forces** - Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MOD Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) on 01980 618244 for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.
4. **Missing children/runaways** - Children who go missing or run away from home or care may be in serious danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation or abduction as well as missing education.
5. **Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System** - Children who have offended or are at risk of doing so are also at risk of disengaging from education. Local authority Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are responsible for supervising those young people (aged 8 to 18). YOTs should work with the local authority CME officer to ensure that children are receiving, or return to, appropriate full-time education. Where a young person was registered at a school prior to custody, the school may keep the place open for their return.
6. **Children who cease to attend a school** – there are many reasons why a child stops attending a school. It could be because the parent chooses to home educate their child. However, where the reason for a child who has stopped attending a school is not known, the school must investigate the case and ensure the child is receiving suitable education. Once the school has undertaken reasonable enquiries and the pupils whereabouts are still unknown, the school must refer the case to BCC's CME officer and follow the referral procedures outlined in this policy.

Children Missing Education Referral Form

Complete and return this form **by email** with details of pupils who have unauthorised absence whose **whereabouts cannot be traced**. Please do **not** use for matters of persistent absence. (See Guidance notes below)

Have you called the CME team for background checks prior to completing this form?

| CHILD DETAILS | | | | | | |
|---|--|-------------|--|---|--|-----------------|
| SURNAME* | | | | | | |
| FIRST NAME* | | | | | | |
| GENDER* | | DOB* | | YEAR GROUP | | OUR REF: |
| UPN*: | | | | | | |
| CURRENT ADDRESS* (include post code) | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| PARENT'S NAME/PHONE NO* | | | | | | |
| CURRENT/PREVIOUS SCHOOL* | | | | | | |
| DATE LAST ATTENDED: | | | | | | |
| PUPIL STATUS* (Please Tick/Delete as appropriate) | | | | Formerly/Currently Known to Social Services <input type="checkbox"/> Looked After Child <input type="checkbox"/> Special Education Needs <input type="checkbox"/> Traveller <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

| DETAIL ACTIONS PRIOR TO REFERRAL: | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----|----|--|---|
| REPORT OUTCOME OF HOME VISITS: | | | | |
| DATE | AM | PM | ADDRESS VISITED: (if different from above) | WHO DID YOU SPEAK TO? (State relationship to the pupil) <i>'Aunt', 'Uncle' or 'Cousin' is not acceptable without forename and/or surname</i> |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| Does this child have a history of non-attendance? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is there a pattern of unauthorised term time leave? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Is this child subject to Private Fostering? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you have any supporting documentation to support relocation out of Birmingham – Please attach. | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SAFEGUARDING RISK APPRAISAL (TO BE COMPLETED BY DSL)

Risk Assessment* (are there any known concerns/safeguarding risks; is this child known to Children's Social Care/subject to a Child protection assessment/plan.
CMEbham330

Date any concerns referred to MASH:

Outcome of referral to MASH:

OUTLINE CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES

YOUR CONTACT DETAILS

| | |
|-----------|--|
| NAME | |
| JOB TITLE | |
| TEAM NAME | |
| TEL NO | |
| EMAIL | |
| DATE | |

Please return completed form immediately to:

cme@birmingham.gcsx.gov.uk

DO NOT SEND CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION TO ANY OTHER ALTERNATIVE EMAIL ADDRESS.

PLEASE CONFER WITH THE CME TEAM TO OBTAIN DELETION NOTICES

GUIDANCE NOTES AND CHECKLIST

- This form **should be** used for reporting pupils of statutory school age who are absent from school for 20 consecutive days without authorisation, **whose whereabouts is unknown**. See sections 8F and 8h of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended 2013.
- This form **should not** be used for reporting pupils who are absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive days **who remain resident at their known address or have moved to another known address**.
- Pupils who leave school and transfer to another school, or who leave school to another district and parents confirm their new address, should be reported to the School Admissions Service via the **'In-year notification of pupil movement form'**
- Under The Education, Pupil Registration Regulations, schools and academies have a duty to carry out 'reasonable enquiries' into the whereabouts of pupils who meet the criteria for referral via this form. The enquiries schools and academies are expected to undertake are outlined in the checklist with their outcomes recorded on this form:-

CHECKLIST

In most circumstances, the school's enquiries will commence **from the first day of unauthorised absence**. Have you:

- ✓ Called the CME team for background checks on the family e.g. sibling schools.
- ✓ As the DSL ensured that any safeguarding concerns have been promptly referred to the Children's Advisory Support Service (CASS). Tel: 0121 303 1888?
- ✓ Tasked appropriate staff to check with all members of staff who the pupil may have had contact with?
- ✓ Checked with the pupil's friends, siblings and known relatives at this school or other schools?
- ✓ Tasked appropriate school staff to conduct telephone calls to ALL numbers held on the pupil file?
- ✓ Tasked appropriate staff to conduct home visit(s) to the last known address of the pupil?
- ✓ If possible, enquired of neighbours as to the location of the family?
- ✓ Sent a letter to the last known address and record the outcome?

ALSO:

- ✓ **If there is good reason to believe that a crime may have been committed? E.g. this is a very sudden, unexpected situation and/or there are cultural reasons to suspect that the pupil is at risk or there have been past suspicions concerning the pupil and family which, together with the sudden disappearance, are worrying? Have you made a prompt referral to the Police?**
- ✓ **If the pupil is subject to a Child Protection plan or investigation, has the Social Worker has been informed of the pupil's absence?**
- ✓ **Similarly as above if the pupil is 'looked after'?**

In the three instances above, CASS should be informed immediately