

## Pupils Missing in Education (PME) – Information for Schools

It is always concerning when a child does not attend school and the reasons are not clear.

Under the [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) guidance (August 2024) all schools are legally required to share information from their registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

- **New Pupil and Deletion returns:** notifying the local authority when a pupil’s name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times.
- **Attendance returns:** providing the local authority with the names and addresses of all pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U). Local authorities must agree the frequency that attendance returns are to be provided with all schools in their area. This should be no less frequently than once per calendar month.
- **Sickness returns:** providing the local authority with the full name and address of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been recorded with code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. Only one sickness return is required for a continuous period of sickness in a school year. This is to help the school and local authority to agree any provision needed to ensure continuity of education for pupils who cannot attend because of health needs, in line with the statutory guidance on education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

In accordance with the guidance Leicestershire County Council (LCC) will require you to do the following:

### New Pupil and Deletion returns

**All schools must make a return to the local authority within five school days** when a pupil’s name is added to the admission register or removed.

A return can be submitted by completing a [Record Absence Data](#) form. This is for notifying LCC in relation to suspensions, part time timetables and mid-year moves, where the pupil’s name is added to or deleted from the school admission register.

Please contact the Inclusion service for advice if you are unsure as to whether a pupil should be removed from roll.

Suspensions	All children
Part time timetables	All children
Mid-year moves / On and Off Rolling	All children

### Attendance returns

Complete a monthly PME data return in respect of pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly or have been absent for a **continuous period of ten school days** where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically **classified as unauthorised (G, N, O, and/or U)**.

### Sickness returns

Complete a monthly sickness return via the PME data return providing the local authority with details of all pupils of compulsory school age who have been **recorded with code I (illness)** and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

**It is expected that a school will compete and record one or more of the following actions when a pupil's whereabouts are unknown and the school are unable to make contact with listed contacts**

1. Make contact with the parent, relatives, neighbours using known contact details. Consider other forms of contact including text messages, emails, internal school messaging systems, home visits, social media checks etc.
  - a. Where other known siblings attend other schools, check to see if the other school are having contact with the family.
  - b. If there are other services involved (for example, social care, health, SENA, Traveller team) check to see if they have had contact with the family.
2. Where there are safeguarding concerns, follow the school's safeguarding procedures and outline that all the actions above have been completed. If a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children's social care (and the police if appropriate)
3. If unable to locate their whereabouts following the above attempts and the school have exhausted every option to try to locate the child, seek further advice and guidance from **Children's Duty First Response on 0116 305 5500**.
4. If all the above steps have been completed and school are still **unable to locate the child's whereabouts after 10 continuous school days**, school should complete a [PME referral](#) to the Inclusion Service. The safe and wellbeing checks will remain the responsibility of the school and school should continue to try to do this at regular intervals.

**Action required by school when pupil whereabouts is known but there is a continuous period of five unauthorised school days**

Under the National Framework schools will need to consider whether a referral to Attendance Team for a Penalty Notice is the most appropriate course of action where a pupil has had more than 5 school days **unauthorised absence** in a 10-week rolling period. Schools are directed to consult the [Leicestershire County Council's Code of Conduct](#) for issuing Penalty Notices to ascertain whether a referral should be made to the Attendance Team or whether providing further or alternative support is a more appropriate tool to improve attendance in the pupil's particular circumstances.

Schools should consult [Appendix A](#) contained within the Code of Conduct which sets out key considerations a school should make to ascertain whether sufficient support has been provided to a parent and pupil.

If you have been working together with parents to re-engage a child back into school by using a graduated approach and engaging other relevant agencies to support and this has not been successful in improving the child's attendance, please complete a referral to the Inclusion Service for additional support via our [website](#).

If the parents have not been engaging with support that the school has tried to offer/put in place, please contact the Attendance Team for further advice [attendanceteam@leics.gov.uk](mailto:attendanceteam@leics.gov.uk) or 0116 305 6743.