



## CHILDREN WHO GO MISSING FROM EDUCATION January 2011

1.1 If a child or young person is receiving an education not only do they have the opportunity to fulfil their potential but they are also in an environment that enables local agencies to safeguard and promote their welfare. If a child goes missing from education they could be at risk of significant harm.

1.2 There are a number of reasons why children go missing from education. These can include:

- failing to start appropriate provision and hence never entering the system;
- ceasing to attend due to exclusion (for example, illegal unofficial exclusions) or withdrawal; and
- failing to complete a transition between providers (for example, being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new local authority area).

1.3 Children's personal circumstances, or those of their families, may contribute to the withdrawal process and the failure to make a transition.

1.4 Certain groups of vulnerable children are more likely than others to go missing from education:

- young people who have committed offences;
- children living in women's refuges;
- children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation;
- young runaways;
- children with long-term medical or emotional problems;
- looked after children;
- children with a gypsy/traveller background;
- young carers;
- children from transient families;
- teenage mothers;
- children who are permanently excluded from school;
- migrant children, whether in families seeking asylum or economic migrants; and
- children/teenagers being forced into marriage.

1.5 There is a Child Missing Education (CME) named point of contact in every local authority. Every practitioner working with a child has a responsibility to inform their CME contact if they know or suspect that a child is not receiving education. To help local agencies and professionals find children who are missing from education and identify those at risk of going missing from education, guidance was issued in July 2004, *Identifying and maintaining contact with children missing, or at risk of going missing, from education*<sup>261</sup>.

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<sup>261</sup> <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publication&ProductId=LEA%2F0225%2F2004&>