

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	22 OCTOBER 2024
Report Title:	CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION POLICY
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Responsible Officer:	MARK LEWIS GROUP MANAGER – EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure.
Executive Summary:	The current guidance document in relation to children missing education (CME) was last updated in 2016. There have been a number of legislative changes since this date which are now reflected in the policy document attached at Appendix 1. The local authority is now required to have a policy document in relation to CME to implement its legal duty.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval of a Children Missing Education Policy for 2024.

2. Background

- 2.1 The current guidance document in relation to children missing education (CME) was last updated in 2016. There have been a number of legislative changes since this date which are now reflected in the policy document attached at **Appendix 1**. The policy if approved by Cabinet will replace all previous guidance.
- 2.2 The local authority is now required to have a policy document in relation to CME to implement its legal duty.
- 2.3 In addition, the local authority must maintain and revise this policy on a regular basis to ensure it remains relevant and to reflect any changes.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 A CME policy is essential and contributes to the well-being and educational rights of children and young people. The local authority is required to comply with a variety of legislative frameworks that enables it to implement its legal duty to locate, assess, monitor and track children missing education.

- 3.2 Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 was inserted into the Act as a result of the Education and Inspections Act 1996. This requires local authorities to make arrangements which enable them to establish the identities of children residing in their area who are not registered pupils at a school receiving a 'suitable education' otherwise than at a school.
- 3.3 Every child has a right to education. A CME policy supports ensuring that children who are missing from education are identified and supported to access their educational entitlements in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).
- 3.4 A CME policy facilitates early identification of children who are missing education, it supports the local authority to intervene to address any issues or changes in circumstances that may be preventing children from attending school.
- 3.5 Children who are missing education can be at greater risk of harm including exploitation, abuse and criminal activity. The CME policy supports the local authority to monitor and safeguard vulnerable children, ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to protect their welfare. The CME policy supports efforts to promote inclusion and equity in education.
- 3.6 A CME policy encourages collaboration among various agencies including schools, social services, health and police. A multi-agency approach is crucial for information sharing and allowing a more comprehensive support system for children and families.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified negative impacts on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 Summary on the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 assessment is listed below:

Long-term	Children and families are enabled to take control and responsibility for the care and protection without intervention from the local authority.
Prevention	Schools having robust, effective and graduated responses that are understood across the school will ensure children and staff are protected from harm.
Integration	The service is a multi-agency partnership where integration is key to good service delivery arrangements.
Collaboration	Collaboration is a key approach to supporting children and families through the sharing of information and resources.

Involvement Participation and engagement arrangements will be strengthened to ensure everyone is aware of their responsibilities linked to safeguarding.

6. Climate Change Implications

6.1 There are no climate change implication as a result of this report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 Children who are missing education can be at greater risk of harm including exploitation, abuse and criminal activity. The CME policy supports the local authority to monitor and safeguard vulnerable children, ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to protect their welfare. The CME policy supports efforts to promote inclusion and equity in education.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications related to this report.

9. Recommendation

9.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the CME policy attached at **Appendix 1**.

Background documents

None