**Professionals Briefing Sheet –**

**A Quick Guide to Children Missing Education**

**Definition**

**Children Missing Education (CME)** are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise at a school.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing, or at risk of missing, education are vulnerable to academic underachievement and risk being out of education, employment or training (NEET) in later life. They may also be at risk of abuse and exploitation.

Our ambition is for all children in Norfolk to achieve their full potential and have their needs met at the earliest possible opportunity.

**Children Missing Education (CME) are at significant risk of:**

* Underachieving
* Being victims of abuse
* Becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training)
* Becoming victims of child exploitation

**Children at particular risk of missing education**

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, so it is vital that the Children Missing Education team are made aware of any child without delay.

Although not exhaustive, the list below presents some of the circumstances:

* Failure to start school at age 5 and hence never entering the system
* Pupils at risk of harm/neglect
* Illegal exclusion from school
* Withdrawal from school by a parent
* Failure to return after school holiday or period of illness
* Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families
* Children of Service Personnel
* Missing children and runaways
* Children and young people by the Youth Justice Service
* Children who cease to attend school
* Children of new migrant families

**Statutory Responsibilities**

Local authorities’ responsibilities for children missing education apply to all children of compulsory school age. Children are of compulsory school age from the first full term

after the child reaches their fifth birthday or until the last Friday in June in the school year that they reach sixteen. Norfolk County Council has statutory duties under [Section 436A of the Education Act 1996](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/4)  to identify, as far as is possible, children who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school. In addition, [Section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/437)  further requires the Local Authority to intervene if it appears that parents are not providing a suitable education.

**Norfolk Schools**

* Must notify Norfolk County Council within five days of adding a pupil’s name to the admissions register including all the details contained in the admission register for the new pupil.
* Must monitor each pupil’s attendance through their daily register following their school attendance procedures and policies to establish any reasons for absences, marking register accordingly and support improvements in attendance.
* Have a shared responsibility with Local Authorities to conduct joint reasonable enquiries to locate pupils who may be missing from education.
* Must notify Norfolk County Council when they are about to remove a pupil’s name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the [Pupil Regulations](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/regulation/8/made), no later than the date that the child’s name is due to be removed.

**Partner Agencies**

Statutory guidance clearly states that where any professional identifies a child who is not in education or where there is a doubt that a child is attending school then the Children Missing Education (CME) protocol should be followed. Working Together is clear that*: “Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. No single practitioner can have a full picture of a child’s needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.”*

Partner agencies will be well placed to identify any children missing education within Norfolk. Remember to ask any parent, carer, child or young person which school they attend.

Any referrals to CME Team can be made by contacting the CME Team on **01603 307716** or by email to [cme@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:cme@norfolk.gov.uk)

Further information is available on the NCC website at: [Children missing education - Schools (norfolk.gov.uk)](https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/pupil-safety-and-behaviour/children-missing-education/children-missing-education-policy)