

Education Services

**Children Missing  
Education (CME)**

**2020**

## Introduction

Local authorities (LAs) have statutory duties relating to the provision of education and to safeguarding the welfare of children, who are not receiving a suitable education. A list of current legislation and guidance is attached in **Appendix A**.

Local authorities have a duty under section [436A of the Education 1996](#) (added by [section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)) to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise.

The duty applies in relation to children of compulsory school age who are **not** on a school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school.

The duty **does not** apply to children of [compulsory school age](#) who are absent from school. The duty complements and reinforces duties that already exist for schools to monitor attendance. Schools have a duty to monitor attendance and may where appropriate make a referral to the Court Attendance Officer (CAO)/ School Attendance Liaison & Elective Home Education Officer (SALEHE) using the [AIM guidance](#) where the attendance of individual pupils gives grave cause for concern.

The Local Authority's procedures are underpinned by the relevant statutory requirements in relation to missing/lost pupils, connected with the DFE's central [s2s \(school-to-school\)](#) Lost Pupils Database and are consistent with and support local child protection best practice.

For the purposes of this document 'child' refers to anyone of [statutory school age](#).

This policy is intended to ensure that:

- robust systems are in place in Harrow to identify and track children at risk of, or who may be missing education
- schools and Council Officers are aware of systems and use them effectively
- partner agencies understand who to notify and how to do so
- the risk of children missing from education is minimised
- children who are identified as missing education are returned to an education setting
- where appropriate we share information with other local authorities

### Why children go missing from education

Children fall out of the school system because they:

- Fail to start school and therefore never enter the system at key transition points – nursery to primary, infant to junior and primary to secondary and where there are in year admissions

- Fail to complete a transition between education settings or after moving to a new Local Authority
- Are removed from school roll without a destination  
The above three examples would need to be referred to the Lead Officer for Children Missing Education and Child Employment (LOCME)
- Cease to attend through withdrawal or truancy. The school would need to refer to the AIM policy.

In a small minority of cases there may be safeguarding issues that result in a child going missing because they are abducted, are a victim of crime or because the child runs away from home. It is essential that when a child goes missing in these circumstances an urgent referral is made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

### **Children at particular risk of missing education**

[DfE CME guidance](#) issued in September 2016 has identified that children who have experienced certain life events are more at risk of missing education.

These include:

- Pupils at risk of harm / neglect
- Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families
- Children of service personnel
- Missing children and runaways
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice system
- Children who cease to attend school
- Children of new migrant families

Harrow considers the following groups are also at particular risk of missing education:

- Looked after children and care leavers
- Children identified as having specific child protection issues including those whose names are placed on a child protection plan
- Children at risk of sexual exploitation, including children who have been trafficked to, or within the UK.
- Children who could be at risk of any cultural or unlawful practices, for example forced marriage and or female genital mutilation.
- Children with long term medical or emotional problems, including emotional behavioural difficulties
- Children who are victims of bullying
- Children exposed to domestic abuse, family conflict and/or family breakdown
- Children whose families have experienced homelessness and who are living in temporary accommodation, including a refuge/hostel.
- Children from mobile and transient families
- Children of parents with long term medical or emotional problems, for example those with mental health problems and those that misuse drugs and alcohol

- Children who are at risk of becoming involved in crime and/or children whose parents are involved in crime
- Young carers
- Teenage parents and their children
- Children who have been excluded from school, are persistent non-attenders, or are otherwise missing school
- Children on roll of alternative education providers
- Children with unrecognised or unmet special educational needs

Children Missing from Education are at greater risk of:

- Physical harm
- Sexual exploitation
- Becoming involved in crime. □ Demonstrating anti-social behaviour □ Misusing drugs and alcohol. □ Being ‘Trafficked’ □ Being illegally employed.

It is therefore vital that the Local Authority, schools and other agencies work together to safeguard children and share information about children missing education.

Harrow Council will therefore ensure that all Harrow schools / nurseries and children’s centres are made fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to missing/lost pupils, at the start of each academic year and children who may have attended but have no known future education provision.

Harrow Council will closely monitor and review annually the identification and tracking of Children Missing Education procedures in order to ensure best practice.

### **Role of Parent / Carers**

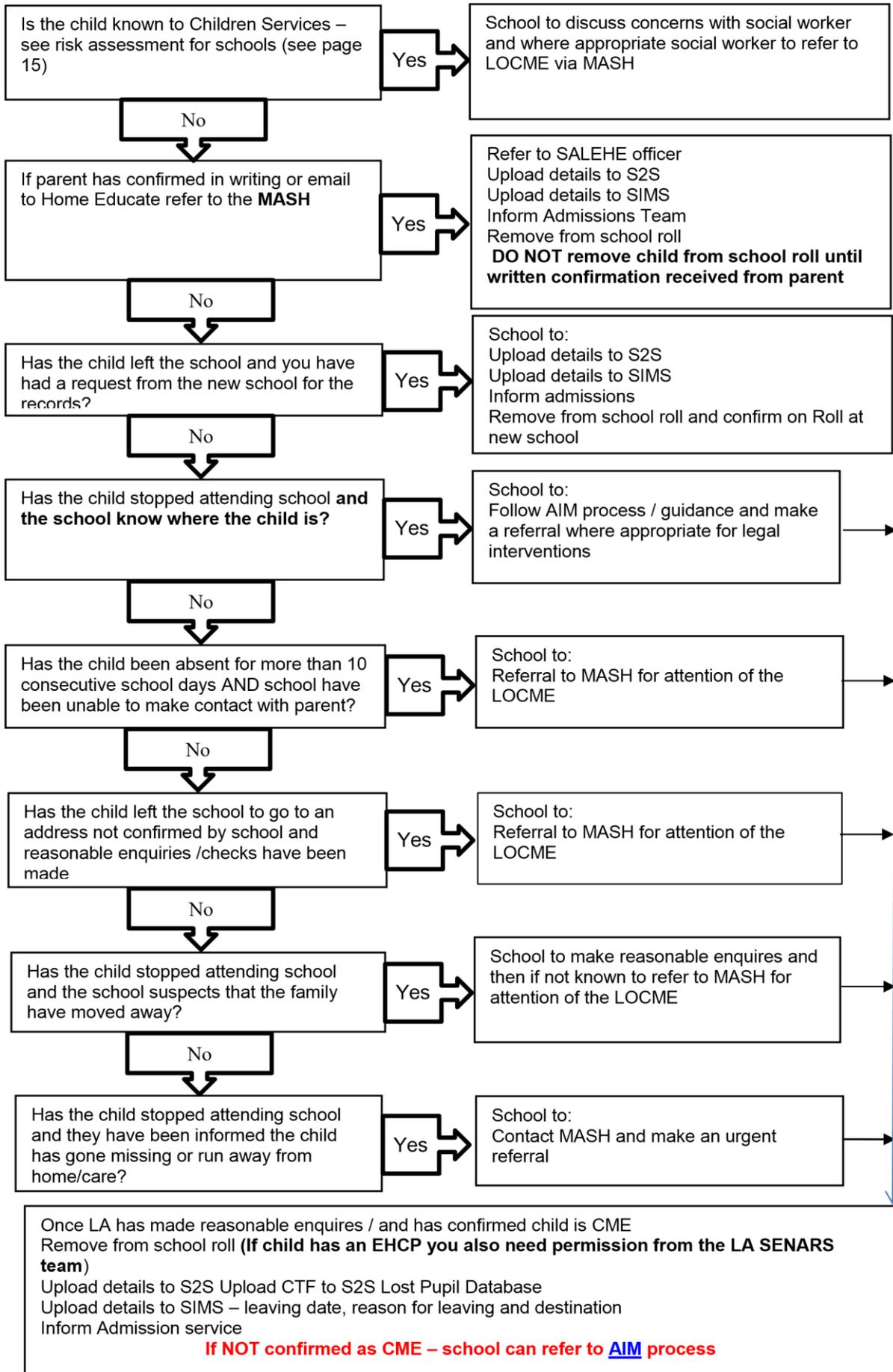
Parents have a duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age are receiving a suitable full time education. This may be at home or at a school and parents have a right to withdraw their child from school for home schooling at any time provided the child is not subject to a School Attendance Order.

Where parents wish to remove their child or children to be electively home educated (EHE) they must give written notification to the school and the school must take the child’s name off the school roll and notify the Local Authority.

Harrow Council may use a School Attendance Order to ensure parents have their child registered on a school roll where the child is not already registered. Harrow may also fine or prosecute a parent where there is an issue of non-attendance for a child if registered on school roll; action will be taken by the Court Attendance Officer (CAO) in Education Services in line with the Attendance Intervention Model policy (AIM).

Parents should inform the school if they are moving to another address in the UK or abroad. Parents will be asked to provide evidence of a new school, their new address and contact details. If the details are not provided, the school will ask LOCME as part of the school process to carry out further checks to establish the destination and the education of the child. Where the child has moved to another borough and they do not have a school place and they are not being home educated the LOCME will pass on the child's details to the relevant UK council or borough.

## The Referral Pathway for Children Missing Education - Schools



## **Process to follow when a child has been identified as missing education.**

### **Identification**

#### **Making a referral:**

Any professional coming into contact with a child and their family/carers should ask which school the child attends.

If it is not possible to ascertain the name of the school, and/or any concerns are identified that the child could be missing from education, the professional **must** make a referral to the MASH who will then refer the matter to the LOCME in Education Services. This post is responsible for receiving details of children missing from education.

The main MASH contact telephone number is: **020 8901 2690** or via secure email to [Duty&Assess@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:Duty&Assess@harrow.gov.uk)

Any concerned person may also make a referral if they believe a child is missing education.

#### **MASH will refer these types of referrals to the Lead Officer for Children Missing Education and Child Employment (LOCME)**

#### **Referrals should be made to the LOCME in the following circumstances:**

- Children who are no longer attending school and cannot be located at the last known address.
- Children who have left the school and the parent have not provided a new address / school in the UK or abroad.
- Children who have not started a new school.
- Children who have moved into Harrow and the parent / carer are unable to provide a new school name.
- Children who have not shown up following an offer of a place made by the Admissions Service– applies to both in-year and transfer between schools settings, or where a family has moved into Harrow and no school application has been made.
- It is recommended good practice that, information is recorded when they are contacted by family asking about school places and the school notify the Admissions Service or LOCME with the contact details for the family along with full names and dates of birth. Please **DO NOT** assume the parent / carer will contact the Admissions Service or apply online.

It is **NOT** necessary to refer the following to the LOCME

- Children who have moved and been admitted to another school.
- Children who have moved away and have applied to the new Local Authority Admissions Service or schools. Provided the Admissions Service in the new borough has **confirmed** it has been reported to the new borough's CME Officer.

- Children who have moved away and the parent has provided verification to prove they are moving away and they are leaving the UK
- Children with poor attendance – Schools should undertake the initial follow up of a pupil's absence in accordance with the [AIM guidance](#).

**It is expected that the referrer will inform the LOCME on any updates on CME cases referred to the LA and the LOCME will inform the referrer of case closures.**

### **Reasonable Enquires by School / LA**

A definition of reasonable enquires before a child is removed from the schools roll is listed on **page 13 section 37** of the [DfE CME guidance](#) 2016

The LOCME works closely with other agencies, for example Housing, Social Care and other LA teams, to track a missing child and ensure that the child is safe. The LOCME may also work closely with relevant family members and professionals in relation to any child who is missing.

Where the name of a pupil is to be deleted from the admission register, the education establishment must make a return to their Local Authority showing the grounds for deletion under Regulation 8 [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#). This is completed via school's Management Information System.

A record of the reasonable enquires made must be recorded in the child's file with the name / team, contact email / telephone number and date of actions taken.

There are three files that can be created by schools. Explanations of different files schools are statutorily required to create and upload via the school's Management Information Systems to discharge their duty are listed below.

- Common Transfer Files (CTF) – Used to transfer pupil data from one school to another.
- Children Missing Education –Leavers (CML) – Used to provide Harrow Council with information required when a pupil leaves your school outside the normal phase transfers. Sent to Harrow via S2S
- Children Missing Education-Joiners (CMJ) – Used to provide Harrow Council with information required when a pupil joins your school outside the normal phase transfers. Sent to Harrow via S2S

### **Procedures for locating missing or lost pupils**

If a child leaves a Harrow school with an unknown destination:

- Schools should notify MASH by making a referral, if the child is on a child protection plan or if the school have child protection concerns about the child.
- For a child not resident in Harrow refer to LOCME for further tracking who will pass the details to the appropriate Local Authority where the child lives.

- SIMS notifications are automatically picked up when Capita One runs the report automatically each week to LOCME when an unknown destination for a child is recorded, however the LA would expect the school to make a referral via MASH
- Monitoring / responding to S2S missing messages
- Where Admissions Officers offer a school place to a child who has been recorded as missing they will contact the LOCME urgently who will take the appropriate action
- Where the destination is unknown and the Admissions Officers receive CML file notification they will refer to the LOCME.
- Where an online application is made for an in-year school place and no previous school is listed the Admission Service will contact the family for the details and pass these to the new school.
- If a Harrow school which has previously uploaded an unknown destination CTF and is then contacted by a school at which the lost child has subsequently registered, the school which sent the CTF to the Lost Pupil Database should create a new CTF file and send this to the receiving school.
- Where a parent registers for a “My Harrow” account and mentions children but does not record their school details the Admission Service will refer to the LOCME.
- Key to success/National Pupil database where appropriate.
- Housing checks on vulnerable families to ensure that their children are in education.

After four weeks if such efforts prove unsuccessful then the LOCME will advise the school to:

- Create a ‘lost pupil’ common transfer file (CTF) with XXXXXXXX as the destination is unknown / child missing within the Schools Information Management system (for example SIMS system). Remove the child’s name from the school roll (having consulted Education Services and, where the child has an Education, Health and Care Plan consulted SENARS)
- Upload the CTF to the DfE Secure Access website where it will be held in the Lost Pupil Database - **DO NOT send via unsecure email.**

Harrow Council recognises that these procedures will only function effectively if all Harrow schools and council based professionals are committed to adhering to the following principle

**WHENEVER A PUPIL JOINS OR LEAVES A SCHOOL. A COMMON TRANSFER FILE MUST BE CREATED AND UPLOADED TO S2S AND EITHER A CML OR CMJ IS CREATED AND UPLOADED TO S2S.**

[Further information and guidance on the transfer of a CTF](#)

## Appendix A

## **Legislation and guidance**

There are various statutory duties upon LAs and parents (supplemented by guidance) relating to the provision of education and the safeguarding of children which are relevant to children missing education.

The principal provisions are as follows:

### **[DFE Children Missing Education Guidance](#)**

**[Removing pupils from roll](#)** - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 has guidance on.

### **[School Places](#)**

**[Section 14\(1\) Education Act 1996](#)** provides that a Local Authority must make sure that there are sufficient schools or school places for providing education in their area. For these purposes, the schools must be sufficient in number, character, and equipment to provide all pupils with the opportunity of appropriate education (s.14 (2)). 'Appropriate education' means, broadly, education which is desirable in view of the pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes and the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school (s.14(3)).

### **[Attendance](#)**

**[Section 7 Education Act 1996](#)** provides that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any specific educational needs (s) he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Furthermore Section **[437 \(1\) Education Act 1996](#)** provides that if it appears to a local education authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they must serve a notice in writing on the parent ('a School Attendance Order') requiring them to satisfy the LA within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education.

### **[Additional Educational / Provision Arrangements](#)**

**[Section 19 \(1\) Education Act 1996](#)** and **[19\(4A\) Education Act 1996](#)** requires every Local Education Authority to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or education otherwise for those children of compulsory school age who by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them. For these purposes, 'suitable' education is defined as 'efficient education suitable to the age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs the child (or young person) may have.' (s.19 (6)).

## Welfare

[S.175 Education Act 2002](#) imposes a duty upon LAs and governing bodies to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. For these purposes, 'functions' includes the powers and duties of LAs and governing bodies.

Section [11 of the Children Act 2004](#) places statutory duties on key people and bodies e.g. a duty on key bodies, including the local authorities, to make arrangements to ensure that when carrying out their functions they take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

## Links to other relevant law and guidance

[Children Act 1989](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Monitoring attendance](#)

## Information Sharing

If there are any concerns with regards to sharing information the professional concerned should refer to the [Harrow Local Safeguarding Children Board](#) guidance.

[Information Sharing](#): advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers (July 2018).

Reference should be made, where appropriate, to the [London Child Protection Procedures](#) 'Child Protection Procedures' and the Harrow LSCB joint protocol '[Children who go missing](#)' (June 2016). See Contacts for Missing Person Coordinator / Runaway project

## Further Information

### The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

#### Deletions from the school register

8(1). The Regulations enable schools to delete from their register compulsory school-age children in the following circumstances:

- a. the school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order;
- b. the School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority;
- c. completion of compulsory school age;
- d. permanent exclusion;

- e. death of the pupil;
- f. transfer between schools; and
- g. pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
- h. failure to return for an extended family holiday after both the school and the local authority has tried to locate the pupil;
- i. a medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age;
- j. in custody for more than four months;
- k. 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority on school have tried to locate the pupil; and
- l. left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.

8 (3) Schools can only lawfully delete non-compulsory school-age children in the following circumstances:

- a. left the school;
- b. 20 school-days continuous absence without good reason;
- c. death of the pupil;
- d. permanent exclusion; or
- e. child who was admitted to the nursery is not transferring to the reception class.

8(4). In general, pupils can be deleted from the register of one school if they register at another (see below). However, it is possible for any pupil to register at more than one school and, where this happens; there are restrictions on applying the power to delete pupils because they are registered at another school. Schools cannot delete pupils from the register if one of the circumstances in regulations does not apply.

All other deletions are illegal and could result in court proceedings against the person responsible.

**It is not permitted to remove pupils from roll on the grounds of nonattendance alone.**

**In relation to pupils with either a statement of special education needs or an education health and care plan (EHP), the pupil cannot be removed from the roll of the school named in the statement / EHP without the permission of the LA that maintains the statement / EHP.**

## **Completion of compulsory school age**

Schools can delete pupils from the roll if they have:

- a. reached the end of their compulsory school-age for the setting; and
- b. are not continuing their education at the school.

Deletions cannot be made until the children reach their school leaving date, which is the last Friday in June of the school year in which their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday falls.

**NOTE: Where the word deletion/delete is mentioned this relates to removing the pupil from the school register.**

## **Risk Assessment**

When assessing risk, the school or a professional should consider the following:

- Is the child known to children safeguarding services?
- Is the child looked after?
- Is the child currently subject to a child protection plan, a child protection investigation or a child in need?
- If not does the school / professional have any current concerns about the child?
- Have there been previous concerns or involvement with children's safeguarding services in Harrow or another borough?
- Is the child known to Early Support services?
- Is this a "mobile family" who have moved addresses / boroughs frequently?  
□ Is there a history of poor attendance?
- Have parents previously been subject to proceedings in relation to poor attendance?
- Are there any immigration issues?
- Is the child vulnerable because of age and or disability etc.? □ Is the child at risk of contact with concerning adults including contact online?
- Has the child been known to associate with adults or other children who pose a risk to children?
- Is the child at risk of CSE? (A separate CSE risk assessment should be discussed with MASH / the allocated social worker). □ Is the child at risk due to FGM, forced marriage or abduction and consequently at risk of being removed from the UK?
- Is the child a young carer?
- Is there a history of domestic abuse and violence in the family?
- Is there a history of parental mental ill health or substance abuse?
- Is the fact the child is missing unusual?
- Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk? □ Is the child in the process of being assessed for their special education needs via an EHCP?

- Is there an indication that the child may be subject to radicalisation or extremism?

Where you answer yes or are not sure you should discuss the case with the safeguarding lead in the school and or your manager who will advise if further action should be taken and if a referral should be made to an appropriate team / professional.

## **Overview of identification and tracking processes**

### **Schools**

- School should promptly notify the MASH by making a referral. (If the child is on a child protection plan or if the school have child protection concerns about the child they must immediately notify the MASH.
  - Remove the child's name from its roll (consult Education Services including SENARS where there is an EHCP)
  - Create a 'lost pupil' common transfer file (CTF) with XXXXXXXX as the destination is unknown.
  - Upload the CTF to the DfE's secure website where it will be held in the Lost Pupils Database.
  - School will add details to SIMS and also on the leavers / starters form sent to the Admission service within five school days.
  - If a Harrow school which has previously uploaded a lost child CTF is contacted by a school at which the lost child has subsequently registered, and then the school which sent the CTF to the Lost Pupils Database should create a new CTF file and send this to the receiving school.
  - When a pupil joins or leaves a school then a Common Transfer File must accompany him / her as well as a request to the previous school for a copy of the school file.
  - It is recommended good practice that where a parent / carer makes enquires about a school place in person, on the telephone or via email, information is recorded and the school send an email to the Admissions Service and LOCME with the contact details for the family along with full names and dates of birth.
- Key to success – National Pupil Database.

### **LA / LOCME**

- Annual review of the identification and tracking of children missing education procedures in order to ensure best practice. Attendance at CME Leads meeting.
- Annual reminder to all schools about their responsibilities – issued before the beginning of each academic year.
- MASH or the LOCME in the Education Service will work with the school and make reasonable checks to try and identify the child's current whereabouts/destination including checks with other departments, home visits, telephone calls and emails.

- LOCME will ask the Admissions Service to add a new missing alert to Capita One
- Children missing from education are recorded in Framework I Mosaic with cross checks with other databases.
- Where appropriate we share information other local authorities.
- LOCME and Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Team Manager & Child Sexual Exploitation Co-ordinator will liaise on the list of children brought to Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings to ensure these children are in education setting and to offer necessary support where relevant. The MACE meetings include both child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation.

### **LA / Schools information management system / Capita One**

- SIMS notifications are sent to LOCME when an unknown destination for a child is recorded. An alert is added to the Admission service database Capita One.
- Monitors central register of Alternative Education Placements.

### **LA / Admissions**

- Where the Admission service staff, offer a school place to a child who has been recorded as missing they will receive an alert message on Capita One to contact the LOCME urgently who will take appropriate action
- Where the Admissions staff receive a leavers notification they will refer to LOCME via MASH.
- Where an online application is made for an in-year school place and no previous school is listed the Admission Service will contact the family for the details and pass these to the new school.

### **All Professionals**

- Any professional coming into contact with a child and their family/carers should ask which school the child attends, where there are concerns that the child may not be in education to refer to LOCME.

## **Glossary of terms**

<b>CME</b>	Children Missing Education
<b>AIM</b>	<a href="#">Attendance Intervention Model</a>
<b>CSE</b>	Child Sexual Exploitation
<b>EHE</b>	Elective Home Education
<b>EHCP</b>	Education Health and Care Plan
<b>LA</b>	Local Authority
<b>LOCME</b>	Lead Officer for Children Missing Education & Child Employment
<b>MASH</b>	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
<b>SALEHE</b>	School Attendance Liaison & Elective Home Education Officer
<b>SENARS</b>	Special Education Needs Assessment & Review Service
<b>S2S</b>	School to School
<b>SEN</b>	Special Education Needs and Review Service
<b>CAO</b>	Court Attendance Officer
<b>SIMS</b>	Schools Information Management System
<b>CTF</b>	Common Transfer File
<b>CML</b>	Children Missing Education – Leavers
<b>CMJ</b>	Children Missing Education - Joiners

### **For further information, please contact:**

Lead Officer for Children Missing Education Services

[cme@harrow.gov.uk](mailto:cme@harrow.gov.uk)