



# **CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

**(TO INCLUDE THOSE CHILDREN AT RISK OF GOING MISSING)**

## **POLICY AND GUIDANCE**

## Background Information

<b>Document Purpose</b>	This policy and guidance provides an outline of North East Lincolnshire Local Authority's Capita One Educational Management System and procedures for identifying, registering and tracking Children Missing from Education and our plans to develop strategies for identifying those at risk of going missing from education. Our aim is to ensure that every child and young person in North East Lincolnshire has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and to ensure that no child or young person slips through the net.	
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<b>Subject</b>	Children and Young People of statutory school age	
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<b>Review Date</b>	As Required	

## Outcomes Framework

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Under Pinning Programmes</b>
All people in NEL enjoy and benefit from a strong economy	
All people in NEL feel safe and are safe	0-19 Programme
All people in NEL enjoy good health and well being	
All people in NEL live in sustainable communities	
All people in NEL fulfil their potential through skills and learning	Education Strategy Skills Strategy

<b>Other relevant Outcomes</b>	<b>Level of Significance</b>			
	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>None</b>
Being Healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staying Safe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enjoying and Achieving	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making a Positive Contribution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Achieving Economic Wellbeing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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## **Introduction**

This policy and guidance provides an outline of North East Lincolnshire Local Authority's system and procedures for identifying, registering and tracking Children Missing from Education and our plans to develop strategies for identifying those at risk of going missing from education. It also recognises the statutory responsibility of schools and identifies the steps that schools need to take to ensure that they are compliant with such.

Our aim is to ensure that every child and young person in North East Lincolnshire has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and to ensure that no child or young person slips through the net.

This guidance has been produced to help the local authority meet its current statutory duties relating to the provision of education and the safeguarding and welfare of children:

- It supports the local authority to fulfil its obligations in relation to S175 of the Education Act 2002. This imposed a duty upon local authorities and governing bodies to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- It supports Sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004 which includes various provisions relating to safeguarding and promotion of welfare of children.
- It supports Section 436A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 which 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.
- It supports the requirements of Statutory Instrument 2006 No 1751 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and Statutory Instrument No 792 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016.
- It supports and works alongside North East Lincolnshire Authority's 'Children and Young People who go Missing from Care and Home'.
- It supports the Single Assessment Framework procedures in North East Lincolnshire.

## **Definition of Children Missing from Education**

Children missing from education in this document refers to all children of compulsory school age who are not on school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision). It also refers to any child whose name will be deleted from a school admissions register (after the school and local authority have made reasonable enquiry to locate the child before the decision is made): because they have continuous unauthorised absence from school for a period of 20 school days; leave a school and future provision is unknown; fails to return from extended leave within 10 school days.

## **Why Children go Missing from Education**

Children go missing from the education system because they:

- Fail to start school at Year Reception entry, hence never entering the authority's system
- Fail to complete transition at:
  - Key Stage 1 to 2 (Infants to Juniors); or
  - Key Stage 2 to 3 (Primary to Secondary)
- Medical reasons
- Cease to attend due to unofficial exclusion

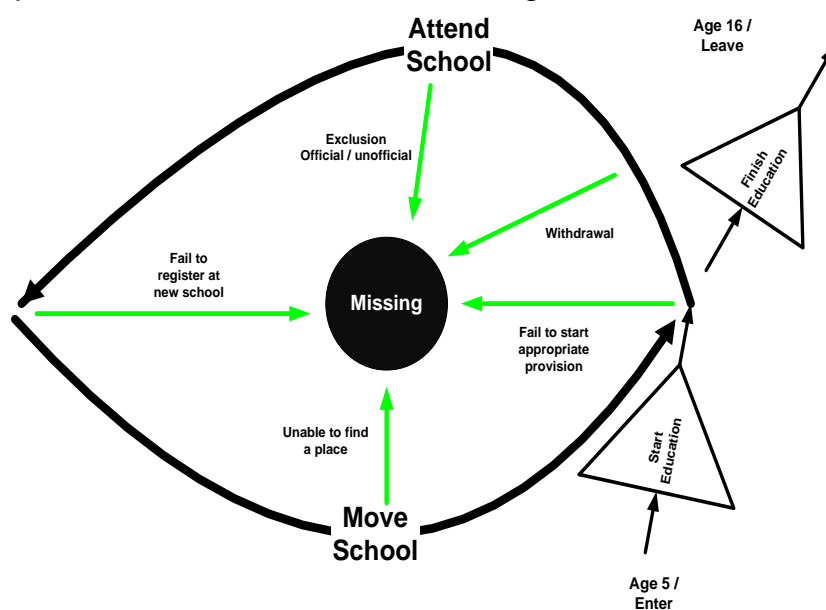
- Are withdrawn by parent/carer
- Are electively home educated
- Transfer between local authorities
- Are transient and traveller families
- Arrive in the country via asylum, refugee status or as EU nationals
- Permanent exclusion
- Fail to attend alternative provision or work placements
- Cease to attend for an unknown reason

It is to be noted that personal circumstances of the child or those of their families may contribute to the withdrawal process and the failure to make a transition, e.g. parents / carers escaping domestic violence, families moved quickly under the police witness protection scheme.

Children can go missing when they don't enter or fall out of the education system and there is no systematic process in place to:

- Identify those children
- Ensure that once identified they engage or re-engage with appropriate provision

The following diagram illustrates the main ways in which a child can fall out of educational provision and hence become missing:



There are also other circumstances by which a child could go missing. Most cases are relatively minor whereby the child returns home quickly, or is not believed to be in any serious danger even if they are found or do not return. However, there are more serious cases, such as abduction. It is therefore essential that when any child goes missing from education, the case is approached in a sensitive and structured manner.

### Identifying and Engaging Stakeholders

In paragraph 17.97 of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report, Lord Laming recommended that: “Front line staff in each of the agencies which regularly come into contact with families with children must ensure that in each new contact, basic information about the child is recorded. This must include the child’s name, address, age, the name of the child’s primary carer, the child’s GP and the name of the child’s school if the child is of school age. Gaps in this information should be passed on to the relevant authority in accordance with local arrangements”.

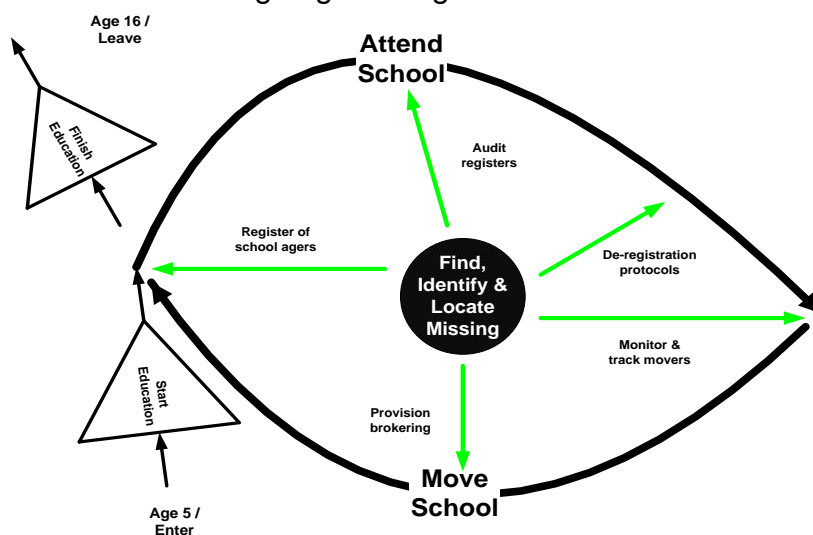
It is necessary to raise awareness amongst all stakeholders about how to inform the local authority about children missing from education, in order to ensure that agencies e.g. health and housing apply this principle consistently. It is often the case that another agency is aware of the arrival or the existence of a child living in the area but not in education, before the local authority is aware.

Key Stakeholders in respect of North East Lincolnshire are: North East Lincolnshire Schools/Academies, Early Years providers, School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team, Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team, Education Welfare Service, Elective Home Education Service, Behaviour Service, Pupil Referral Units, Alternative Education Providers, Independent Schools, Further Education Institutions, Identified Work Placements, Early Help Services, Child Protection Team, Childrens' Social Care Teams, Local Safeguarding Children Board, Authority and Private Housing Providers, Homeless Hostels, Domestic Refuges, Asylum and Refugee Support Groups, Accident and Emergency Departments, Various Health Services, Benefits Agency, Police, Integrated Young People's Support Service, Youth Offending Service and Voluntary Organisations.

In order to ensure all children in North East Lincolnshire are receiving an education it will be necessary to regularly raise awareness with all stakeholders of the importance of missing children and remind agencies of the need to notify the local authority if they suspect a child is missing from education. This will identify children at risk who have entered North East Lincolnshire.

### Reducing the Risk of Children Going Missing from Education

The following diagram shows how some of the key features of this policy can help reduce the likelihood of children going missing.



### Action when Children arrive in North East Lincolnshire

When pupils arrive in North East Lincolnshire all North East Lincolnshire schools (including community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation, trust, academies and independent) if approached for admission must inform the local authority's School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team as they have statutory responsibility to be made aware of all in year admissions. In the case of a statemented child / child with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) where the parent/carer may make direct contact with the Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team, they will advise the School Admissions / Children

Missing from Education Team of the formal request in order that the application can be logged through the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team's statistics and be entered onto the local authority's Capita One Educational Management System.

Once on the school's admission register all receiving schools must complete a SA5 and submit accordingly to the authority and pick up the s2s file from the DfE's secure website. Occasionally, the file may not have been uploaded to the website by the previous school. If this is the case and the previous school is not known the local authority's Informatics Team can be approached to assist in locating the file by searching for MMM/XXXX file.

### **Action when Parent/Carer informs that Children are leaving current North East Lincolnshire school to a known destination and identified education provision.**

When a child leaves a North East Lincolnshire school/education provider the school/provider, the statutory requirements for schools is to:

- (1) Complete a SA5 and submit to the local authority's School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team.
- (2) Upload the pupils file to the DfE's secure website.
- (3) Check the S2S website to ensure that the file has been downloaded by the receiving school.

If it is not downloaded within 2 school days, the school should make enquiries as to the whereabouts of the family. If on enquiry, the child is not located a referral should be made to the North East Lincolnshire School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team.

If the parent/carers has elected to home educate the child, the school must still complete the SA5, inform the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team and the Education Welfare Service and forward the child's hard paper file to the Elective Home Education Advisor and a copy to the parent/carers. Further information can be found in North East Lincolnshire's Elective Home Education Policy.

### **Process for Monitoring Pupils who Cease to Attend**

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 imposed a duty upon local authorities and governing bodies to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The statutory duties under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2016 requires that all education providers must begin enquiries as to the whereabouts of the child and family within 10 school days or sooner. If enquiries do not locate the child and resolve the issue a referral should be made to the North East Lincolnshire Education Welfare Service. (The timescale for the referral should be not later than 20 school days or unauthorised absence or sooner, depending on the particular circumstances of the child – see notes on Looked After Children and those subject to a Child Protection Plan).

The child must remain on the school register until all reasonable enquiries are completed even if this means that the child will amass more than 20 days absence. The outcome of the school and local authority's attempts to trace the child will dictate the next steps. If they are unable to find the child they must refer the case to the appropriate agencies. The school after consultation with the authority's Education Welfare Service should enter the appropriate cessation date to remove the child from

the school's register and transfer the child's information to the Lost Pupil Database via the s2s website.

Children with statements of special educational needs / education, health and care plans (EHCP) should not be removed from the register until a review of the statement / EHCP has taken place and the local authority has agreed to change the name of the school in Part 4 of the statement / in the EHCP.

When a child leaves a North East Lincolnshire school and their destination is unknown, the school should create an electronic CTF (Common Transfer File) using the 'destination unknown' code XXX XXXX. This file is uploaded onto s2s and the child's details automatically go onto the 'Lost Pupil Database' section of the site. Schools must inform the Education Welfare Service that this has been done.

Files that are sent to known schools or local authorities but come back as rejected should be treated as the child now being missing from education and should be uploaded to the Lost Pupil Database as above and the local authority's School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team informed.

The School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team make enquiries by contacting other local authorities to ascertain if children missing from North East Lincolnshire schools have been admitted on a register elsewhere.

### **Pupils on alternative packages**

Details of those children dual registered remain the school's responsibility to monitor the attendance of those pupils on its school register with alternative package providers. It is also the schools responsibility to monitor the quality of the education provided by alternative providers that they commission. The local authority recommends a minimum of one visit per term to each alternative provider.

In the case of Elective Home Education the authority recommends a minimum of one advisory service contact per academic year.

### **Key Actions to Reduce the Risk of Missing Children from Education**

In North East Lincolnshire the Lead Officer for Children Missing from Education is The Head of Education Services and Strategic Lead for Education. The approach to ensuring the identification, registration and tracking of Children Missing from Education will be a multi-agency approach with:

- The School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team receive notification of children missing from schools, services or agencies.
- The School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team will endeavour to reach as many prospective First Admission children as possible through various media i.e. early years providers, general practitioners, health services etc., and will monitor and follow up any missing co-ordinated applications at all key stage transfers. The School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team will work closely with the current / previous education provider, Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team, relevant Children's Social Care Teams and the Education Welfare Service to ensure all families are reached.
- Links and agreements have been agreed to be able to cross check those entering statutory provision against partner databases of children at statutory school age (e.g. Early Years, Health etc) and inform the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team of those not in education, in order for further enquires to be made.



- All in year school admission applications are administered by or reported to the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team, so any schools that are directly approached for admission must refer the parent/carer to the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team and advise them of the direct approach in order that it can be dealt with. Unsuccessful admission appeals of new arrivals will be monitored and chased up if an alternative school is not sought. In the case of a statemented child / child with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) where the parent / carer may make direct contact with the Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team, they will advise the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team of the formal request in order that the application can be logged through the School Admissions Team / Children Missing from Education statistics and be entered onto the Capita One Educational Management System.
- After undertaking Census checks the local authority's Informatics Team will notify the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team of those children who have not arrived at infant/primary school entry or transition stages at the end of Key Stage One or Two. The School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team will follow up these cases.
- The Informatics Team will lead in the monitoring of the Education Pupil database and will liaise with the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team when any children at risk of missing education are identified.
- An email will be sent to all community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation, trust schools, independent schools and academies in and out of county where pupils are known to have been offered a place to check that pupils have started at those schools. If the local authority is notified that a child has not started, this will be referred to and followed up by the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team.
- In addition to this the team will also undertake regular audits of children within the local authority's Capita One Education Management System database that are registered at independent or neighbouring authority schools to ensure that the information held is still correct, and if not appropriate follow up will be undertaken.
- In respect of statemented children / children with EHCPs these checks will be made by the Special Education Needs Assessment and Review Team and if necessary referred to the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team.
- All North East Lincolnshire schools will keep admission and attendance registers, in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
- All North East Lincolnshire schools will complete the Common Transfer Form s2s electronic document which schools are statutorily required to send to a child's receiving school within 2 days of their leaving the current school.
- All schools will complete and submit the SA5 forms to the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team when children leave or join their school, including when the parent / carer has advised of Elective Home Education. These are to be submitted at the actual time of the change to ensure that all records are as up to date and any action required is taken as soon as possible.
- The School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team and all Education Welfare Officers on receipt of referrals will actively identify, monitor and track those children missing from education, with the support of all appropriate stakeholders and agencies.
- Permanently excluded children, potentially permanently excluded children and

those referred to the local authority's Behaviour Attendance Collaborative (BAC) who are subsequently moved to another school or pupil referral unit (PRU); dual registered; and or are attending alternative provision will have their attendance monitored by the school on which the child is on roll. It is the responsibility of the school to frequently check individual children's attendance at any offsite or alternative provision. Children who have been permanently excluded and are awaiting placement on a school roll or on Behaviour Attendance Collaborative (BAC) trial periods will be registered on a 'holding' base and closely monitored by the Behaviour Service until such time that a mainstream school transition is in place or trial periods are completed.

- Procedures are in place for the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Manager to escalate any cases of concern to senior management. Those children educated at home are monitored on an annual basis by the local authority's Elective Home Education Advisor and the report is submitted on the Capita One Education Management System.
- Schools must complete returns to the Education Welfare Service of every registered child who fails to attend the school regularly or has unauthorised absence for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days.
- Schools must complete returns to the Education Welfare Service to seek authorisation for the deletion of children from the Admission Register. The authorisation request must include all relevant information including the grounds for the deletion.
- In the event of a child death, all schools are required to notify the local authority's Informatics Team. If the child was known to have involvement with internal services from the information on Capita One Education Management System those services will be notified in order that their records can be amended. In the case of a statemented child / child with an EHCP where the Special Education Needs Assessment and Review Team are notified they will take the lead on notifying all relevant services and agencies.
- There will be regular monitoring of the processes and numbers of children in North East Lincolnshire relative to Children Missing from Education by the senior management and elected members.

**Children subject to a Child Protection Plan** - If a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan is believed to be missing then the Child Protection Co-ordinator must be informed immediately by the agency that has raised the concern.

**Looked After Children (LAC)** - If a Looked After Child is believed to be missing then the named Social Worker for the child must be informed immediately by the agency that has raised the concern.

**Children in Need (CIN)** - If a Child in Need is believed to be missing then the named Social Worker for the child must be informed immediately by the agency that has raised the concern.

**Local Safeguarding Children Board Procedures** – If at any time there are concerns about a child's welfare, and in particular if it is considered that a child may be, or is, suffering a significant harm, established Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures must be followed.

## **Registration and Data System**

North East Lincolnshire Local Authority maintains a Capita One Education Management System which obtains individual pupil data electronically from all authority services and schools.

Various North East Lincolnshire Local Authority services could receive enquiries from other local authorities / agencies regarding children who are missing. All enquiries need to be logged with the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team.

## **Referral Routes**

- Child does not appear at entry to Year Reception.
- Child does not appear at the allocated school at transition from Infant to Junior School (Key Stage 1 to 2) or Primary to Secondary School (Key Stage 2 to 3).
- Child does not appear at the allocated school following casual/in-year admission or transfer.
- Referral from school when child ceases to attend (i.e. unauthorised absence for 10 sessions and there has been no or limited contact with parents/carers).
- Children with a substantial amount of authorised non-attendance with no evidence as to why this has been agreed.
- Children not attending alternative provision.
- Children permanently excluded from school where contact has been lost to offer attendance at a pupil referral unit, alternative school or provision.
- Children removed from a school roll (not attending at schools direction - unofficial exclusion).
- Children placed in the domestic refuge from outside of the area.
- Children educated other than at school i.e. elective home educated, where monitoring contact is lost.

It is the responsibility of all officers, partners and external services to notify the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team, of any information received from another authority or agency regarding a child who may be missing from education, who it is believed is residing in North East Lincolnshire. The School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team can be contacted on (01472) 326291 (Option 4) or by email to [childrenmissingfromeducation@nelincs.gov.uk](mailto:childrenmissingfromeducation@nelincs.gov.uk).

On receipt of a referral initial enquiries will be made which may include visiting an address where the child is believed to be living, contact other agencies e.g. Police, Housing and Health etc. The School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team will check if a preference or admission application form has been received, processed etc.

If the child is traced, the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team or Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team will secure educational provision. If the child is not traced all relevant checks will be made and the case will be monitored and appropriately escalated to senior management if required.

## **Review**

This policy will be kept under regular review to ensure the local authority's continual ability to ensure that children are identified and that contact is maintained with children missing or at risk of missing education.

## **Additional Information**

### **School Admission Procedures**

North East Lincolnshire has in place a set of agreed Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for admission to both primary and secondary schools either at natural points of admission or transfer i.e. first admissions to primary school, infant to junior transfer, secondary transfer or in year admissions. These schemes are in accordance with the relevant Admissions Legislation, Regulations and School Admissions Code and apply to all maintained schools and academies in North East Lincolnshire.

The admission of statemented children / children with an education, health and care plan (EHCP) is covered under different legislation. This requires the local authority to consult with the proposed school prior to naming it in part 4 of the statement / in the EHCP. Admission requests of statemented children / children with an EHCP made through the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team are logged into the admissions system and referred onto the Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team. If a parent/carer makes direct contact with the Special Educational Needs Assessment and Review Team for an admission or transfer, they will advise the School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team of such in order that it can be tracked through the admissions / transfer system.

### **Fair Access Protocol**

The School Admissions Code requires all local authorities to have a Fair Access Protocol in place. The protocol contributes to ensuring that all children and young people have access to appropriate education.

### **Advice on how to use s2s**

North East Lincolnshire's Informatics Team is able to advise schools and services on the use of s2s. If schools have any queries they can contact the Informatics Team on (01472) 323326.

Missing children enquiries could include the following actions by the schools and the Education Welfare Service:

- Home visit - forwarding address identified
- Information forwarded to receiving local authority
- School admissions in receiving local authority contacted
- Receiving school identified
- School records transferred

Enquiries should be made of other sources using appropriate forms e.g. Housing provider, Health Services, Police and other agencies as appropriate.

Depending on the information received from other agencies, the case may need further investigation and may need further monitoring.

**Children subject to a Child Protection Plan** - All services and agencies have a responsibility for children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan. If a child subject to a Child Protection Plan goes missing, the Child Protection Co-ordinator must be informed immediately.

**Looked After Children** - As corporate parents all services and agencies have a responsibility for Looked After Children. If a Looked After Child goes missing, the named Social Worker for the case will take responsibility.

**Children in Need** - All services and agencies have a responsibility for Children in Need. If a Child in Need goes missing, the named Social Worker for the case will take responsibility.

**Children Permanently Excluded from School** - North East Lincolnshire's Behaviour Service has responsibility for the arrangements and securing of provision for those pupils permanently excluded from school.

**Children with a Traveller Background and or from Transient Families** - North East Lincolnshire Education Welfare Service and The Schools Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team work together to ensure that traveller children and those from other transient backgrounds gain access to their legal entitlement to an education that meets their needs and promotes the inclusion and achievement of such children to enable them to become independent users of the education system.

**Children Electively Home Educated** - Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 provides that: "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise." This allows parents to remove their child from school and provide them with education at home. Parents/carers do not need to inform anyone if their child never starts school.

Parents/carers of children with statements of special educational needs / education, health and care plans (EHCP) may educate their children at home even though the local authority remains responsible for ensuring that the education the child receives is suitable. The statement / EHCP must stay in force and the local authority must ensure that parents/carers can make suitable provision, including providing for all their children's special educational needs. If parent/carer's arrangements are suitable, the local authority is relieved of its' duty to arrange provision directly, but it still remains the local authority's duty to ensure the child's needs are met.

The local authority can intervene if it has reason to believe that parents/carers are not providing a suitable education and may issue a School Attendance Order under section 437(1) of the Education Act 1996. It may also apply to court for a child assessment order under S43 of the Children Act 1989 if it has reasonable cause to do so (which will only be where there is a risk of significant harm to the child).

The Education Welfare and Elective Home Education Services have an agreed joint protocol for identifying and monitoring children removed from school to be educated at home.

**Information Sharing** - North East Lincolnshire has a School Admissions / Children Missing from Education Team regularly in line with data protection requirements share information regarding pupils who are missing or unplaced and track their movements including advising of liaison / involvement with a range of services and agencies including the children's services, benefits agency, housing, health, youth offending service and the police. Individual cases causing concern will be escalated to the respective Head of Service.

**Single Assessment Framework** – The Single Assessment Framework assists in assessing needs and improving services to children, young people and families and enables a child's needs to be assessed in a holistic way, to decide what, if any, response is needed. If a response is required it is likely to be of a lower order than if the issue had been allowed to escalate.

The Single Assessment Framework enables practitioners to liaise with any other professionals who might have already completed an assessment for the child and share concerns with them. This enables professionals from different agencies to work more effectively together, build a picture of a child's needs over time and develop a more appropriate response.