

Nottinghamshire Children Missing Education Strategy

This strategy is designed to enable the County Council to fulfil its statutory duties in relation to education provision and the safeguarding and welfare of vulnerable children. It is intended to guide the work of local authority officers, schools and other agencies in the procedures and practices to be followed in order to track, monitor and maintain contact with children and young people at risk of or already missing education. This will prevent vulnerable children and young people becoming 'unknown' to relevant professionals and therefore becoming even more high risk.

Throughout this guidance reference to 'Schools' is taken to mean all maintained Schools, Academy Schools, (including those that are Free Schools), University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools.

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1. Context

Children missing education are defined as children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local Authorities have a legal duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, children missing education. Additionally, Nottinghamshire's Children Missing Education Strategy outlines actions the Council takes to ensure access to appropriate education for children who are registered with a school but where it appears that they are not accessing or being provided with their educational entitlement, categorised by OFSTED as 'Pupils Missing Education'.

The relevant DfE guidance that governs this area of work is the Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2016. Ofsted has also published findings on children missing out on education in December 2018 and November 2013, as well as having a clear focus on the subject within the Ofsted Inspection Framework. The May 2019 report 'Timpson review of School Exclusion' highlights several areas for the Department for Education, Local Authorities, Schools and Academies to consider in relation to Children and Pupils Missing Education as a result of exclusion, placement in Alternative Provision and being 'Off Rolled'.

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. Children and young people who do not access school or appropriate alternative education are deemed to be vulnerable and their risk is increased as they continue to be without a school place. Safeguarding children and young people continues to be a key shared responsibility of the LA with schools and other external partners. High quality education provides children and young people with the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding as well as vital social and emotional skills to prepare for a confident future.

Nottinghamshire County Council is committed to the continuing development and implementation of a strategic and coordinated approach to ensure that every child and young person is 'known' and is accessing education appropriately. This requires all staff to be alert to situations which might indicate that a child or young person may not be on the roll of a school or attending appropriate alternative education. This demands a culture of shared responsibility where all staff, whatever their role, remain alert to children who are not on a roll or attending appropriate educational provision.

2. Underpinning principle

The Council is committed to ensuring that every child and young person of statutory school age is on a school roll, with the exception of those children and young people who are electively home educated.

3. Why should children and young people be on a school roll?

All children and young people of statutory school age are legally required to be on a school roll and to access full time education unless there is a medical or other reason that makes this inappropriate

or they are being formally electively home educated. Schools are responsible for keeping children and young people safe during the school day and have the knowledge, expertise and resources to ensure that children and young people access their educational entitlement to fulfil their potential within the aspirational context of school.

For a small minority of children and young people, the 'traditional' school setting may not be appropriate for all or part of their experience. However, it is important that the school remains the commissioner of any externally provided education or support and accepts responsibility for the outcomes of the provision they have commissioned. This quality assurance is the best guarantee that children and young people can have of receiving appropriate education that equips each young person with the necessary skills for the future and keeps them safe.

4. Current situation

4.1 Children Missing Education Officer

Nottinghamshire County Council has a CME officer whose sole duty is to monitor and track children missing from education. This officer sits within the Safeguarding and Independent Review group and is responsible particularly for:

- Children and young people whose whereabouts are unknown but who are on a school roll
- Children and young people whose whereabouts are known but who are not on a school roll i.e. moved into the area

There is clear policy and protocol agreed with schools to ensure that Children Missing Education are identified and reported to the Local Authority (Appendix A). The CME officer works in partnership with other CME officers across the country and with partner agencies to ensure that school aged children are located and supported to return to school. The CME officer and Fair Access officer have an agreed protocol to ensure that once a Child Missing Education is identified, a school place is secured quickly through the Fair Access protocol.

4.2 Pupils Missing Education Practitioner

An additional Pupil Missing Education (PME) practitioner is employed with the Fair Access Team to review data returned to the Local Authority by Schools detailing children and young people not in receipt of their full education entitlement (reduced timetable) or educated in commissioned alternative provision.

The referral process for any service or school to report concern that a child is either CME or PME is outlined in Appendix B. This includes children who have no school roll, pupils accessing inappropriate part-time provision, pupils accessing inappropriate alternative provision, pupils who have unmet SEND or SEMH needs who are not attending their allocated school place and children registered as Elective Home Education but not accessing learning.

4.3 Current practice in the Council

The CME officer continues to identify and track children missing from education, whilst the PME officer follows up cases where schools are reporting use of reduced timetables and alternative provision to ensure this is appropriate. Nottinghamshire County Council maintains a list of approved alternative providers, who are registered and quality assured through internal processes, and this information is available to all schools in Nottinghamshire to support them in making high quality alternative provision where needed, in line with the recommendations in The Alternative Provision Market Analysis Research Report, October 2018.

Children known to be CME or PME are discussed at the weekly Fair Access Children Out of School meeting and actions agreed to support a return to education. For the most vulnerable children who are unable to be admitted into a school setting the three weekly Vulnerable Children Education Commissioning group can agree exceptional cases of Local Authority funded alternative provision. The CME monitoring board, chaired by the Service Director Education, Learning and Skills, meets bi monthly to review the work of partners in securing positive outcomes for children who are Missing Education and to review the most complex cases to agree cross agency actions to support progress.

Under the leadership of the Admissions of Vulnerable Children Group, chaired by the Service Director, approaches and systems have been discussed and shared and inconsistencies been identified. All officers responsible for a particular vulnerable group are tasked with continuing to review their practice in relation to knowing who their children are and developing and implementing at team level, systems to identify children and young people who are at risk of failing to access appropriate support or become 'unknown'. A departmental action plan, shared with schools and other key partners in 2015, aimed to develop new ways of working across services and partners and this has been updated alongside this strategy to reflect the current position, and is included at Appendix C. The continued effective sharing of information to identify children and young people at risk of becoming "unknown" allows services to take appropriate action to re-engage these children and young people with school or other alternative provision and this is evidenced by the success of systems that have already been implemented.

4.4 Our work with Schools

There has been significant investment in raising school and academic awareness of the CME and PME process through formal communication, newsletters and safeguarding board training. Schools are therefore regularly updated and are aware of their responsibilities to ensure accurate information is shared. Officers are prepared to challenge schools that remove children and young people improperly or illegally from their roll or will not accept pupils onto their roll who need to join them and a guidance document in relation to 'Off Rolling' was circulated to schools and governors in June 2019 alongside a revised Fair Access Protocol that came into effect in February 2019.

The Council has recognised that keeping children on a school roll and accessing their education entitlement is a key part of keeping children safe. As a result, a wide range of professionals continue to be brought together under the leadership of the Service Director with responsibility for Education, Learning and Skills to review current practice, share good practice and identify gaps through which children and young people can fall. The Council recognises the commitment and good practice that can currently be identified but also acknowledges that historically there has been insufficient sharing of knowledge, information and data.

The Council is committed to supporting a reduction of Fixed Term Exclusions within Nottinghamshire schools in order to prevent children missing education as a result of exclusion. This is supported by developments in systems made available to school to record and report Fixed Term Exclusions, enabling more accurate and timely data to be collated.

5. Who are the children and young people at risk of missing education?

The vast majority of children and young people engage positively with school, attend regularly and are actively encouraged to do so by their parents and carers. It is vulnerable young people who are most likely not to attend school; DFE guidance specifically identifies Pupils at risk of harm/ neglect, children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families, children of Service Personnel, missing children and runaways, children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System, children who cease to attend a school and children of migrant families. The recent Timpson review highlights the link between children who are excluded either on a fixed term or permanently and the time they miss from education and makes recommendations to try and address this. The numbers overall are relatively small and Nottinghamshire County Council recognises their responsibility to identify these vulnerable children and young people individually to ensure that the Council's resources are targeted on those who need them most.

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. The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information. In order to implement the requirements of the County Council's CME strategy, the County Council has nominated a Service Director to ensure that the work of a wide range of professionals is brought together to do all that is possible to prevent individuals or groups of young people becoming 'not known' to appropriate professionals and therefore passing from the Council's protection.

The list of children and young people who are most likely to be subject to this strategy are listed in Appendix D. This list also shows the service or officer with lead responsibility for providing support and challenge to schools and other educational settings for each of these vulnerable groups of children and young people.

6. Background Documents

Education Act 1996 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>

Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2016
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2017/18, OFSTED December 2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201718-education-childrens-services-and-skills>

Pupils missing out on education, OFSTED November 2013

<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/18825/1/Pupils%20missing%20out%20on%20education.pdf>

Alternative Provision Market Analysis Research Report, October

2018 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision-market-analysis>

Timpson review of School Exclusion

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf

The Children Act 2004 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents>

7. Related Guidance

Nottinghamshire County Council Fair Access Protocol, February 2019

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/1733874/fair-access-protocol.pdf>

Nottinghamshire County Council Off Rolling Guidance

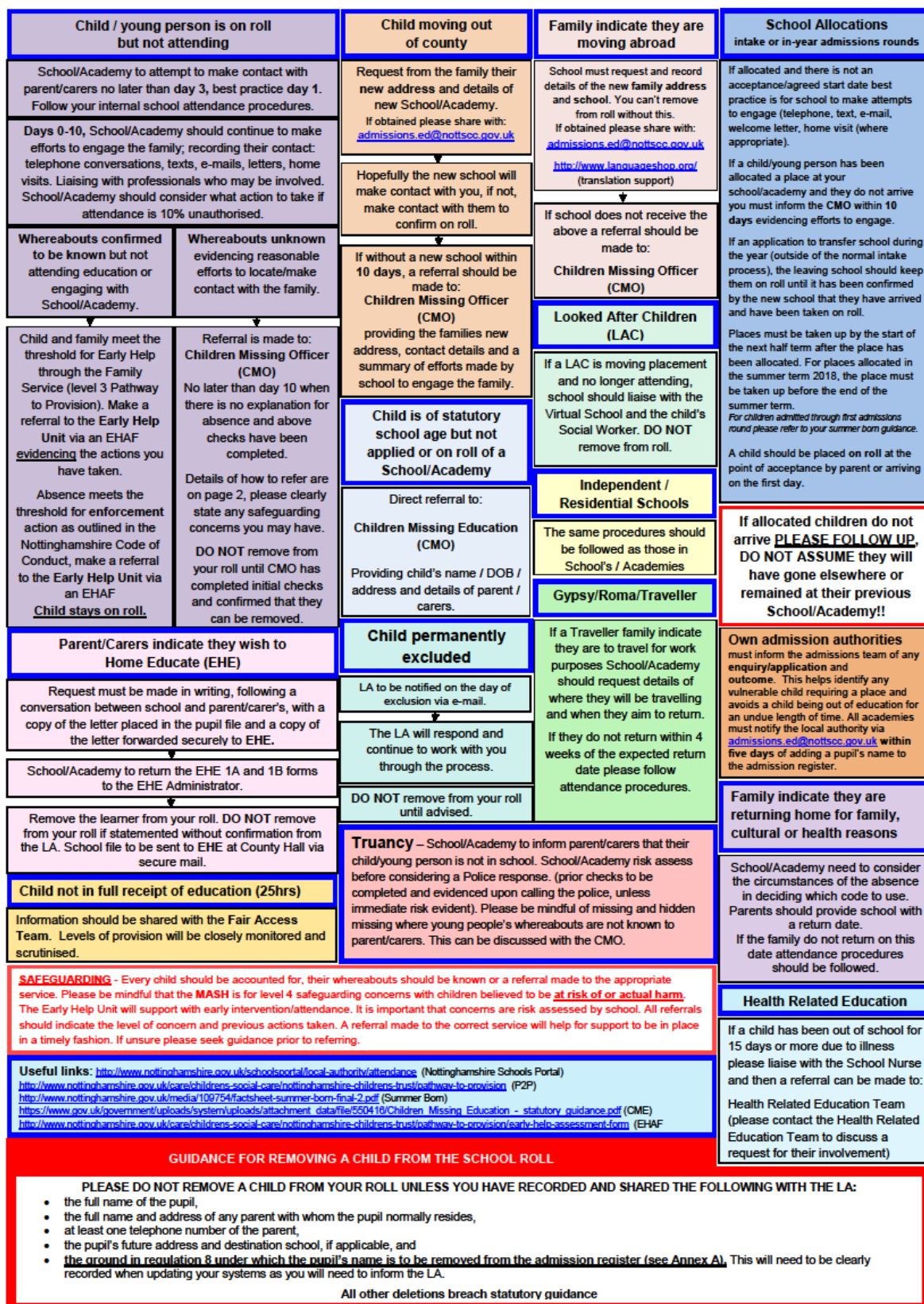
<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/for-schools/fair-access-and-children-missing-education>

Nottinghamshire County Council Reduced Timetable Guidance

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/for-schools/fair-access-and-children-missing-education>

Appendix A: School Attendance Guidance (flowchart)

GUIDANCE FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND BUSINESS MANAGERS WHERE CHILDREN ARE AT RISK OF MISSING EDUCATION



GUIDANCE FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND BUSINESS MANAGERS WHERE CHILDREN ARE AT RISK OF MISSING EDUCATION

Frequently Asked Questions

What do I need to consider and what information do I need to share when I refer a child/young person?

- Do school have safeguarding concerns? If so, please provide details and contact children's social care if urgent.
- When was the last day the child/young person was in school?
- Have all emergency contacts been exhausted? - addresses, telephone numbers (call / text), e-mail addresses of parents/carers, relatives, friends, work contacts, extended family (abroad if available)
- Have you completed checks with known services? Is the young person open to: CSC, Family Service, ICDS, Health/School Nurse, School Admissions, CAF/CASS
- Are there known siblings/family members attending another school?
- Have friends in school seen or heard from the young person? (speak to pupils discreetly, consider accessing social media)

Home visits:

- check the property for any signs of life
- leave a note explaining why you are trying to make contact, what your expectations of them are, what actions will be taken should they not make contact
- visit during different times of the day
- have neighbours seen or heard from the family?

What does a home visit involve? What do I need to do?

Home visits will allow you to gain a sense as to whether the family are still living in Nottinghamshire, and if this is an attendance issue or child missing education in that we do not know where the family are. Dependent on how well you know the family this could be completed by a door knock, explaining that you are concerned that the young person is not attending school or if unanswered looking for signs of life, does it appear like the family are still resident?

A colleague passing by the property on their way home from work could look for signs of life. A visit can be done after you have exhausted all the emergency telephone contacts, written to the family etc. – but an early visit may resolve the issue.

If school do not wish to complete a home visit one can be purchased through the Family Service for £50. Please contact your linked Service Manager.

A child/young person has moved out of county and I do not have a new school to forward the pupil file to, what should I do?

If a family has moved out of the area school should request from parent/carers the name of the child's new school and new family address. If a school place is not yet obtained please request the address and share this with CMO who will liaise with colleagues in the area who will confirm local applications or arrange a visit to discuss the young person's education whilst in their area. Once confirmed they are known to the new area they become the responsibility of the new LA closing all involvement for Notts. The pupil file can be transferred once a new school is identified. **Please do not phone admissions teams across the country waiting for children to arrive in a school, follow the flow chart**

What should I bear in mind if a parent/carer chooses to home educate?

Although a parent/carer has the legal right to electively home educate, this may not always be in the child's best interests, particularly if there are significant safeguarding, parenting, SEND or other issues. Some parents are not able to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, others have fallen out with the school or have an older school-refusing child. Please remember to consult fully with any agencies involved and the EHE team before deciding to off-roll the child. It is sometimes possible that a more appropriate solution is found than home education. Please liaise with the EHE Team via EHE@nottscc.gov.uk. There is not a role for CMO or school admissions.

What do I do if a child is allocated a place at my school and does not arrive? (<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/109754/factsheet-summer-born-final-2.pdf>)

If a child has been allocated a place at your school and they do not arrive best practice is for school to try and engage the family, telephone calls, letters, visits (where appropriate). If contact cannot be made please inform the CMO know within 10 days of allocations.

A child is leaving my school and moving abroad, what do I need to record?

For children who move abroad, we would require the address that the child would be living at along with the school they will be attending, without this a referral would need to be made to CMO – we can't record "moved abroad", "left country", "Poland", "USA" etc. without clear confirmation.

If there were safeguarding concerns school would need to raise them without delay.

School would need to consider the reason for the move i.e. is it a planned move? Is it work related? Are there known family abroad? Have parents been open and informative? Have peers spoken to the child via social media since moving abroad etc. (discreetly).

School should request in writing from parents the details of the new address and name of school etc. (school will hopefully have sufficient contact details other than just mum and dad's phone numbers, i.e. friends/family in the UK, e-mail addresses, work contacts etc.)

If there are no safeguarding concerns and school have the above information the pupil file should remain with the UK school. A copy of the most recent reports would be provided to parents to give to the new school.

Where possible we would ask school to make every effort to confirm the young person's attendance at their new school (there is usually a colleague who can speak English), but we would need to be mindful of how we do this (usually via telephone), e-mail would not be secure to share confidential information.

My young person is open to a social worker or attending a refuge do I still need to follow attendance procedures?

It is important that school have a good relationship with social workers, liaising / sharing information accordingly, but continue to follow internal attendance procedures, school should not rely on the child's social worker to inform CMO etc.

When can I remove the young person from my roll?

We would advise that children remain on the school roll until their new school is confirmed or confirmation is received from CMO that the child/young person is known to another local authority with their CME team taking responsibility for the case. This will ensure that the young person does not slip between services/authorities.

If a child has moved within Nottinghamshire and is living outside of a reasonable distance to travel to their previous school this should be communicated to the CMO.

For missing children please refer to: http://www.procedureonline.com/nottinghamshire/scb/user_controlled_folders/Children%20Missing%20from%20Care%20and%20Home%20Joint%20protocol.pdf

We all have a responsibility for a child's attendance, speak to a service, do not assume that somebody else will be dealing with it!

MASH – Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub For children at risk of or actual harm. 0300 500 80 90 Mash.Safeguarding@nottscc.gcsx.gov.uk	Virtual School – Looked After Children (Sue Denholm) 0115 804 0644 virtual.schools@nottscc.gov.uk	Children Missing Officer (CMO) (Glen Scruby) 0115 804 1045 glen.scruby@nottscc.gov.uk	Integrated Children's Disability Service (incl EHCP process) 0115 804 1275 ICDS.Duty@nottscc.gov.uk
Traveller Advice (not referrals) safecommunities.cc@nottscc.gov.uk	Exclusions exclusions.ed@nottscc.gov.uk (perm) fixedterm.exclusions@nottscc.gov.uk	Fair Access 0115 977 3225 fairaccess@nottscc.gov.uk	Register Queries (Family Service) South: 0115 854 0438 North: 0115 804 1591 West: 0115 804 1578
Elective Home Education (EHE) 01159 772 573 EHE@nottscc.gov.uk	Early Help Unit (EHU) 0115 804 1248 early.help@nottscc.gov.uk	School Admissions (school use only) 0115 804 1237 admissions.ed@nottscc.gov.uk	Health Related Education Team 01823 799157 hretoffice@fountaindale.notts.sch.uk
Whole School Safeguarding and Designated Person Training safeguarding.training@nottscc.gov.uk	Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) (Eva Callaghan) 0115 804 1272	Customer Service Centre including school apps, appeals, transport 0300 500 80 80	Education Psychology Service 0115 804 0828

Version 4 –
January 2018

Tackling Emerging Threats to Children (CSE, online grooming, internet safety, bullying, black and minority ethnic children, radicalisation)
0115 854 6440 – (please note this is not a case management team and referrals should not be made for individuals, this is a themed education programme)

Appendix B: CME and PME Concern Flowchart 2018

CME pupils are those without a school roll, whilst PME pupils have a school roll but are prevented from, or unable, to access their school place effectively. In both cases the home address of these children will be known. This chart is not relevant to pupils who are simply refusing to attend (Family Service) or when the whereabouts of the child are unknown (Children Missing Officer).

<p>LEVEL ONE</p> <p>Any local authority officer, school, parent, external agency, concerned that a child is either CME or PME can refer the case. E.g. This includes children who have no school roll, pupils accessing inappropriate part-time provision, pupils accessing inappropriate alternative provision, pupils who have unmet SEND or SEMH needs who are not attending their allocated school place, children registered as EHE but not accessing learning.</p>	<p>Refer the case to the Fair Access Team who may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and guidance • Refer the case to the weekly Children out of School meeting (COOS) Chair: FA Team Manager • Allocate the case to a Fair Access Officer or the Children Missing Education Officer. <p>Contact details for referral: pme@nottstcc.gov.uk</p>
<p>LEVEL TWO</p> <p>Any local authority team manager who believes that a child known to their service has</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remained CME or PME for longer than 20 days and • that the current interventions made by the officers involved are not resolving the situation and • that the Local Authority may have a duty to provide interim education 	<p>Refer the case for consideration to the three weekly Vulnerable Children Education Commissioning Panel (VCEC). Chair: Group Manager SISPA.</p> <p>The VCEC panel may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide advice and guidance to services, schools and families. • provide support and challenge to services, schools and families. • Agree to fund interim education provision until appropriate long term education has been agreed. <p>Contact details for referral: Gill.Bevington@nottstcc.gov.uk</p>
<p>LEVEL THREE</p> <p>Any Team Manager or Group Manager who believes that a child or young person has had no education for an unreasonable period of time and that services or schools maybe failing in their statutory duties.</p>	<p>Refer the case for consideration by the CME Board. Chair: Director Education, Learning and Skills.</p> <p>The Board will provide scrutiny and challenge and make recommendations as required.</p> <p>Contact details for referral: pme@nottstcc.gov.uk</p>

Appendix C: CME Action Plan 2019/20

Priority 1- Development and implementation of a revised Nottinghamshire CME strategy

Impact Evidence:

- A revised CME strategy to be developed in partnership with key internal partners.
- Through a process of public consultation the CME Policy will mediate with key stakeholders including Nottinghamshire residents, the Dioceses, school based teachers and senior leaders and internal teams such as HRET, Education Psychologists, Family Service. In addition, the policy will be mediated and discussed at Fair Access Locality Panel meetings with senior leaders in schools.
- The strategy to be agreed by Children and Young People's and Policy Committee.

Priority 2- Strengthened locality knowledge of vulnerable children and processes to support them

Impact Evidence:

- Following public consultation SEND locality working arrangements are being implemented with the intention that decisions regarding support and High Needs funding are made on a more local level in order that needs are met clearly and effectively.
- CME referrals to the Fair Access Team are routinely raised at Fair Access Locality Panel meetings where appropriate.

Priority 3- More robust processes to support vulnerable children and young people who are without a school place or access to education

Impact Evidence:

- Children and Young People where Elective Home Education (EHE) is deemed unsuitable have been included in the revised Fair Access Protocol (February 2019)
- New recording and Data Management processes are being developed for the Fair Access Team to ensure consistent and timely monitoring of this group.
- 'Off Rolling' guidance has been developed and awareness continues to be raised with internal teams through mail out and briefing sessions. This guidance is also available to schools via school's portal and awareness was raised at headteacher briefings.
- Development of a system for identifying all Looked After Children placed in Nottinghamshire by other Local Authorities and providing support from the Fair Access Team to ensure that actions are taken so that these children have access to education where they are identified as being without a school place.

Priority 4- Strengthening systems to track and review of pupils not accessing full time provision

Impact Evidence:

- Updated guidance regarding reduced timetables, including escalating referral routes, has been circulated to internal teams and briefing sessions continue to take place. Guidance has

been made available to schools via School's portal and awareness raised at headteacher briefings.

- A system for 'live' return of the reduced timetable, alternative provision and Fixed Term Exclusion data is being developed in Capita One Education by the Information and Systems Team.
- The Information and Systems Team are responsible for analysing the data returns and raising cases where there are concern with the Pupil Missing Education Practitioner within the Fair Access Team. These cases are then followed up with schools and support and challenge given where needed. For Children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan or Child in Need Plan, a formal letter is sent to the headteacher, chair of governors and copied to the relevant social worker seeking assurances around the provision being commissioned

Priority 5- Processes for supporting children and young people who are registered as Electively Home Educated are reviewed in light of revised legislation

Impact Evidence:

- An EHE internal systems review is taking place and will report back on recommendations to ensure the offer of support to EHE learners and families is appropriate.
- The EHE policy will be reviewed in partnership with key internal and external partners following revisions in legislation. A process of public consultation will be undertaken before the strategy is presented to Children and Young People's and Policy Committee for agreement.

Appendix D: Local Authority service responsibilities

Virtual School team

- Nottinghamshire's Looked After Children (LAC), including those placed out of Nottinghamshire
- Previously Looked After Children
- Asylum seeking children in dispute over age assessments

Fair Access team

- Children on a school roll but not in full time education
- Children without a school place accessing interim NCC provision
- Fair Access pupils
- Children educated other than at school
- Children on roll of a school receiving NCC funded provision to ensure continued access to education
- Children out of school
- Children on managed moves
- Children who are known to be on part time provision
- Children where Elective Home Education is deemed unsuitable and who are required to return to school
- Other Local Authority LAC placed in Nottinghamshire.

Partnership Officers

- Permanently Excluded Children without an EHCP
- Children at risk of Permanent Exclusion

Children Missing Education Officer

- Children whose whereabouts are unknown but are on a school roll
- Children whose whereabouts are known but who are not on a school roll (i.e. moved into the area)

Youth Justice Coordinator

- Young offenders who are subject to a court order
- Young people in custody
- Young people on remand

Family Service

- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families not engaged with education
- Young people receiving education in FE settings dropping in and out
- New or returning Travellers to Nottinghamshire without a school place
- Eastern European migrants without a school place
- Children with a school place of statutory school age who are not attending regularly

Locality Coordinators for health related education

- Pregnant young girls and young mothers

- Children without a school place accessing health related education

Educational Psychology Service and officers in the Integrated Children's Disability Service (ICDS)

- Children with SEND accessing special, specialist and alternative provision within Nottinghamshire
- Children with SEND accessing provision outside of Nottinghamshire
- Children with SEND with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Children with an EHCP receiving Elective Home Education
- Young people with SEND accessing post 16 alternative provision

Early years and Early Intervention Officers

- Vulnerable 2,3,4 year olds not accessing funded provision

Children's Social Care Officers

- Children in need and children on child protection plans
- Children and young people who are hospitalised long term
- Children at risk of sexual exploitation, human trafficking, female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage
- Children in homes experiencing domestic violence
- Young carers
- Children and young people who self-harm and/or misuse illegal drugs and alcohol

Access and Admissions Strategy Team Manager

- Children not transitioning between key stages