

Ensuring that Children are Receiving a Suitable Education 2009

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**This document updates and replaces “Ensuring Access to Appropriate
Education for Children who are Missing or at Risk of Going Missing
from Education” April 2005**



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INTRODUCTION

All schools and services in County Durham are committed to ensuring that all children have access to a suitable education. This document outlines the procedures in place within Durham County Council through County Durham Children's Trust arrangements to locate, register, monitor and track children not receiving a suitable education and ensuring that solutions are implemented. These measures are at the heart of local strategies for preventing negative outcomes for children and young people and ensuring their safety and wellbeing.

Section 436a of the Education Act 1996 requires all local authorities to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. Suitable is defined as "efficient full time education suitable to her / his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have". The duty applies in relation to children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school, for example, at home, privately or in alternative provision.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

The Head of Education is the Local Authority Lead Officer for ensuring that all children and young people have access to a suitable education. This post

- Reports to the Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services (CAS) and the CAS Senior Management Team.
- Reports via the Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services to the Chief Officer Senior Management Team, Member Cabinet and Scrutiny.
- Reports via the Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services to the Children's Trust Executive Board and 5 Local Children's Boards.
- Reports directly to the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- Is the Local Authority Lead for ensuring effective commissioning and quality standards for alternative educational provision.
- Is responsible for ensuring the best possible educational outcomes for vulnerable children, including looked after children.
- Is responsible for ensuring effective outcomes for all relevant performance indicators.
- Ensuring the effective operation of this policy, protocols and procedures.

Responsible directly to the Head of Education and Strategic Manager, School Place and Admissions is the Pupil Casework Manager. This post is the nominated officer for receipt of referrals from schools, services and partner agencies, when they are concerned that the child may not be receiving a suitable education. This role includes all operational arrangements to locate, register, monitor and track children who may not be receiving a suitable education.

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PREVENTION – REDUCING THE RISK

In County Durham, the Local Authority, Schools, Services and Partner Agencies are committed to meeting the needs of vulnerable children and young people. The focus is on

- Raising awareness through Children's Trust arrangements and ensuring that all front line staff know who the nominated officer is for referrals.
- The further development of integrated services within localities.
- The implementation of the Common Assessment Framework
- The implementation of Lead Professional arrangements
- The implementation of Local Children's Resource Groups and team around the child arrangements
- All secondary schools, including academies, in a Behaviour and Attendance Partnership with the Local Authority
- Empowering schools to meet local need with local solutions through delegated funding and by the provision of support for vulnerable groups including, for example
 - Looked after children
 - Children in new immigrant families
 - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families
 - Ethnic minorities and asylum seekers
 - Anxious school refusers
 - Teenage parents
 - Young carers
 - Children who are privately fostered
 - Those who have disengaged or are at risk of disengaging from learning
 - Those at risk of exclusion
 - Permanently excluded pupils

- Those with special educational needs
- Poor attenders
- Those who feel bullied
- Victims of substance misuse
- Those involved in or who are at risk of involvement in crime
- Those with poor social skills
- Those who are sick, have medical conditions or mental health problems
- Those with special educational needs
- Children from families fleeing domestic violence
- Children who do not receive a suitable education whilst being educated at home
- Children of parents with mental health problems
- Children of parents with learning difficulties

Details can be found in

- Local Children’s Board Directories
- The Educational Support Service / Educational Psychology Service information for Schools and other agencies
- Children and Adults Services Directory of Services

The Children’s Trust has an agreed protocol for information sharing and the 8 golden rules for information sharing have been distributed to front line staff within schools, services and partner agencies.

CHILDREN AT RISK OF HARM

Arrangements for ensuring that children are safe from harm are agreed by County Durham Local Safeguarding Board (LSCB) and are accessible at www.durham-lscb.gov.uk or via the LSCB link on the Durham County Council web site. If there are concerns that a child may be at risk of significant harm, then the relevant procedures must be followed without delay.

SYSTEMS FOR IDENTIFYING CHILDREN NOT RECEIVING A SUITABLE EDUCATION AND MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH THEM

Registration and Data Systems

- The Local Authority maintains a county-wide Pupil Database (Capita ONE) which obtains pupil data electronically from schools.
- The Lost Pupil Database on the s2s website is used to hold the Common Transfer Files (CTFs) of pupils who cannot be traced.

Admissions Procedures

The LA has a set of agreed Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for admission to both primary and secondary schools. These schemes are made by Durham County Council under the Education (Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements (England)) Regulations 2002 and apply to all maintained schools in County Durham.

Each scheme requires that the LA make appropriate arrangements to ensure that a common application form is available on request from the LA and from all primary schools in County Durham. This is accompanied by a Parents Guide to Education specifically designed to assist the parent in considering the schools available and take them through the application process.

The LA makes the offer of a school place to the parent of every child living in County Durham commencing in primary education in September who applies for a place at a maintained school. In addition the LA identifies and provides an individual application form to the parent of every child living in County Durham transferring to secondary education and will make the offer of a secondary school place, even where the parent fails to complete the appropriate preference form. The LA also makes the offer of a school place to the parent of any child living in County Durham who applies for a place at a maintained secondary school in a neighbouring authority and where a place is available.

In Year Fair Access Protocols

The vast majority of pupils are placed in accordance with the agreed admission procedures. Pupils covered by this protocol are any who are hard to place in a school and the protocol balances the circumstances of the pupil and the circumstances of the school.

Transfers between Secondary Schools

The LA and secondary schools have an agreed protocol regarding in-year transfers of pupils. This ensures best advice to parents, careful consideration of the issues and effective management of the process.

Transition Points

The pupil Casework Team extracts migration reports to Education Welfare Officers in the One Point Service at the beginning of and at various points during the academic year. This enables the Service to ensure all pupils have been admitted and are attending.

Children Not Receiving Education Panel

This panel receives referrals regarding pupils who are not accessing education despite the best endeavours of the relevant services. The panel resolves individual cases and identifies gaps in provision.

Elective Home Education

Parents are not required to register with the Local Authority or required to seek approval from the LA unless the child is in a special school. The LA is therefore only aware of children being educated at home if notified by the school the child was attending, or via the parents making direct contact with the LA.

Once the LA is notified that a parent intends to home educate, a panel of officers meets to consider the request and a proposal is then requested of the parent. Once the proposal is received the panel then requests to see an example of learning. Further requests to see these examples are made usually on an annual basis. If it appears that parents may not be providing a suitable education a referral is made to Education Welfare Officers who make contact with the parents.

Checks are made as to whether the child is known to be at risk.

Children Missing from Education - North East Regional Forum

The LA maintains close contact with other LAs in the North East region through the CME Regional Forum.

Arrangements for Tracing Children Leaving Educational Provision

a) Pupils leaving a Durham school

- Schools supply details of leavers to the Pupil Casework Team, including details of the school they are transferring to if known.
- Where this information is not available, the Pupil Casework Team request Education Welfare Officers to make enquiries in conjunction with the school to trace the pupil using their contacts with other agencies while the Casework Team make enquiries with National Health Service colleagues and the LA's Revenue and Benefits Team where appropriate to trace the family.
- If the pupil is not traced, the details are reported to the nominated CME officer and the school is instructed to upload the pupil's CTF onto s2s.
- Where information is available of possible destinations, tracers are sent to those LAs using the DfE list of CME contacts.
- A monthly report is produced through Capita ONE to identify active pupils who have no registered base. The records are checked and made inactive only when the pupils are confirmed as accessing education elsewhere or they are designated missing and their CTfs uploaded to s2s.
- Designated CME cases are recorded and routinely rechecked for any subsequent information having been received.

b) Pupils arriving in Durham

- The Pupil Casework Team notifies Education Welfare Officers when transfer applications are received and keep them informed of progress. Any delays in admission on behalf of parents/carers are reported and the EWO asked to visit the family.
- Other LAs contact the CME officer with information on pupils moving into County Durham. EWOs are requested to visit where a home address is known.
- Where another LA has uploaded an incoming pupil's CTF onto s2s, the designated Lost Pupil Database User will download the file and forward to the receiving school.
- Tracer requests from other LAs are routinely checked through Capita ONE.

ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR SPECIFIC VULNERABLE GROUPS

Looked After Children

Looked After Children are included as first criteria in the LA's Admission Policy.

All children in public care are identified as Looked After on the LA's Pupil Database, including which Authority they belong to and this is kept up to date by nominated LA (Pupil Casework Officer or SEN Placement and Provision Officer) and Safeguarding and Specialist Services Officers.

Nominated Officers (Senior Pupil Casework Officer or SEN Placement and Provision Officer if the child has a Statement of SEN) and the Educational Support Services Manager, if needed, ensure admission within 20 days and arrange any appropriate support to effect this. A specialist panel meets regarding any hard to resolve cases and to raise awareness regarding the issues.

The One Point Service, Attendance Improvement Team and LACES Team have developed a joint procedure to support the attendance of Children in Public Care. The LACES Team provides names of Looked After Children attending County Durham schools to Education Welfare Officers. The Education Welfare Officer will discuss these children at attendance meetings with school to ensure their attendance is not becoming an issue. If a Looked After Child has been absent from school for more than 3 days the EWO will make contact with parents/carers to find out the reasons. If there still appears to be concern or if the child has accumulated more than 10 days non-attendance in the current academic year, the EWO will make a referral to the LACES Team and both services will work together to support the return of the child to school.

Gypsies and Travellers, Ethnic Minorities and Asylum Seekers

LA Services support these groups with priorities as follows:

1. To support the LA to fulfil its statutory duty to access all children to education.
2. To support leadership and management to raise the attainment of minority ethnic pupils, including Gypsies and Travellers, through the provision of additional pupil focussed support.
3. To support whole school development, through the process of self-review, in order to raise the attainment of minority ethnic pupils and Travellers.
4. To support leadership and Management, in all schools, to meet their duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

Those at risk of Disengagement/Exclusion

The Green School is an alternative Key Stage 4 provision for pupils who have become disengaged or who are at risk of disengaging from learning. Schools nominate pupils for placement and pupils remain on their referring school roll.

The Attendance Improvement Team and the Green School have an agreed protocol which deals with attendance related issues. Within the project, the Green School makes efforts to encourage attendance by contacting parents to discuss issues. Where limited or no progress is being made a referral is made to the Attendance Improvement Team who will initially make a joint home visit, followed by further home visits to assess and provide support to re-engage the pupil. Ultimately legal proceedings will commence if there is no improvement in attendance.

Those who feel bullied

The Anti-Bullying Service provides a number of different strategies in schools as follows:

1. To work with individual pupils, both victims and perpetrators of bullying.
2. To introduce group work/circle time sessions around bullying, friendships and anti-bullying awareness raising.
3. To assist schools with the development of Anti-Bullying Policies.
4. To assist training and supervision of Peer Supporters, Buddies or Mini-Buds.
5. To assist Anti-Bullying awareness raising events i.e. School Anti-Bullying Weeks.
6. To assist with Anti-Bullying Service events e.g. Happier in Schools Week.
7. To assist staff anti-bullying training sessions within schools.
8. To undertake joint home visits with other personnel.
9. To join school anti-bullying interest groups and support the school in meeting anti-bullying accreditation criteria.

Schools are invited on a termly basis to apply for Anti-Bullying accreditation which provides standards for them to measure their success. Information for schools is available on the Anti-Bullying website which has an email facility used by parents, teachers and pupils to get advice.

Those with special educational needs

The Statutory Assessment and Review process ensures that those who have Statements of SEN have access to appropriate education.

Permanently Excluded Pupils

The Senior Officer, Pupil Casework chairs the following Panel Meetings to ensure permanently excluded pupils receive full-time and appropriate education.

1. On a weekly basis a meeting is held with Officers from SEN to discuss those pupils who have been permanently excluded who have Statements of Special Educational Needs.
2. Every two weeks an Admission and Placement Panel consisting of the Senior Officer, Pupil Casework, the Head Teacher of the PRU and an SEN Officer to consider placement and admission arrangements and attendance and reintegration issues for all permanently excluded pupils.
3. Once a month an Exclusion Panel made up of representatives from SEN, PRU, Connexions, YOT, Social Services, EPS and Access Service meet to discuss the provision for all current permanently excluded pupils.

The meetings allow each individual pupil to be discussed to allow appropriate decisions to be made about their education. From these discussions additional services may be contacted to become involved eg:

Attendance Issues - Education Welfare Officer
Medical - Home and Hospital Tuition Service

Those who are sick or have medical conditions or mental health problems

- **The LA is responsible for ensuring that:**
 - there is a named LA officer with responsibility for the co-ordination of educational provision for young people who are unable to attend school because of medical needs,
 - pupils with medical needs are not at home or in hospital without access to education for more than 15 working days (pupils with recurrent illness should have access, as far as possible, from day one),
 - procedures are in place for ensuring early identification of pupils' needs,
 - pupils are offered a minimum entitlement of 5 hours teaching per week,
 - there is close liaison between pupils, their families, their schools, and other agencies.

- **For ill and injured pupils at home:**

The Home and Hospital Support Service provides teaching to ill or injured pupils who are medically unfit to attend school. Medical confirmation is required from a Community Paediatrician, Hospital Consultant or School Nurse that the pupil is unfit to attend school. Where there is a medical recommendation, home teaching can be arranged in consultation with the pupil's school and family. A teacher is appointed to work with the pupil and to liaise closely with the school. Home teaching continues until the pupil is confirmed to be well enough to return to school.

- **For ill and injured pupils who are admitted to hospital:**

The Home and Hospital Support Service offers teaching to pupils admitted to the University Hospital of North Durham. Priority is given to pupils who have recurrent admissions and to pupils whose stay in hospital is 5 days or more. When necessary home teaching is provided when a pupil is discharged from hospital.

- **Anxious School Refusers**

The Home and Hospital Support Service can provide advice and support regarding pupils who are anxious and reluctant to attend school. The Service works in partnership with schools and a range of agencies, especially the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and promotes a multi-agency approach to support the pupil's reintegration into school. Where a teacher is appointed to support the pupil there is close liaison with the school, family and other agencies.

Group for Anxious Pupils (GAP) was commissioned by Durham County Council to address the problem of young people in Key Stage 4 who are unable to attend school because of their anxiety i.e. pupils who '*can't go*' rather than those who '*won't go*' to school. GAP is a multi-agency and multi-professional provision, which provides:

- access to the curriculum for the core subjects and IT
- social interaction and inclusion
- planning for F.E., training or work
- therapeutic support.

- **For pupils with identified mental health problems including depression, anxiety etc:**

The Home and Hospital Support Service is able to provide advice and support regarding the education of pupils with identified mental health problems such as depression or an eating disorder. The Service works in partnership with schools and a range of other agencies, especially the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. A multi-agency approach is essential in determining an individual's needs and support arrangements.

- **Pregnant Pupils/Teenage Parents**

The Home and Hospital Support Service requires medical advice from a Community Paediatrician or School Nurse. Pupils have the opportunity to continue to attend school or to continue their education in small groups specifically for pregnant pupils. The Advisory/Re-integration Officer arranges this in consultation with the pupil and family, school and Health personnel. Return to school is planned according to each pupil's individual needs. Ongoing monitoring and support is available to schools and individual pupils.

Those involved in crime

Close liaison between Education Services and the Youth Offending Team ensures that young people on specific orders access appropriate education. LA services contribute to multi agency forums to target support to individual young people and produce action plans as appropriate.