



Children Missing Education: Checklist for schools

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

It has been agreed within Leicestershire that schools should notify the local authority if a pupil has been absent, without the permission of the school, for a continuous period of 10 days or more, or before if there are concerns around the safety or known risks to the child.

To support referrals of this nature we would like to ensure that the schools have completed the following check prior to sending the referral to the Inclusion Service or Court Team.

Unknown absence over 10 days - unable to make contact with the family

1. The school will need to make every effort to contact the parent/carer
 - Have you have thoroughly exhausted every means of contacting the child remotely?
 - Emailed the family/young person and checked school email accounts
 - Phone calls – all numbers including extended family
 - Text to request contact
 - Is the child engaging/contactable through the school's portal/website and where possible and able check social media sites that you are aware the child might access?
 - Have you visited the child's address, and does it look as through the family are still living at the address?
 - Where other known siblings attend other schools, check to see if the other school are having contact with the family.
 - Is there a social worker or SEN officer involved? Contact them directly to see if they have had any involvement with the child
 - Where other services (health etc) are known to be involved check with them to see if they have had contact with the family.
 - If all of the above has been tried, have you text the family to say that 'contact is urgently required, and the school will need to escalate the concern to Social Services or if advised, the police if there is no response to the text'?

2. If you have safeguarding concerns, follow the school's safeguarding procedures and outline that all of the actions above have been completed
3. Where you are not able to locate their whereabouts following the above attempts and the school have exhausted every option to try to locate the child, then the child is a missing person and as such should be reported to social care in the first instance to risk assess their vulnerability and advise of any further actions that will be taken.
4. School should complete a CME referral to the Inclusion Team when the child's attendance cannot be confirmed after 10 days. The safe and wellbeing checks will remain the responsibility of the school and you should continue to try to do this at regular intervals in case the child/family returns to the property.
5. The Inclusion Service will make contact with the school to gain any further advice and let you know what steps will be taken next.

Unauthorised absence over 10 days: contact with the family has been made but the child is not attending

Although the Inclusion Service will monitor attendance, the initial responsibility for attendance will be with the school. The Inclusion Service can offer advice and support when the following steps have been taken:

The Education Welfare Officer or alternative support that is employed by the school has to complete a visit to the child at the family home to ascertain why the child has not attended and to look at potential measures that can be put in place to support the child's return. This may include:

Anxiety based influences

- Reassuring the child/family around the aspects they are concerned about considering safety planning with the child/family to enable safe peers/adults/places should the child become anxious during the school day.
- Allowing the child to visit when the school is quite (before or after school so they can see what it looks and feels like)?
- Offer a transitional time table to support the child's return and has this been discussed and agreed with the parents?
- Complete risk assessments if it is specific COVID related and are they putting measures in place to help the child's needs/concerns or concerns of the family?
- Make clear to the parents the government guidance around social distancing and re-engaging back in to school and offered re-assurance around this?

- Reassurance around hands, face, space
- Utilising specific PPE/training and fit testing where needed – such as AGPs for clinical procedures
- Reassuring where the child will be sitting
- Reaffirming government advice
- Looking at the routine of the child as they come home – washing hands/using hand sanitiser changing clothes on their return etc
- Are there risks around safeguarding in the home? If so are social care aware? Are their times during the day that the child can speak the person they may be worried about? Usual practices still apply.
- Has the child accessed any therapeutic support around the anxiety – through CAMHS, Wellbeing Service, other that has been commissioned directly by the school using the AWPU? Has the school received medical evidence that the child is too ill to attend school? If yes refer to the Inclusion Service for Medical Needs advice/support.
- Have other services been involved where needed, such as Autism Outreach and have referrals been made?
- Has the school been providing education at home? Are they still providing education and if so is the child engaging in this, if not then it could be more than just anxiety and needs to be looked at in the wider context of CME.

Non-Anxiety Based influences

- Is the child at home or are they elsewhere such as living with other family members etc where they are unable to attend school due to distance? If elsewhere, what are the barriers to them coming back home so that they can attend school and are the necessary services in place if required?
 - How long does the families aim to be away?
 - If its due to legislation around Covid such as quarantine/travel ban arrangements, then can the child learn remotely?
 - If the child is part of a travelling family, are the traveller education team involved and able to offer support? or has the family moved away to work and should be coded as T? If so have the school provided work packs to be completed whilst they are travelling, or will the child be dual registered?
 - If it due to custody/LAC status how long is this likely to be for and can learning arrangements be put in place in the interim? i.e. dual registration/distance learning and are services involved where required such as virtual school?

- Has the school any concerns over the behaviours that the child has been displaying prior to their non-attendance where safeguarding/CSE/CCE risks may need to be considered? Are social care/wellbeing service involved? If yes what are they doing to support and if no, do they need to be?
- Have you approached the Inclusion Forums for advice where behaviour support may be needed?

If the parents are supportive of school and are trying everything to support the child re-engage and the school has made every attempt to re-engage the child back in to school but this has been unsuccessful, complete a referral to the Inclusion Service for additional support by submitting the referral for inclusionpupilservice@leics.gov.uk using Egress secure email, or the AnyComms+ system.

If the parents appear to have not engage with the support that the school has tried to offer/put in place contact the court team for further advice.