



Children Missing Education Policy and procedure

Revised July 2021

Contents

Context	1
1. Definitions	1
2. Background	2
National context	2
Local context	3
Recent local developments	3
3. Key objectives and principles	4
4. Key service areas	4
Schools	4
Education Welfare Service	5
Single Point of Access	5
Business support officer	5
Admissions	5
Education Inclusion	6
Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Service	6
Youth Offending Service	6
Family Support Team	7
Children’s Social Care	7
Virtual Headteacher	7
5. Governance arrangements	7
6. Recording and referring children missing education or at risk of missing education	8
7. Identifying and supporting children at risk of becoming missing from education	8
8. The local procedure for locating and tracking children missing from education	9
Days 1 to 5	9
Days 5 to 20	9
Day 20	10
9. Children not receiving a suitable standard of education	10
10. Recording and monitoring	11
Appendix 1 - Function of the groups working to prevent children missing education	12
Appendix 2 - Terms of reference for the children missing from education panel	14

Context

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 from, or at risk of missing education, are at risk of underachieving and becoming not in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life. They may also be at risk of abuse, sexual or criminal exploitation.

The 'Children missing from education (CME)' policy and procedure provides a clear vision that is accessible and understood by all, regarding school responsibilities and how Achieving for Children (AfC) will:

- address the needs of children who are **at risk of becoming missing from education**
- identify children whose school placement may be **at risk of breaking down**
- identify, locate, engage children **who are missing education**
- provide **full-time education for all children suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs** as referenced in the DfE Circular 7/90: Management of the school day

This procedure is in line with the [DfE document 'Children missing education'](#) and other relevant legislation and statutory guidance.

1. Definitions

It is important to differentiate between children who are at risk of missing from education, children who are missing from education and children who are not receiving a suitable education.

If not attending a state maintained school or an independent school, pupils should receive full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs. This also applies to children who are being electively home educated.

Children at risk of missing from education are children or young people receiving a suitable full time education who, due to their circumstances, are at a higher risk of missing from education, or their school placement is becoming difficult to sustain and are more likely to be at risk of harm. Children at risk of missing from education are classified by AfC as:

- **known:** a child at risk of missing from education for whom AfC has been notified that, due to the child's circumstances, are likely to become missing from education
- **unknown:** a child at risk of becoming missing from education about whom AfC has no knowledge

Children missing from education are children or young people of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll. Children missing from education are classified as:

- **identified and located:** a child missing from education that has been identified and located by Achieving for Children
- **identified but not located:** a child missing from education that has been identified by Achieving for Children, but cannot be located
- **unknown:** a child missing from education about whom Achieving for Children has no knowledge

Children not receiving a suitable education are classed as not receiving 25 hours of good quality registered provision a week. Where children do not receive this level of education, it is often because they are being educated outside of state maintained or independent schools, for example, at home or in alternative provision. For some pupils who have been out of education for an extended period of time, accessing the full 25 hours is not appropriate and a gradual transition is planned and supported by Achieving for Children. This procedure seeks to put in place clear processes to support these three groups of pupils.

2. Background

National context

A child typically starts school in reception year and must access statutory education from the term after their 5th birthday. The child must remain in statutory education until they are aged 16 or they leave the country.

Children are missing from education when they fail to register with a school or when they fall out of the education system. Their personal circumstances, or those of their families, may contribute to their withdrawal from education and/or their failure to successfully reintegrate. Figure 1 is a simplified model of a child's educational pathway and identifies the primary ways in which children may become missing from education.

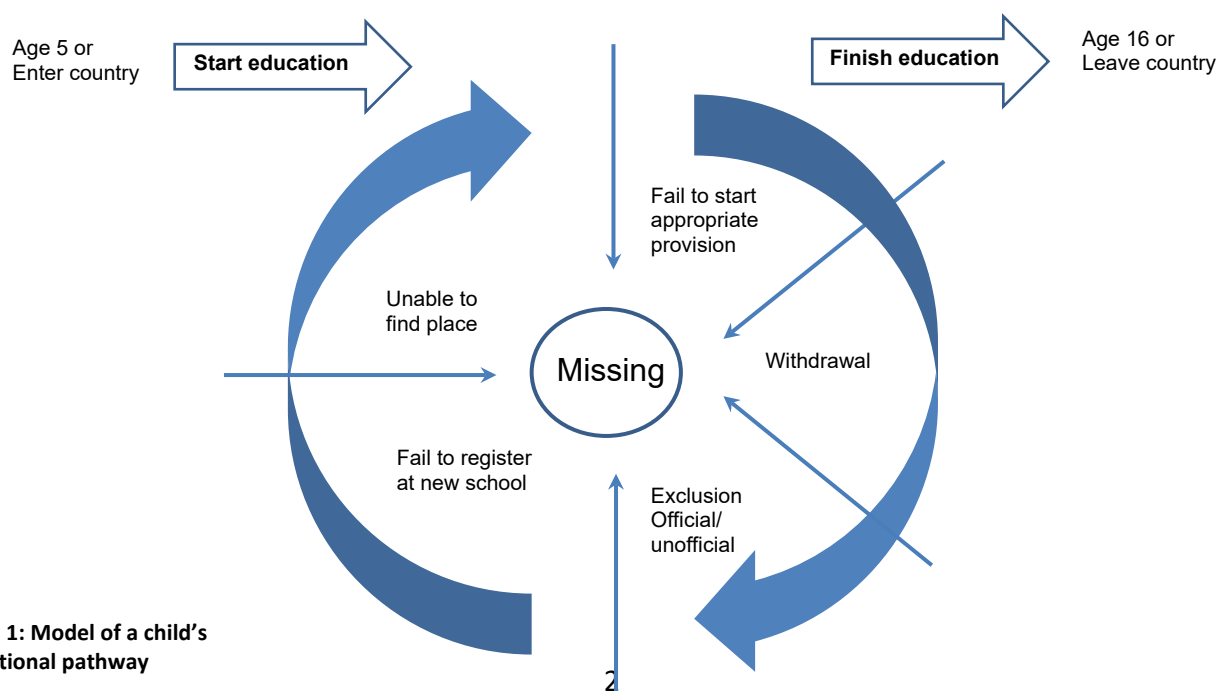


Figure 1: Model of a child's educational pathway

Achieving for Children is commissioned by Kingston and Richmond councils to ensure that they meet their statutory duty to arrange suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age. This includes providing alternative forms of education for children where mainstream inclusion is not appropriate.

Local context

Achieving for Children collates information relating to children and young people missing from education or at risk of missing from education in a register. The register collects a range of information relating to the child or young person including their age, their school year, the type of provision they are receiving, the number of hours they are receiving, the reason why they are at risk of or missing education, the responsible school or team, and the data provider.

Recent local developments

- Strong relationships are in place with all schools, including academies, free schools and those in the independent sector, so that pupils who are missing from education, or suspected of being at risk of missing from education, are known and monitored.
- Schools, including academies, free schools and those in the independent sector are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to [registering](#) and [de-registering](#) children.
- Agreed processes and procedures are in place so that timely preventative action can be taken.
- The Associate Director of Pupil Support monitors CME processes and holds an overview of the CME register and the case notes detailing support in place.
- A 'risk of CME' (ROME) panel to discuss children and young people whose education placement is becoming difficult to sustain, meets bi-weekly and agrees intervention, support and actions to try and sustain the placement or move swiftly to secure more appropriate provision.
- Communication between the key services that work with children missing education or at risk of missing education is facilitated through the ROME panel.
- The ROME panel ensures consistent reporting and monitoring of children who are at risk of missing education to understand the breadth of the issue and also to make sure that action is being taken to put in place a sufficient level of education.
- Children who are accessing individual tuition because of [medical needs](#), attending the pupil referral unit, or [electively home educated](#), are included on their own registers. The figures of these young people are collected six monthly and any trends or concerns are discussed at the ROME panel. [An annual report is completed](#).
- An annual report on CME is shared with the AfC's senior leadership team, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the lead members from each local authority.
- Key trends coming out of ROME panel meetings are shared termly as a 'Learning from ROME' brief with AfC colleagues to help inform teams of the current successes and challenges.

3. Key objectives and principles

The following statements set out the key objectives and principles that Achieving for Children will adhere to, to ensure the successful implementation of this procedure.

- There is a shared commitment and responsibility between Achieving for Children, schools, partner agencies and parents to provide children and young people with a good quality and accessible education suitable to their needs.
- A senior leader within Achieving for Children is responsible and held to account for ensuring that the organisation knows about all children and young people who are unable to access school, and that action is taken to ensure that they are able to access education in the best possible way.
- To oversee all cases, the panel will maintain a single register of children missing education or at risk of missing education. All children and young people who receive support from Achieving for Children will have their educational needs considered by early help ROME panel members.
- To oversee all cases, we maintain a single register of children missing education or at risk of missing education. Individual services also hold registers of children accessing their services, including the elective home education (EHE) register, maintained by the Education Welfare Service, children accessing medical tuition, maintained by the Education Inclusion Support Service at primary level and Malden Oaks at secondary level and children who are looked after, held by the Virtual School. Individual teams have their own criteria for referral of cases to the ROME register.

4. Key service areas

A number of key service areas are involved in responding to cases of children missing education or at risk of missing education. They often work together to support the same child. Key service areas are described below.

Schools

Schools have a key responsibility in identifying children missing education or at risk of missing education. Their statutory responsibilities are set out in detail, in the [DfE document 'Children missing education'](#).

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify Achieving for Children when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the 15 grounds listed in the regulations. They should do this by completing a secure online [form](#). Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with their education welfare officer (state maintained schools) or the AfC Single Point of Access (SPA) (independent schools), before deleting the pupil's name from the register, if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) or (h)(iii).

Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) has statutory responsibility for monitoring the attendance of pupils who attend state maintained schools within Kingston and Richmond. All schools receive the support of an allocated officer. The EWS works with schools and other key services to identify, locate and track any children missing education or at risk of missing education.

The EWS also has responsibility for monitoring the quality of education being provided to children who are electively home educated and to take action when evidence suggests that the education they are receiving is not suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and any specific needs they may have.

Single Point of Access

If a school has been unable to establish the whereabouts of a child, or they have safeguarding concerns, this should be reported to Achieving for Children via the Single Point of Access (SPA). On receiving notification of a child missing education or at risk of missing education, the SPA will, based on information provided, create a record on the central system and make a referral to the most appropriate service to respond to the child's needs. If the school is a state maintained school, they should make use of their allocated education welfare officer (EWO) when trying to establish the whereabouts of a child.

Business support officer

The business support officer is responsible for oversight of the maintenance of the CME register. Services report bi-weekly on the details of children under their supervision who are missing education or at risk of missing education, through the ROME panel. Actions are recorded on the register. An annual report on CME is shared with Achieving for Children's senior leadership team, the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and the lead members from each local authority.

Admissions

The School Admissions team processes applications for admission to state maintained schools in Kingston and Richmond, and provides advice and guidance to parents and schools regarding all aspects of the admissions process. Although not directly involved with CME, the Admissions Service often receives information that helps identify children missing education or at risk of missing education, such as when a child's placement at a school is refused or a child doesn't start on the first day as planned.

The service is responsible for the determination and implementation of Fair Access Protocols across all state maintained primary and secondary schools. As a result, the service may come across cases of CME who are not on roll at any school. The School Admissions team notifies the Education Welfare Service when they receive information regarding children missing education or at risk of missing education.

Education Inclusion

The Education Inclusion Support Service (EISS) supports primary aged pupils who have been permanently excluded, and primary and secondary aged pupils who are at risk of exclusion from school.

The EISS team support primary aged pupils who are missing education, including those who have medical needs and cannot attend school, those who have special educational needs but are not appropriately placed, and those pupils who are between placements. Malden Oaks is the service provider for secondary aged pupils who are missing education for the same reasons.

The service also includes specialist practitioners and support staff who work with both primary and secondary aged pupils, their families, schools and other professional partners to sustain appropriate educational placements and ,where necessary, support reintegration into school.

Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Service

The majority of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities will have their needs met within a mainstream setting at SEND support. Children and young people who require provision over and above what is ordinarily available in a mainstream setting to make progress will require an education, health and care plan (EHCP). The plan will set out the child's or young person's educational, health and care needs, the provision required to meet those needs and the desired outcomes to be achieved. The SEND Service is responsible for reviewing the EHCP annually (six monthly if the child is under 5 years) to ensure the child and young person is making progress and that the provision and outcomes remain appropriate.

Youth Offending Service

The Youth Offending Service (YOS) is a multi-agency partnership between Achieving for Children, the police, the Probation Service, the NHS and youth services, who jointly resource a multi-disciplinary team.

The aim of the service is to:

- reduce the likelihood of re-offending by children and young people
- protect the public
- protect children or young people who have committed an offence
- ensure that sentences are served

The YOS supervises a range of children who are at risk of becoming missing from education. Often the YOS will work with the Education Inclusion Support Service to try to reintegrate and sustain placements where possible for children at risk of missing education.

Family Support Team

The Family Support Team offers support and help to families for children aged 5 to 19. This support includes:

- addressing difficulties with a child's habits or behaviours
- building confidence in dealing with difficult parenting issues
- helping to motivate children and encourage good attendance at school
- improving relationships between family members
- signposting to support agencies

The Family Support Team works within the cluster model and will contact a family within three working days and make a visit to the family within seven working days. If an assessment is made that the family is in crisis, more immediate interventions and support will be provided.

Children's Social Care

Children's Social Care services provide support to children and young people in need of help and protection. Services include statutory assessment and care planning for children at risk of significant harm, provision for looked after children and those leaving care, as well as fostering and adoption services. Education will be considered as part of the assessment of children and young people in need of help and protection.

Virtual Headteacher

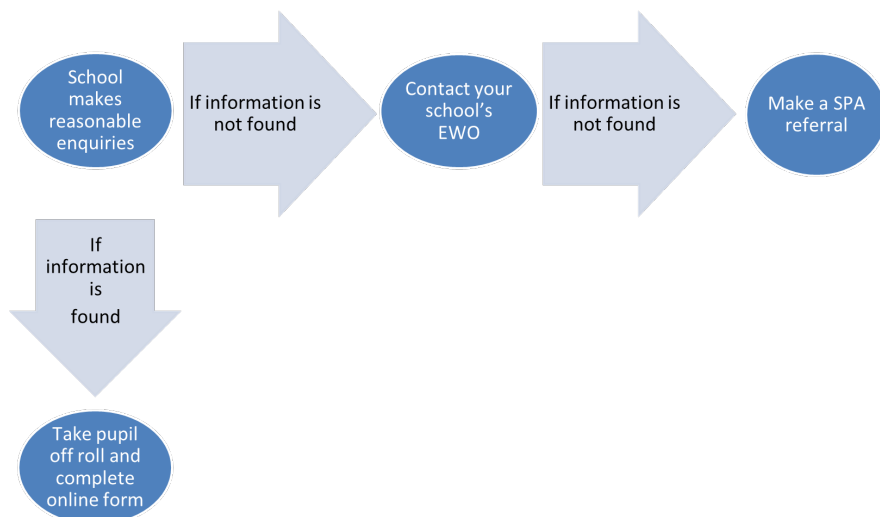
AfC Virtual School, under the leadership of its headteacher, is responsible for the quality of provision and outcomes of all looked after children across both boroughs and more recently those children open to Children's Social Care at child in need and child protection. This includes all children who are attending early years, in-borough or out of borough school provision. AfC Virtual School ensures that all looked after children are provided with full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs.

5. Governance arrangements

Achieving for Children has established governance arrangements to ensure that children missing education or at risk of missing education are known, and action is taken to ensure they receive a suitable education. The arrangements ensure there is strategic and operational management of the issues and clear links are made with relevant groups such as the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and the lead members from each local authority.

6. Recording and referring children missing education or at risk of missing education

Figure 2: process for maintained schools



State maintained schools should follow the process indicated in Figure 2. Independent schools should refer directly to the [SPA](#), if they have been unable to ascertain the key information about a child missing education or at risk of missing education. All schools should complete the [online form](#) if they have all the key information about a child, or when they have been given permission to complete the form by SPA or their EWO. They should also follow the other duties as recorded in the [DfE document 'Children missing education'](#).

Any other service or agency can also notify SPA if there is a concern about a child missing education or at risk of missing education.

On receiving notification of a child missing education or at risk of missing education, SPA will check to see whether the child is known to Achieving for Children. If they are not, they will create a record on the central system and make a referral to the most appropriate service to respond to the child's needs. If they are known, they will notify the service that is working with the child to let them know they have received information.

7. Identifying and supporting children at risk of becoming missing from education

Children and young people at risk of becoming missing from education come into contact with Achieving for Children in different ways. Sometimes, children will already be working with a service and receiving some form of support. At other times, they will be referred through the SPA for another primary need, for example if they are a child in need or a young offender.

For children who are already known to services, the lead professional will (if they have not already done it) reassess the child's educational needs and liaise with the appropriate school or with the EISS or SEND service to ensure the risk of missing education is reduced or removed. They will check whether the child is already on the CME register.

Where it is a new referral from the SPA, the service must undertake an initial assessment which includes the child's educational needs. The lead professional may have to liaise with the appropriate school, with the EISS or SEND service to ensure the risk is reduced or removed.

Services will also check whether a child has been recorded on the CME register as a child missing education or at risk of missing education, and speak to any other professional that is involved. If a professional deems the case appropriate for discussion at ROME panel they will complete a referral for that young [person](#).

8. The local procedure for locating and tracking children missing from education

Days 1 to 5

When a child is absent without any explanation, schools should follow their own existing first day calling or contact procedures, and continue to do so for the first five school days. Schools must keep records of all their attempts to contact the parent or carer of the child. If the school has concerns regarding the child's safety or welfare they should contact SPA immediately.

If the school makes contact with the family or the child returns to school within this time, but no explanation is provided, the school should consult with their allocated EWO for advice and guidance, or make a SPA referral.

Days 5 to 20

If the child has been absent for five consecutive days without any explanation, the school should complete a referral to SPA. The referral will then be forwarded to the EWS who will undertake one or more of the following actions to try and locate the child:

- make contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours using known contact details
- check local databases within the local authority
- check Key to Success or [school2school \(s2s\) systems](#)
- follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies such as those of housing providers, school admissions, health services, police, refuge, youth justice services, children's social care, and HMRC
- check with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and/or the Border Force
- check with agencies known to be involved with family
- check with local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known
- check with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved
- check with the local authority where the child lives, if different from where the school is
- in the case of children of service personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS)
- home visit(s) made by appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessment and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s) and relatives

This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive, and so local authorities and schools should treat each case on its individual merits and use their judgement, ensuring they have taken into account all of the facts of the case.

If the child is located, Achieving for Children will inform the school and relevant partner agencies and explain what actions should be taken.

If the child has moved to another school, the EWS will confirm with the relevant local authority that the child is now living in and attending school in their borough and contact the receiving school to confirm this. Once confirmation has been received, the EWS will give permission for the Kingston or Richmond school to remove the child from their roll, upload or send the child's records to the new school and complete the online [form](#).

Day 20

If, after 20 days of unauthorised absence following investigation by the EWS, the school is unable to establish the whereabouts and location of the child, permission will be given by the EWS for the school to remove the child from their roll, where there are no immediate safeguarding concerns. The school will then upload the child's records onto the [School2School](#) database as a child missing from education and complete the online [form](#).

9. Children not receiving a suitable standard of education

For some children, being educated in mainstream school is not an option. This may be because they have a special educational need or disability, a medical need, are a school refuser, or they have been excluded from school for a fixed period or permanently. For these children alternative education provision is organised by the SEND service if an EHCP is in place, or through the EISS. Some children are electively home educated by their parents or tutors.

Our aspiration is that all children not in mainstream school should receive full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs. This should be the basic provision for specialist schools for disabled children, the Pupil Referral Unit and individual tuition. If a child is electively home educated, the level of education should be suitable (appropriate to age, ability, aptitude and any special needs). The Education Welfare Service is responsible for any children where elective home education is deemed to not be suitable. If a child has an EHCP and is electively home educated, the SEND service will continue to organise annual reviews and through these decide if the elective home education is meeting the child's needs.

When a child is excluded from school, basic provision should begin from the sixth day. For a fixed period exclusion, this is the school's responsibility and for a permanent exclusions it is Achieving for Children's responsibility. Schools should ensure that the minimum standard of education is maintained for permanently exclusions up to six days and that no child is at risk of harm whilst not at school.

10. Recording and monitoring

One of the key risks of children missing education or at risk of missing education, and children not receiving suitable education is that information is not shared across different agencies and that the child falls between the gaps.

To counteract this, Achieving for Children has established a ROME panel to identify children and young people whose school placement is at risk of breakdown, they have arrived in borough and are hard to place, are permanently excluded, and therefore a coordinated and personalised plan is required. The vulnerability of these children and young people, without the protective factor of school, is assessed in the panel and actions agreed in a multi-agency forum.

Names of children and young people who meet these criteria will be collected and discussed at the fortnightly ROME panel, where accountability for moving the case forward and the lead service is agreed. Business support follows up activity in between meetings to ensure pace and rigour in actions agreed.

This register enables any service, at any one time, to know which children are at risk of missing education, missing from education or not receiving suitable education.

Service leads are required to [submit details](#) of new additions to the register immediately on identification of that child or young person being at risk of CME. The register is held and maintained by business support.

Each fortnight, one week ahead of the CME panel, the business support officer will re-circulate the register to the ROME panel. The panel members are required to provide an update on their actions in a timely manner and to clearly indicate outcomes of actions. All updates are held on an individual's case [notes](#). Any outstanding actions will be communicated to the Associate Director for Pupil Support.

Removal of pupils from the ROME register can only occur with the approval of the ROME panel.

Appendix 1 - Function of the groups working to prevent children missing education

Children missing from education strategic level

Achieving for Children (AfC) Senior Leadership Team

The Achieving for Children Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has overall responsibility for the 'Children missing education' policy and procedure, and for ensuring that children and young people are receiving suitable education.

Children missing from education strategic lead

The Associate Director for Pupil Support has been identified as the CME strategic lead. They are responsible for maintaining an overview of the work of the CME panel, and chairing the risk of CME panel. This role will include close liaison with the Director of Education, Director of Children's Social Care and the Director of Children's Services, who leads the Protection and Early Help Service, to ensure a multi-agency approach is adopted.

Children at risk of missing from education group (ROME)

An at risk of missing from education panel (ROME) group has been created to provide an overview of children at risk of missing education. It oversees the implementation of the 'Children missing education' policy and procedure and provides oversight of the cases of children and young people who are at risk of missing education and/or their placement is difficult to maintain. Its remit includes ensuring that children who are at risk of missing education are not at risk of harm and every attempt is made to ensure that they can receive appropriate education provision.

The panel is comprised of representatives from services who work with children missing education or at risk of missing education including. The panel meets every fortnight.

Terms of reference for the panel can be found in Appendix 2 of this procedure.

Children missing from education operational level

Fair Access Panel

The Fair Access Panel determines which schools will be nominated to receive hard to place pupils referred by the Head of Admissions. The Fair Access Panel meets as and when required. The panel consists of the headteacher of each secondary school, headteacher of the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), and representatives from Achieving for Children. The panel feeds into the CME panel through the EISS representative.

Cause for Concern Panel

The cause for concern panel is held once a month during term time in each of Kingston and Richmond to discuss pupils at a secondary level who are at risk of exclusion. The panel includes representatives from each secondary school, the Education Welfare Service and other support services. It aims to support secondary school pupils who are considered by headteachers to be at risk of permanent exclusion. Any relevant outcomes feed into the ROME panel through the education inclusion representative.

Children missing from education partnership arrangements

Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership

The Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership (KRSCP) is led by the key local strategic partners in the multi-agency safeguarding children arrangements - the Detective Super Police Borough Command, the Directors of Children's Social Care and the Director of Quality in the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group). The partnership is the statutory mechanism for agreeing how the relevant organisations in each area will cooperate to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, and for ensuring the effectiveness of what they do.

Appendix 2 - Terms of reference for the children missing from education panel

Purpose

To identify children and young people whose education placement is at risk (or they are without a school place) based on:

- poor attendance, alongside emerging additional needs
- mainstream school finding it difficult to meet needs
- emerging escalation in special educational needs
- care placement changing which could impact on school placement
- ‘in-year’ admission with context of instability in previous schools, or, accessing alternative provision in other local authorities
- permanent exclusion or at risk of

Referrals will be considered in three groups:

- on roll and not attending
- not on roll and hard to place
- concerns or risk of breakdown

The majority of our time will be spent on intervention models, suggestions and plans to support the third group using the ‘Signs of Safety’ model:

What is working well?	Reflect on the young person’s current placement and provision therein
What are we concerned about?	Summarise the current risk factors. To include the view of the young person and parent (if known) as to the difficulties identified
What needs to happen?	Identify possible intervention to sustain the current placement. Agree the teams who need to work together either to stabilise current placement or proactively plan alternative options

Additionally, the panel will:

- agree cases which require joint commissioning and pooled budgets, and should be referred to the joint agency panel
- ensure that appropriate referral processes and pathways from each service are in place to assist swift and accurate identification of cases for the panel
- identify cases for the ‘fair access panel’ or alternative provision pathways

Representatives from each service are responsible for:

- identifying referrals and taking forward agreed actions
- providing feedback at the next meeting

The chair is responsible for escalating any unmet actions and escalating appropriately.

Chairing

The panel will be chaired by the Associate Director of Pupil Support as the CME strategic lead.

The agenda will be distributed at least five working days before the day of the meeting except in emergency situations agreed by the chair.

Membership

- Associate Director for Pupil Support
- Headteacher Malden Oaks School
- Exclusions and Reintegration Officer
- Senior Officer, Education Welfare Service
- Specialist Educational Psychologist
- Head of School Admissions
- Head of Education Inclusion Support Service
- Senior SEN Case Officer
- Business Support Officer for NP
- Headteacher or Deputy headteacher, Virtual School
- Youth Resilience Service - Team Manager
- Representative from the Single Point of Access
- Representative from Tier 3 CAMHS
- Representative from Emotional Health Service

Please note: If the member is unable to attend the meeting, then an alternate staff member should attend in their place.

Frequency

The group will meet fortnightly.

Attendance

Members are expected to attend all meetings so that their knowledge, skills and experience can be shared and colleagues can learn from one another.

Additional members of staff or key stakeholders may be invited to attend for specific items.

Administration

The meeting will be chaired by the Associate Director for Pupil Support.

The business support duties will include:

- updating NP database
- monitoring and follow up of decisions and agreed actions
- sharing action sheet between meetings
- ensuring follow up action is completed and escalating appropriately

Paper and distribution

Referrals should be made when concerns are raised from individual services, but will be collated fortnightly for the panel.

Links with other boards

- Cause for Concern Panel
- MARVE
- Join Agency Panel
- Individual team referral panels

UK GDPR and Confidentiality

The Children's Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and to share information appropriately.

Information is shared in accordance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act. Processing is necessary for the compliance with a legal obligation and for the performance of a task in the public interest.

Participants should assume all information is confidential unless agreement is confirmed that it may be disclosed beyond the meeting.