



# Baines School

Nil Sine Labore

The Governors of Baines School

## CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION POLICY

Last Updated	October 2024
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Next Review Due	February 2027

## Introduction

All children, regardless of their circumstances are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Section 436A of the 1996 Education Act (added by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006) requires the Local Authority to establish the identities of children within the area who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education other than at a school. Children of compulsory school age within this category are regarded as Children Missing Education (CME) and should be returned to full time education. The Local Authority have procedures in place to prevent children at risk of becoming CME.

## Rationale

Baines School works with children and families 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 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 CME.

## Definitions

**Children Missing Education (CME)** refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity (e.g. school, alternative provision, elective home education), and/or has been out of any education provision continuously for a period of not less than twenty school days'.

### CME is defined if the child is:

- On a school roll, not attending and the family's whereabouts are unknown.
- Of compulsory school age;
- Not on a school roll;
- Not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school, e.g. at home, privately or in alternative provision.

### Examples include:

- A child/young person has been removed from roll after being permanently excluded and no alternative provision is in place
- A child/young person has not been attending school and a home visit reveals that the family may have moved away

- A child/young person has moved into the area but no arrangements have been made to access a new school
- A child/young person has moved out of the area (this includes moving outside of the UK) or is about to move out of the area but no arrangements have been made to access a new school
- A child/young person who has been offered a school place, but parents/carers have refused the place offered and the authority is not aware of alternative arrangements for the child/young person's education

## **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 31st 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 sixteen.

**A Parent** is defined in Section 576, Education Act 1996 as:

- All natural parents/carers, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person who has care of a child (having care of a child or young person means that the child lives with and is looked after by that person, irrespective of their relationship).

## **Lancashire County Council Role**

Safeguarding children and vulnerable members of society is a key priority for Government. The Home Office, 'Missing children and adults, a cross government strategy', outlines the government's objectives for all agencies to comply with:

- Prevention – reducing the number of people who go missing – for the Education Welfare Service, this means working closely with all agencies to break the cycle for those who repeatedly go missing.
- Protection – reducing the risk of harm to those who go missing - this means ensuring that the cases of CME are investigated thoroughly and as quickly as possible to locate pupils and close cases.
- Provision – providing missing people and their families with support and guidance - this means signposting families to appropriate supportive agencies.
- Baines School will seek support from the local authority for guidance and advice on CME. The local authority has procedures and adheres to the DfE guidance 'Children

Missing Education. Statutory guidance for local authorities September 2016'. The local authority has a designated officer who manages all CME concerns. If we are not sure whether we should refer, we will call the CME team on 01257 517333 or email [cme@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cme@lancashire.gov.uk) for advice.

## **Our School's Duties**

We have statutory safeguarding responsibilities under the Education Act 2002. We will investigate any unexplained absences. If a child fails to attend school, school staff will try to establish the family's whereabouts before making a CME referral. In order to fulfil these responsibilities Baines School will as applicable:

- Use its contact telephone numbers to attempt to speak with the parent/carer or other family member.
- Send an email to parents/carers.
- Speak to siblings and/or known relatives within the School.
- Speak to friends of the child who is not attending.
- Speak with School staff of known siblings at other schools.
- Make home visit(s) to attempt to ascertain if the family are still in the same home at different times of the day.
- Enter into discussions with the local authority.

Following the completion of these attempts to locate the child:

- The School will complete a CME referral and registration certificate and email them to [cmooe@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:cmooe@lancashire.gov.uk). (Any partner agency or service involved with children has a duty to notify the Local Authority of any child or family who are missing from education).
- A CME referral must be completed if there are 20 days of continuous unexplained absence.
- Baines School will not delete a child from the school roll until advised by the CME officer. - Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Should parents/carers approach the School for a place but the School has no places, School Admissions should still be updated stating that the School has been approached by a parent with details of the child including DOB, carers and address. This enables the local authority to track these children and support them in securing a place in education.

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding of all children is paramount and this policy must be considered in accordance with the Schools safeguarding procedures. Concerns about a child should be reported on 0300 123 6720 or out of hours 0300 123 6722 (5pm – 8am) or the Police.

The Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board provides guidance and protocols relating to situations that may result in CME. For example, Child Protection, Child Sexual Exploitation, Children Missing from Home or Care in Lancashire, Forced Marriage, Honour & Ritual Killings, Female Genital Mutilation (Inc. Breast Ironing), Child Slavery or Trafficking and any form of child harm.

Safeguarding concerns can be discussed with the Education Safeguarding Advisor. Please refer to Baines School Safeguarding Policy for the school's approach.

## **Related Policies**

Baines School Child Protection Policy Baines

School Attendance Policy

## **Further Information and Guidance**

**Children missing education. Statutory guidance for local authorities September 2016**  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/550416/Children\\_Missing\\_Education\\_-\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

**School Attendance** <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>

**Missing**

**Persons**

**Strategy**

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/117793/missing-persons-strategy.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/117793/missing-persons-strategy.pdf)