



*'Doing our best to achieve our best'*

## **Clarendon Primary School & Nursery**

### **Safeguarding Children Missing in Education**

#### **Introduction**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and Local Authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Local Authorities are expected to focus their resources effectively in intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

#### **Rationale**

This policy has been created to assist the school and other professionals who work with children and families within Surrey, to ensure that we:

- Meet statutory duties relating to the provision of education and safeguarding the welfare of children missing education.
- Have robust multi-agency systems in place to identify, refer and track children missing from education or at risk of doing so.
- Establish monitoring and reporting systems for all children missing from education and at risk of becoming a 'Child Missing Education'.

#### **Definitions**

**Children Missing Education (CME)** refers to all children who are of compulsory school age and are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision).

As part of Surrey, we are expected to refer a pupil to the Local Authority for further investigation if s/he has been continually absent from school for more than 10 school days without permission and where 'reasonable checks' fail to establish their whereabouts and the reason for their absence.

Examples of why a child goes missing from education can be found in Appendix 1.

**Compulsory School Age** – A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1st January and 31st March they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1st April and 31st August they are of compulsory school age on 31st August; if they turn 5 between 1st September and 31st December they are compulsory school age on 31st December. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year they reach 16.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

##### **Parents' responsibilities**

Parents have a duty to ensure compulsory school aged children are receiving suitable fulltime education. Some parents may elect to educate their children at home and may withdraw them from school at any time to do so, unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order. Where a parent decides to home educate their child this decision must be put in writing to the school.

It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to ensure that parents meet these responsibilities.

## Schools Responsibilities

The statutory requirements for all schools to record joiners and leavers are defined in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006.

As a school we must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of each child jointly with the Local Authority, before deleting the child's name from the register.

When removing a child's name, our notification to the Local Authority must include:

- the full name of the child.
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the child normally resides.
- at least one telephone number of the parent.
- the child's future address and destination school, if applicable.
- the grounds under which the child's name is to be removed from the admission register.

As a school we must:

- Enter pupils on the admissions register on the first day on which we have agreed, or the parents have been notified, that the pupil will attend Clarendon Primary School.
- Notify their Local Authority **within five days** of adding a pupil's name to the admission register (see Appendix 3). The notification must include all details contained in the admission register for the new pupil.
- Monitor each pupil's attendance through the daily register and follow the procedure in Appendix 4 in cases of unauthorised absence.
- Liaise with parents where attendance becomes a concern.
- Liaise with the Surrey Inclusion Officer where concerns around a child's school attendance continue and / or when a child has been absent from school, without explanation, for 10 consecutive days.
- Complete ½ termly Local Authority data returns identifying children who are attending alternative provision and/or attending school on a reduced or modified timetable.
- Remove a pupil's name from the admissions register on the date that the child leaves Clarendon.
- Notify the Local Authority when we are about to remove a pupil's name from our admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations, no later than the date that the child's name is due to be removed. (This includes where we have not been notified by the parents of a new school their child/ren will be transferring to.)
- Where a parent notifies us, in writing, of their intention to electively home educate their child we must forward a copy of the letter to the Elective Home Education Team / allocated LA Education Inclusion Officer. Where parents orally indicate that they intend to withdraw their child to be home educated and no letter has been received, we must not remove the child from our roll and should notify Inclusion Officer at the earliest opportunity.
- Work in partnership with parents and other professional agencies (identified below) to help ensure all children are receiving access to education and do not become 'children missing education'.

## Local Authority's Responsibilities

The Children's Missing Education Tracking Officer's role is:

- To track all statutory age children who leave any Surrey school and who do not transfer automatically to another school. This involves identifying and monitoring children until they are registered as being on roll with a new school or alternative educational placement.
- In accordance with statutory guidance, act as a point of contact for enquiries and referrals from other Local Authorities, partnership agencies and Children's Service's staff. This applies to any child who is at risk of 'missing education' in order to assist the prompt identification of such children and their re-engagement with educational provision.
- To maintain a database of identified 'Children Missing in Education', children who are not registered to a school and meet the criteria as 'awaiting school placement'.
- To regularly provide senior managers and service leads within Surrey with a list of current 'Children Missing in Education' cases for monitoring and intervention.
- To take responsibility for investigating all children added to the 'Lost Pupil Database'.
- To be the point of contact for schools if they are aware that a child is unplaced, i.e. has no destination school.

The education Inclusion Service role is:

- To fulfil Surrey County Council's statutory responsibilities of ensuring parents provide their children with a full-time education in accordance with the Education Act 1996. This includes investigating why children are not attending school regularly and making enquiries about children who may be 'missing education'.
- To make reasonable enquiries when a child has been absent without explanation for 10 consecutive days. This may include home visits, contacting known family members, liaising with Police and Housing Groups. In cases where a child is on a school roll but 'missing' and the absence is unexplained the school should follow the process outlined in Appendix 4.
- In order to prevent children from becoming 'Children Missing in Education' in Surrey, they will take responsibility for ensuring that schools only delete children from the school roll lawfully.
- In cases where a child does not appear to be on a school roll, they will follow up all referrals by visiting the home address to investigate whether the child is on a school roll or educated otherwise.
- Where it is established that a child is not receiving a full-time appropriate education they will work with the parent/carer, young person and Local Authority services to ensure suitable educational provision is found for the child.
- Where a parent or carer fails to satisfy the Local Authority that the child is receiving a full-time appropriate education, they will issue a School Attendance Order (SAO). **N.B** – It is a criminal offence if parents fail to comply with a School Attendance Order.
- Where a need for additional support is identified, they will make referrals to appropriate services.
- Where a parent notifies us of their intention to Electively Home Educate their son or daughter, the letter of notification must be passed on to their allocated LA Education Inclusion Officer.

The virtual school's role is:

- To ensure every looked after child receives full-time and suitable education and to take the lead for 'looked after children' who are 'missing education'.
- To monitor attendance and exclusion data on a daily basis through Welfare Call to ensure they are able to respond quickly to any changes in circumstances and provide appropriate intervention.
- To act promptly to identify a suitable education placement when notified that a child has become 'looked after' through social care data systems.
- To discuss 'Missing from Education' data for 'looked after children' regularly at area placement panel in collaboration with missing data from partner services.
- To work with the allocated social worker if a 'looked after child' is identified as a 'Child Missing in Education' due to being a runaway or missing from home or care.

The Education Leads for Vulnerable Learners' role is:

- To monitor the 'Children Missing in Education's' list for accuracy and to track progress in placing children in appropriate full-time provision.
- To refer 'Children Missing in Education' through the In Year Fair Access Protocol, where they meet the criteria, to secure a school place.
- To facilitate the agreed process through the Area Case Review and Action groups, working collaboratively with other services, to ensure every child has access to a sustainable education placement once a child is identified as a 'Child Missing in Education'.

The Admissions Team's role is:

- To ask us, as the current school, to check our leavers at standard transition points, to ensure they have all applied for a school place and that, at the end of the year, we know of the destination school for each child on roll.
- To ensure admissions applications are followed up if they do not indicate a current school.
- To track all in year and normal round applications until the child is placed on roll.
- To refer to the 'Children Missing in Education' officer details of any child who is out of school and for whom no school place has been accepted.
- Along with ourselves, make reasonable checks to ascertain the whereabouts of children who fail to start at school and refer these children to the 'Children Missing in Education' officer if the a destination school cannot be established.

- To refer to the Elective Home Education Officer details of any child who is declared to be receiving home education, (and for whom no school place can be offered) for those children whose parents decline an offer of a school place or withdraw from a school roll in favour of home education.
- To refer any child on where a school attendance order may need to be served when the Education Inclusion Service has submitted the Admission Form and a school place has been allocated through the Fair Access Protocol.
- To monitor late applications to ensure support can be targeted to parents and schools which most commonly have late applicants.
- To monitor applications from abroad to ensure they take up the school place offered when they are due to arrive in the UK.
- To receive and record details of starters and leavers from Surrey's state funded schools.
- To alert the 'Children Missing in Education' officer if a child previously identified to be a 'child missing in education' is known to be offered a school place.

The Elective Home Education Team's role:

Children, who are educated by their parents at home, are not considered to be 'Children Missing in Education'. Some children are not registered with the Local Authority as being electively home educated as the law, in some circumstances, allows parents to choose not to register. The Surrey Elective Home Education Team actively encourages all home educating parents to register.

Children will be added to the Elective Home Education register when notification is received from us (as the child's last school) that we have deleted a child from our roll; this notification should be accompanied by the written request for the child to be de-registered from a person with the parental responsibility to do so. This written request must include a commitment from the parent/carer that education will be provided. When notification is received we will refer this to our attached LA inclusion Officer. The Education Inclusion Service will then visit the family to ensure that parents are fully aware of the responsibilities of educating their son or daughter at home.

Where we fail to provide a copy of the parent's written notice of intent to electively home educate, whether new or established home educators, the child will not be added to the Elective Home Education register and the Area Education Inclusion team will be advised and will follow up with us as the child's previous school.

If the Elective Home Education team receive a 'referral of concern' (whether anonymous or not) from either a professional, family member or member of the public to say that a child is not receiving education at home that is full time, efficient and suitable, they will discharge the Statutory Duty of the Local Authority to make enquiries with the parents; this includes asking to see evidence of learning.

Where parents, whether new or established home educators, fail to engage with enquiries made or fail to satisfy the Elective Home Education team that the education is full time, efficient and suitable, the child will be removed from the Elective Home Education register and a 'Children Missing in Education' referral will be made to the Area Education Inclusion Team.

### **The Notification Process**

A number of processes exist to notify the Local Authority's education database of 'Children Missing in Education'.

(i) Local data transfer system:

Base to Base (B2B) is a data transfer system used by us and ensures the automatic and timely transfer of core student data into ONE (EMS).

***Where B2B is not available, schools must submit a partial CTF for joiners and leaver's data – CMJ and CML or submit a manual data return to the Local Authority.***

(ii) National Data System:

Secure Access is a web based secure data transfer site hosted by the DfE and is available to us and Local Authorities to enable a child's Common Transfer File (CTF) (see Appendix 3) to be sent to and

from any maintained school in England and Wales and for CMJ and CML files to be sent to the Local Authority.

***Where a child's destination is unknown, schools must ensure this is detailed in the Common Transfer File.***

Any person/service who has a concern that a child is 'missing in education' should inform the Local Authority using the online single contact point: CME SCP or email: [CME@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:CME@surreycc.gov.uk)

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding of all children is paramount and this policy must be considered in accordance with the School and Local Authority's Safeguarding procedures.

If we are concerned about the safety of a child we will contact the Surrey Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA) on 0300 470 9100. We will never assume that somebody else will take responsibility and make this phone call.

If a child is in immediate danger we will always call 999.

Where required, we will always seek additional support for families through the Early Help Hub.

The Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership provides guidance and protocols relating to situations that may result in Children Missing Education <https://www.surreyscp.org.uk/>

Records will be kept accordance with service guidelines.

### **Other Relevant policies**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following key policies:

- Attendance Policy
- Children with Medical Needs Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEN Policy

### **Policy review:**

This policy will be reviewed by the headteacher and school governing body either following the time frames outlined below or when the local authority releases an update to their 'Children Missing in Education' guidelines.

Reviewed by the headteacher: Summer Term 2021

Reviewed and adopted by the governing body: Summer Term 2024

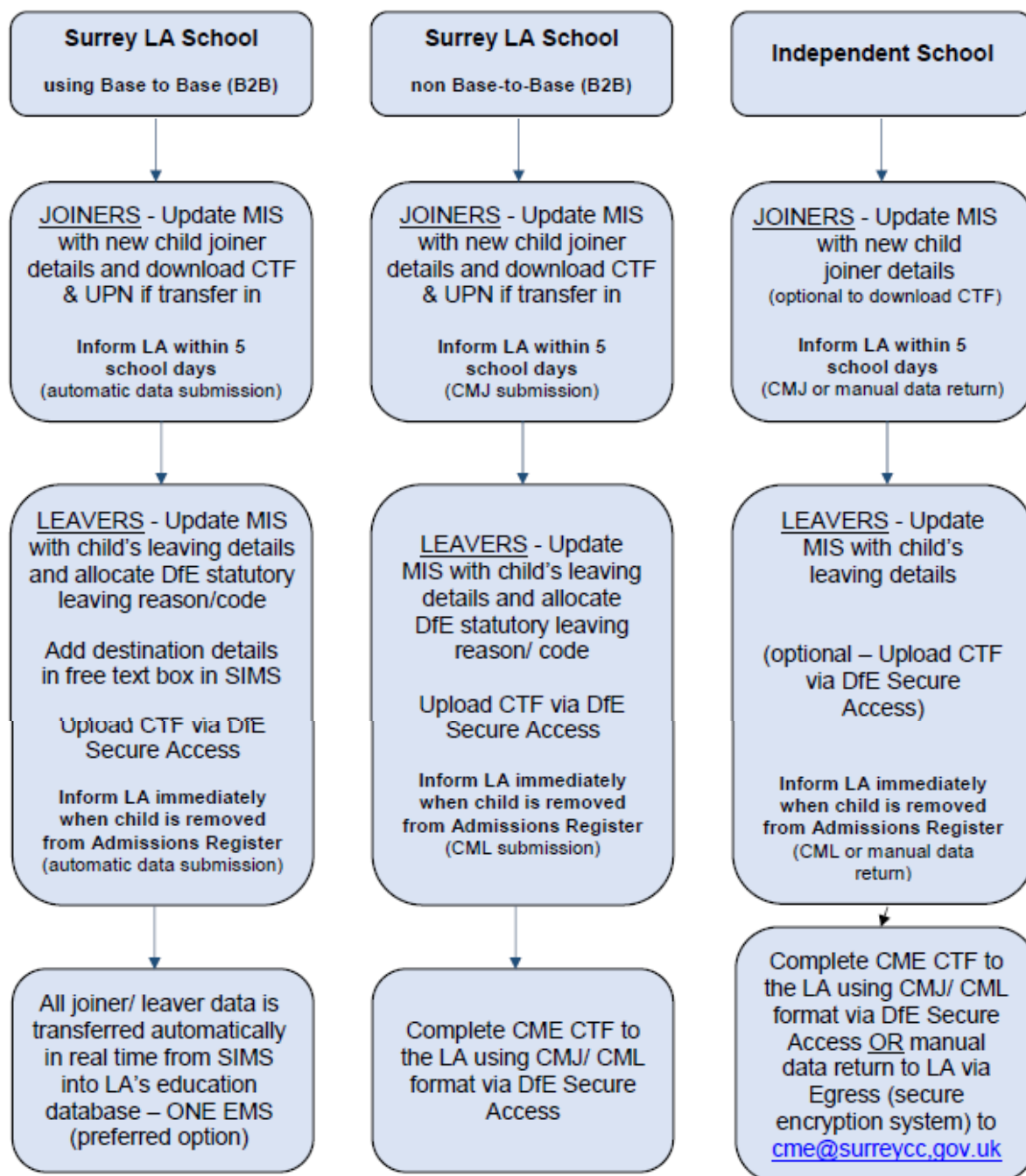
## **Appendix 1 – Why Children go missing from education**

There are complex reasons why children become ‘missing from education’. These include, but are not limited to:

- Fail to start appropriate provision and hence never enter the education system;
- Fail to complete a transition between providers, for example by being unable or not trying to find a suitable school place after moving between Local Authorities;
- Do not complete transition between key stages/schools, particularly if parents are unsuccessful with preferred schools;
- Have a family/carer that does not alert the Local Authority of the fact they are resident in borough or does not know how to access education provision;
- Cease to attend due to withdrawal from provision by parents and schools (e.g. parents no confidence in school, behaviour and truancy issues, fresh start);
- School transfer more difficult to achieve than parents thought (e.g. school places, term-time agreement, school reluctance to admit, timescale key; Stage 4, curriculum capacity);
- Are on the point of permanent exclusion from school and they leave or are persuaded to seek a fresh start in another school;
- Are permanently excluded from schools out of the borough, particularly independent schools;
- Are on alternative curriculum arrangements which are not monitored effectively;
- Have SEN placements that are not completed due to one or more parties not complying with arrangements or able to meet needs;
- Are ‘looked after’ within family arrangements, unaccompanied from abroad, placed in Surrey by other Local Authority’s and not known to the LAC team;
- Are in the youth justice system and returning from secure accommodation;
- Are made homeless due to social or economic issues including domestic violence;
- Members of the Traveller or Gypsy community who move around frequently;
- Families with poor literacy skills or with EAL needs that find accessing information difficult;
- Have health needs or are disabled or where the child is a young carer;
- Are refugees or asylum seekers;
- Are involved in criminal activity;
- Families who live in poverty;
- Dependency on substances (alcohol and drugs);
- Are placed by other Local Authority’s without notification e.g. temporary housing, safety move and witness protection schemes;
- Are let down by system failures between partners where information is not shared effectively to support the child;
- “Dip in and out” of elective home education at the request of parent/carers;
- Have parents who take extended leave/holiday and schools take them off roll or families leave the UK or borough for a period;
- Are bullied in and around schools and difficulties cannot be resolved in school;
- Young runaways who leave their normal residence, to live on the streets or in temporary emergency situations;
- Children that are at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation and Children that are trafficked.

## Appendix 2 The On and Off Roll Notification Process

**Child: - On and Off Roll Notification Process for Schools to inform the Local Authority of statutory school age joiners and leavers (all transitions)**



## Appendix 3 Data Codes and CTF Processes

### Common Transfer File (CTF) and DfE Data Codes

- A CTF is used to transfer pupil data between schools and/or the LA
- It is a statutory requirement for all maintained schools (and best practice for academy & free schools) to always upload a CTF via DfE Secure Access when a pupil joins or leaves a school
- A partial CTF – CMJ and CML can be used to transfer joiners and leavers information from schools to the LA (if no other LA process exists) and ensures schools can meet their obligations in accordance with Pupil Registration regulations and CME policy guidance
- The DfE national code for any school in England & Wales can be checked on the web-site – <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/> (previously Edubase)

### CTF & Leaving Codes (as per DfE)

National code	Use For	Leaving Code	Description
LEA/School No	Known school destination	IM	In Year Transfer – Maintained School
		PM	End of Phase Transfer – Maintained School
National Code	Use For	Leaving Code	Description
MMM/MMMM	Emigration	LC	Left Country
	Private sector	II	In Year Transfer – Independent School
	Private sector	PI	End of Phased Transfer – Independent School
XXX/XXXX	Unknown destination	MI	Missing Pupil
Local code	Use For	Leaving Code	Description
936/LLLL	EHE	EL	Elective Home Education
	Deceased	DD	Deceased
	Excluded	PE	Permanent Exclusion
	Pupil remaining responsibility of LA	OT	Other



## **Appendix 4**

## FIRST DAY OF UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

School **MUST** attempt to contact home via either automated calling system or a designated member of staff telephoning the parents.

### (a) Parent/carer responds:

i) *Aware and reason for absence provided* - school to remind parent they should contact school as early as possible on each day of absence.

ii) *Not aware* - Parent & School to start checks (school site, friends /family etc) to ascertain child's whereabouts. Ongoing risk assessment/consideration of vulnerability regarding informing police

### b) Parent/carer does not answer/respond:

\* Message should be left on answering service requesting parent/carer contacts the school as soon as possible.

\*If the child is subject to child protection plan or is a child in care then the named social worker should be informed.

\*If there is reason to believe that the child may be the victim of a crime the police should be informed.

\*Unexplained absence should be recorded as unauthorised (Code O) .

**If you are concerned the child is vulnerable and at risk of harm, refer straight to the MASH**

School identify a child is absent and no explanation provided by parent/carer

## DAYS TWO TO TWENTY

If the judgement on **Day One** is that there is no reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm, the process of school attempting to contact the family by automated system or telephone should continue daily.

Schools should also attempt to contact the parents/ make enquiries via other contact numbers and emergency contacts held for child.

Schools should attempt to contact the parents via email if known.

If schools have had no response to their enquiries they should write on **Day Three** to home address asking family to make contact to explain absence.

***The Education (Pupil Registration) England) Regulations 2006*** states that schools **MUST** refer to the Education Welfare Officer when a child has not attended for 10 consecutive days and the absence is unauthorised. However schools should seek advice from their Education Welfare Officer before day 10 in order that a decision can be made regarding whether a visit needs to be made to the home address sooner to check the welfare of the child.

## CHILD MISSING FROM SCHOOL FOR MORE THAN 20 SCHOOL DAYS

If a child continues to be missing from school for 20 school days **and** the school and the LA have exhausted enquires and has been unable to locate the pupil and her/his family, under the regulations, it is permissible for the child's name to be removed from the school roll and details of the child up-loaded to the DfE Lost Pupil Database.

If information is received indicating that the child is on roll at another school, all relevant agencies including EWO and CME Tracking Officer should be informed.

If concerns remain in relation to the whereabouts of the child, the CME tracking Officer should continue to pursue reasonable enquiries and missing person activity in accordance with local procedures until the pupil is tracked and on the roll of another school.

**N.B** – In Surrey the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) is now known as an Inclusion Officer (IO).