

Report to: Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Board

Report by: Neil Stevenson - Attendance, Admissions, Exclusions and Reintegration Manager, Education, PCC

Report date: 29th September 2017

Report title: Children Missing Education

Recommendations

It is recommended that the PSCB endorses the following:

1. All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority 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. It is important that this happens *at the point of deletion* and not for any other than the 15 reasons. This should be done via the pupil migration form.
2. Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register. This is not the sole responsibility of the LA.
3. Schools must also notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point.
4. The above is assisted (though not fulfilled) by ensuring that weekly pupil data feeds to the local authority are accurate and delivered on time. The safeguarding concerns that any inaccurate or late data causes should be reiterated to schools.
5. Multi Agency Teams in each of the city's localities are charged with reporting any pupils in the local area that they are unable to find on a school roll (reasonable checks should be made) to the childrenmissingeducation@portsmouthcc.gov.uk officer, with relevant details.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - a) Inform the Board of the role of the local authority with regards to Children Missing Education
 - b) Assure the Board that robust processes are in place to ensure that these responsibilities are carried out in the interests of safeguarding children.

2. Definition

- 2.1. Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.
- 2.2. A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn five between 1 January and 31 March, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn five between 1 April and 31 August, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn five between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 December. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen.

3. Current position

- 3.1. Local authorities have a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise.
- 3.2. Portsmouth City Council has in place robust policies and procedures to enable the council to fulfil its duty in relation to these children, including effective tracking and enquiry systems. Portsmouth referrals are made to childrenmissingeducation@portsmouthcc.gov.uk and the named officer Rajnie Zaman-Haque sits within the School Attendance Team.
- 3.3. The guidance around reduced timetables, procedures around Elective Home Education¹, deregistration from a schools admission register, School Attendance Orders², Education Supervision Orders and placement of Hard to Place Pupils under the Fair Access Protocol through the Inclusion Support Panel, means that the council has good mechanisms for tracking pupils off and onto school rolls. This means that the numbers that are flagged as missing are minimised. This also helps to ensure that the council is fulfilling its wider safeguarding duties

- 3.4. The procedures in place in Portsmouth ensure that there is good information sharing within the council (including social care) and between other authorities and appropriate agencies to track pupils who leave or arrive in our local area. Regular reviews of policies and procedures take place to ensure that they are fit for purpose in identifying Children Missing Education.
- 3.5. The data below shows the numbers that are reported under the criteria set for CME (i.e. that the family whereabouts are thought to be unknown). It should be noted that the vast majority are located and those who are not are appropriately referred on.

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Number of requests to locate children whereabouts	146	150	291	279	316	298	172
Number of children whereabouts located	130	142			304	294	164
Number of children whereabouts not located					12	4	8
Number of children whereabouts not located (referred to MASH/Police)					12	4	4

NB. The 4 pupils unaccounted for in the last academic years data are still having enquiries made. Other missing data is due to recording changes that are now regularised

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1. In order for processes within the school attendance team to be efficient and secure, timely accurate data is crucial. The government's enhanced guidance in September 2016 was a response to poor quality follow up when a pupil was 'off-rolled'. Therefore precise information in real time in relation to on and off rolling means that each and every pupil is accounted for.
- 4.2. The main gap is always going to be arrivals to the city and the council's Education Service not being aware that there is pupil that should be on a school roll who is without one. Therefore accurate intelligence from other agencies in the community can help ensure that the council can fulfil its duty to ensure that suitable education is provided to all who are entitled. In addition, safeguarding risks of children not being in school are minimised.

5. Supporting documents



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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf (Page 20 and 21)



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[School Attendance Orders](#)