

Children Missing Education Protocol

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The Rationale for this Protocol:

This protocol sets out Enfield's commitment to address the local and wider concern about raising the awareness of children missing education within this authority.

The legal framework for this protocol is;

Children Act 1989
Children Act 2004
Education Act 2002 S175/157
Education 2005 S116
Education and Inspections Act 2006 s 4

All London Child Protection Procedures 4th edition
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013
Keeping children safe in education 2014
Children Missing from Education Statutory Guidance 2004 DCSF

Schools have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their pupils

Introduction

Enfield Council is committed to promoting learning opportunities for all school age children and young people of this culturally rich and diverse community. We aim to ensure equity and equality for all children and young people attending school in this borough, and to ensure they have access to all the information they need to learn and to develop their education interests.

Enfield Council is committed to:

- Ensuring that all pupils who go missing, are lost from school in Enfield or move to other areas are speedily located
- Supporting other LA's to locate their own missing / lost pupils, should such pupils move to Enfield
- Supporting Health Workers and other child and family community agencies that have a concern for a child missing education or a child or children whose whereabouts are unknown

The council believes that it can best achieve this if its procedures:

- Are underpinned by the relevant statutory requirements in relation to missing/lost pupils
- Are interconnected with the School to School National pupil database (S2S);
- Keep children safe and follow best practice underpinned by the statutory framework which places a duty on all professionals to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

Categories of Children Missing Education

- A Child of statutory school age (5-16) not on roll at a registered school
- A Child allocated a place at school but has not attended
- A Child registered as being educated at home but not receiving an education

This Guidance does not replace the Pan London Child Protection Procedures.

This protocol should be read in conjunction with ESCB policy Children Missing from Care and Home 2010.

Children who go missing from education

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.

Children at particular risk of missing education:

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education so it is vital that local authorities make judgement on a case by case basis.

- Young people who have committed offences
- Children living in women's refuges
- Children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation
- Young Runaways
- Children with long term medical or emotional problems
- Looked After Children
- Migrant children, whether in families seeking asylum or economic migrants
- High Mobility (children travelling long distances to school)
- Young Carers
- Children from gypsy/traveller backgrounds
- Teenage mothers
- Children who are permanently excluded from school

- Children and young people who abuse drugs and alcohol

Children missing Education may already be known to other agencies;

- Social Care
- Young runaways Service
- Prevention of sexual Abuse Service
- Teenage Parents Group
- Young Carers Groups e.g. DAZU
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Service for Adolescents and Families in Enfield (SAFE)
- Youth Offending Service (YOS)
- Connexions

Children missing Education may already be known on other databases

- Tribal
- Liquid Logic
- Department for Work and Pensions
- School to School (DfE Database)

It is important that the CME Co-ordinator based in EWS, which is the lead agency with responsibility for monitoring Children Missing Education, investigates all sources to establish as much information as possible about the child/family to assist their enquiries so that each agency is aware of the situation.

It is particularly pertinent that schools update the School to School National Pupil Database (S2S) with any new information concerning a child or young person.

Monitoring and tracking

The aim of this document is to safeguard the welfare of children who become missing from education. The Identification, Referral and Tracking Guidance (2003) requires all local authorities to have a named person responsible for receiving details of children found to be missing from education.

Local authorities are required to track, locate and ensure access to education for children who:

- have never accessed education (have neither enrolled at a school, nor received education otherwise than at school since reaching statutory school age);
- leave educational provision without a confirmed education destination, and/or fail to access a school place when moving to a new area;

- fail to transfer between a new key stage (for instance the Early Years Foundation Stage to Year 1, Year 2 to Year 3 or Year 6 to Year 7);
- have been withdrawn by the parent/carer from the education system (in accordance to the Home Education Protocol).

All children identified as Children Missing from Education need to be monitored and tracked until the local authority can show that they have:

- been allocated a place at a school, or suitable alternative education provision;
- reached a destination in another authority and/or the new local authority is aware and investigating;
- all reasonable checks have been satisfactorily conducted.

Children in Enfield who appear to be missing from education

Where a child resident in Enfield is believed to be missing from education, any council department, partner agency, or individuals in contact with the child, are expected to make a referral, to the Children Missing Education Coordinator.

These may include:

- School Attendance Service,
- Truancy Patrols, Police,
- Health service,
- Housing and Benefits Services,
- Police,
- voluntary and community groups,
- Youth Service,
- parents and members of the public,
- other Local Authorities,
- other education providers.

When a child does not take up the allocated place at a school i.e. reception intake, Y6 to Y7 transition, or casual admission, the school will make all reasonable attempts to contact the family before referring the matter to the Education Welfare Officer, who may subsequently refer to the Children Missing Education Coordinator.

Children Leaving Enfield

Generally, children leaving the borough have a known educational destination. Schools use the School to School (S2S) system to transfer information between local authority areas. In these cases, no action is taken by the local authority.

It is the duty of the head teacher, school staff and school governing body to identify and refer any child leaving with no confirmed forwarding address,

destination or educational provision, or children who fail to attend school after an unauthorised leave of absence.

The school should make initial enquiries by telephoning the family, or any other designated emergency contact numbers available. Where phone numbers are not available, a letter should go to the family's last known address requesting contact and confirmation of the child's whereabouts. In addition, whenever possible, school staff should conduct a home visit.

If these checks fail, referral should be made to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will:

- advise the school how to proceed on removing a child from the roll
- refer the case to the Children Missing Education Officer if the child remains missing from education

If the child has a potential (or probable) education destination, this information will be recorded on the Children Missing Education database. The Children Missing Education Coordinator can then monitor the safe arrival in the named destination.

If there is an existing SPOE referral for the child, or siblings, then the lead professional, or Team, must be contacted. If the child, or siblings, has a Child Protection Plan, or is a Child in Need, the allocated social worker must be contacted immediately.

When the family is not known at the last address given

If enquiries provide no new information, or the pupil cannot be confirmed on roll at a school (or alternative education provision), or the pupil is not in receipt of suitable education *otherwise than at school*, the Education Welfare Officer may advise the school that it may remove the child from the school roll after no fewer than 20 days unauthorised absence, following all reasonable enquiries to locate him or her, however the following exceptions apply:

- children who are *looked after*. These children should be referred to the Virtual School Head Teacher;
- children who have a Statement of Special Education Needs. These children should be referred to the Special Educational Needs Team (SEN).

In all other cases the discharging school will be advised by EWS to:

- create a CTF coded XXXXXX (destination unknown) and upload to S2S where it will be stored in the Lost Pupils section;

The Education Welfare Officer will:

- clearly record all actions taken, and efforts to trace the child before referring the case to the Children Missing Education Officer
- pass all information to the Children Missing Education coordinator.

- The Children Missing Education coordinator will: record and maintain the child's details on the Missing Child section of the Tribal database;
- undertake all relevant agency and systems checks;
- maintain accurate records of interventions;
- make a referral to the SPOE (where necessary);
- refer the case to the CME Forum when all routes to locate the child have been exhausted.

In some cases, there may be information provided formally or informally linking the family with a new area. A neighbour for example may know that the family have moved to another borough or another town/city. In that event, communication should be made with the relevant LA to ascertain whether they have any information on the child's whereabouts. The EWS will ensure that these checks are completed within four weeks.

When enquiries confirm the pupil is on roll at a new school out of borough

Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Appendix 1) prescribe the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age can be deleted from the admission register. When a pupil is deleted from the admission register the school must clearly indicate the date and the reason for removal from roll.

In accordance schools are required to update their management information system (MIS) as soon as the child is removed from roll. An electronic Common Transfer File (CTF) of the pupil's school records should be generated and sent to the new school via the School to School (S2S) secure transfer site.

Children who move abroad

If a Child in Need, or one subject to a Child Protection Plan leaves the UK, the allocated social worker will be responsible for contacting their counterpart and/or the police authority in the relevant countries.

If significant concerns persist, and the whereabouts of a child remains unknown; a referral must be made immediately to Social Care to avoid any risk of significant harm.

Procedures where a child missing from education is not found

If, after all enquiries have been exhausted, the child's whereabouts remains unknown, the referrer will be informed (where appropriate) and the case will be recorded as closed, following a multi-agency discussion (and decision) at the CME forum and information to the Safeguarding Board of cases with safeguarding concerns. The only exception to this is in the case of children looked after by the local authority. These cases are the responsibility of the

Children's Social Care Service and remain open indefinitely until the child is found.

The electronic records will be maintained on the School to School National Pupil Database (Lost Pupils' Database).

Individual Agency's Responsibilities

Schools

Should a child leave an Enfield School without notice from the parent or without the school being advised by the parent which new school the child is to attend the school should promptly notify the Education Welfare Service. If the child is Subject to a Child Protection Plan or if the school have concerns the child may be at risk of harm, and/or a EHF(Early Help Form)has been completed on the child, the school should immediately notify the appropriate School Work Assessment Team.

The school should make all possible investigations to establish the child or young person's whereabouts by contacting in the first instance the parents / carers using all contact numbers given on the child's personal files. The school should also write to the family at any known addresses. Any investigations should be recorded on the child's education file.

Enquiries will also need to be made of other agencies such as the Enfield Schools Admissions Service / Elective Home Education Team.

Provided there are no immediate child protection concerns after 10 days the school must make a referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS). The school will have regular liaison with the EWS to establish the whereabouts of the child.

If, after 4 weeks (20 school days) it has been agreed with EWS that there are no identifiable concerns the pupil's name may be removed from the school roll.

The school must then complete the Common Transfer Form (CTF) within a further 15 days of the child's name being removed from roll.

The CTF must then be uploaded onto the School to School (S2S) database; using 'unknown' as the destination school, so that the CTF goes into the database of pupils who have moved outside of the maintained system. The CTF will be logged in the Missing Child area. The school must retain the child's record.

If it is known that the pupil has moved abroad the records should be returned to Enfield Schools Admissions Service to be archived until the pupil reaches the age of 25 years.

If the pupil is registered at another school all relevant agencies must be informed and the child's record forwarded to the new school.

Receiving School

- Should a pupil join an Enfield school without that school receiving a CTF (Common Transfer File) from the child's previous school then the receiving school should contact the Local authority's officer for the S2S database and request that a search is made for a matching record using names or former names, date of birth and gender. If CTF is NOT uploaded, the child will not be locatable on S2S.
- Should a school subsequently register a lost child, that receiving school should request its own LA to download the original CTF from the Lost Pupils section of S2S. The school should subsequently contact the school which had previously sent the lost child's CTF to S2S.

Parental Choice

Should a parent request that their child leaves an Enfield school in order to be home educated by his/her parents; the school should notify Enfield School Admissions Service (ESAS) of such intention but should leave the pupil on roll until the LA receives the relevant signed form from the parents/carers.

The LA will inform the school when the relevant signed form has been received to enable them to remove the pupil's name from the school roll.

Education Welfare Service (EWS)

All pupils identified as potential Child Missing Education (CME) and are referred to the EWS are recorded onto the SCS Tribal database. At the point of referral from a school to the EWS the Education Welfare Officer will carry out preliminary investigations to establish the parent/carers domestic details as follows:

- Apply risk assessment tool as listed in the LSCB multi-agency protocol (See appendix B)
- Check with Council Tax (Revenues and Benefits Team) to establish if the family still lives at the address identified.
- Visit the family home to clarify if the family is still in residence.
- If EWO is unable to locate the pupil and at least 20 school days have passed, the school will be advised to upload the child's details onto the S2S database before removing the child from their roll.

- EWO will refer the missing child/children's details to the CME Coordinator who will carry out further checks.
- If a child is located the EWS will inform all relevant agencies who will then update their databases.

In cases where the parent and child have been found, the EWS will follow its procedures to ensure the child is returned to education.

If a child is not located and the records have been returned to the LA the CME Coordinator will meet every 3 months with colleagues in Enfield Schools Admissions Service, Strategy, Systems and Performance, Safeguarding, Health and Police to review what should happen next in the investigation. This meeting is known as the CME Forum.

Enfield Schools Admission Service (ESAS)

- The Admission Service retains a list of children who are being Electively Home Educated.
- ESAS will accept and retain files of pupils considered missing from education.
- These will be retained while the child is missing and up to their 25th birthday.
- ESAS will attend the CME Forum every 3 months to review cases of the CMEs presented.
- If ESAS finds that a non - school starter has moved outside of the borough they must inform the receiving borough's Admissions team.
- In cases where parents have refused to accept a school place for their child (ren), this will be referred to the EWS senior management team to apply for a SAO (School Attendance Order). Further information can be found on the EWS website or 'Improving Attendance in Enfield' protocol, please also see appendix 5.

Independent Schools

- Independent schools located in the Borough are legally required to advise the LA about the details of all children admitted and removed from the roll of their school. Independent schools are also required to complete a Common Transfer File.

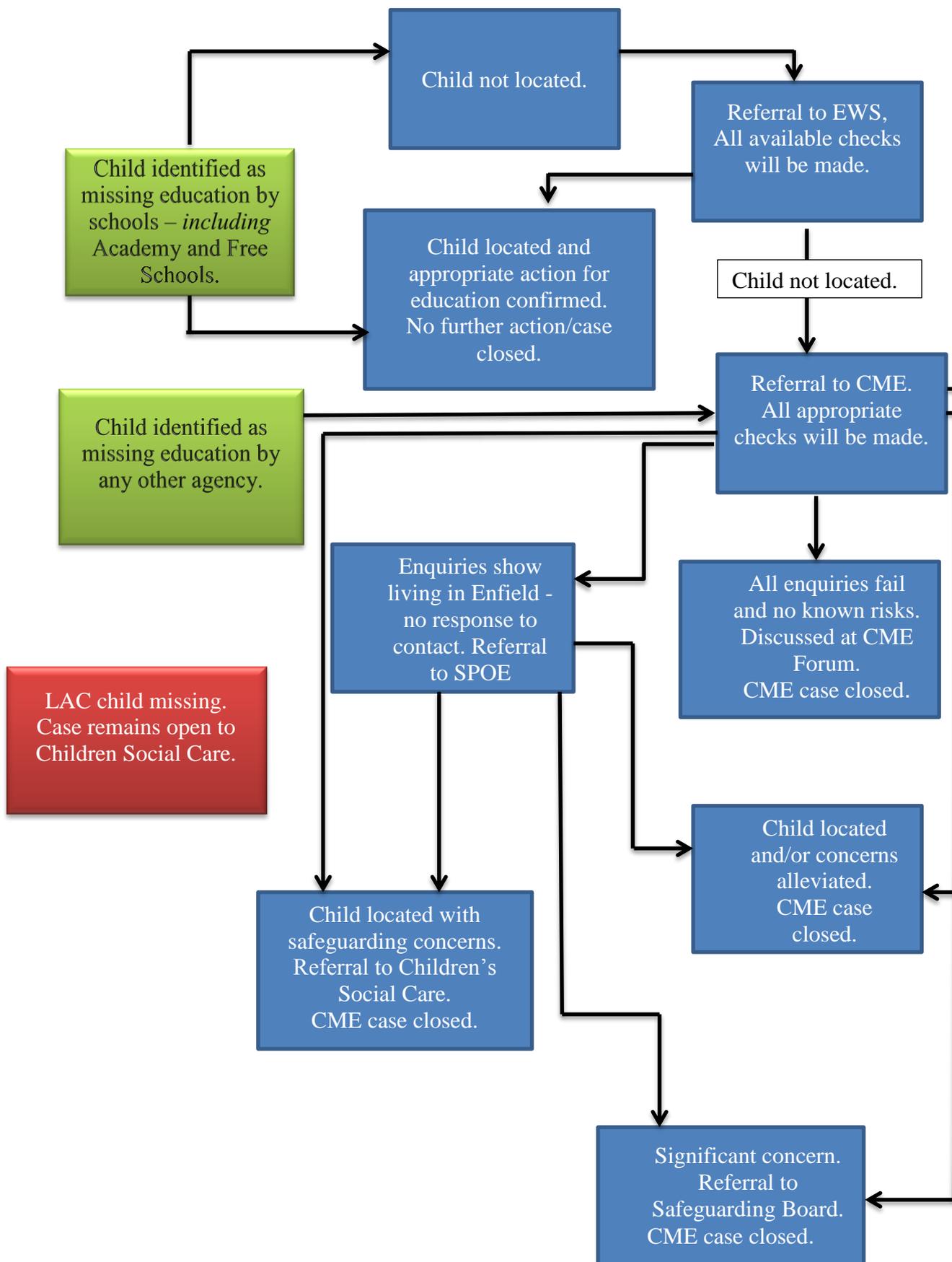
Looked After Children and Young People

- If a Looked After Child goes missing from their care placement, the relevant Social Worker will follow the guidance set out in Children Missing from Care and Home – A Guide to Good Practice, issued in November 2002. This requires them to liaise with the police in the area from where the child went missing to agree the strategy for finding the child, and providing them with any necessary support.
- The Enfield Safeguarding Children Board -ESCB protocol for children missing from home and care should be followed.

Stability of schooling is essential for children who are looked after by Local Authorities. Where children go missing from their care placement, they are rarely absent for long. It is important that their school place is kept open until there is an agreement between the school and the authority with responsibility for their care that this place is no longer necessary.

Please read Child Protection Protocol for Children and Young People missing from Care and Home as well as procedures for Looked After Children

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION PROCEDURES



Appendix 1

Risk Indicators Tool

(Taken from ESCB protocol Children Missing from Care and Home)

Many young people who run away from home and care may be at risk of harm to themselves or others, or are likely to be children in need. In assessing areas of risk, the following factors will be considered.

- Age of child
- History of absence
- Time of day/night
- Health concerns, such as history of self-harm or other health concerns that require medical attention or intervention
- Physical disability or other learning difficulties
- Cultural/racial issues for example forced marriages or female genital mutilation
- Previous behaviour patterns (e.g Repeat runaway, offending behaviour)
- State of mind at the time of absence
- Whether child is perceived as running to someone or from a situation deemed as risky
- Whether child is looked after or is subject to a court order
- Group behaviour for example known to be involved in gang activity
- Whether the child is on the child protection register
- Sexual exploitation/prostitution/trafficking
- Substance misuse
- Domestic violence
- No access to money
- Suffering bullying or abuse
- Maybe exposed to extreme weather conditions

Appendix 2

Useful Contact Numbers

Education Welfare Service Manager: Ellin Joseph
Address: PO Box 56, Civic Centre, Silver Street,
Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 3XQ
Telephone: 0208 379 3336

Education Welfare Service Deputy Manager: Sharon Clarke
Address: PO Box 56, Civic Centre, Silver Street,
Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 3XQ
Telephone: 0208 379 3338

Education Welfare Service Senior Practitioner: Jacquie Dickinson
Address: PO Box 56, Civic Centre, Silver Street,
Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 3XQ
Telephone: 0208 379 3342

Education Welfare Service Senior Practitioner: Fatma Abdurahman
Address: PO Box 56, Civic Centre, Silver Street,
Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 3XQ
Telephone: 0208 379 1907

Child Employment & Entertainment Officer/
Education Welfare Officer: Kyle Redford
Address: PO Box 56, Civic Centre, Silver Street,
Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 3XQ
Telephone: 0208 379 3438

Children Missing Education Coordinator: Rebecca Weekes
Address: PO Box 56, Civic Centre, Silver Street,
Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 3XQ
Telephone: 0208 379 3343

Education Welfare Service Administration Team: Aidan McGuire
Address: PO Box 56, Civic Centre, Silver Street,
Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 3XQ
Telephone: 0208 379 3141

Contact Information

Schools and Children's Services
Education Welfare Service
7th Floor Civic Centre
Silver Street
Enfield
EN1 3XQ

Office/Duty Telephone	0208 379 3745
Office Fax	0208 379 3337
Enfield School Admissions Service	0208 379 5501
Police	0208 836 7121
Social Work Duty Team	0208 379 2507
Out of Hours Service	0208 379 1000
Young Runaways Service	0800 389 2168