**Help Sheet**

**What can we do if we cannot contact a family/child that attends our school?**

* **Do you have up to date contact details for each child and for other people with whom they may live with (for example, a child may move in with grandparents or friends while a parent self-isolates or recovers).**

Keeping Children Safe in Education requires schools to have two contact numbers where possible for families, but[good practice suggests three numbers is better](https://safeguarding.network/emergency-contact-numbers/). Having a telephone number outside the household could be crucial and save much time if you become unable to contact a family at some point.

* **Consider what kind of contact you are planning to have with families and the point of that contact.**

Where you have very frequent contact think about what benefit you are offering to the child and the parent. Checking up daily on families without a perceived benefit from their end will quickly be perceived as a lack of trust or form of social control and, unsurprisingly, will be resisted by parents and young people

**It is important that this is also communicated to families so that they are clear about the need to make contact with the school if their child is not going to be in that day, along with regular reminders.**

**Key Questions and Considerations for schools**

* Is the child involved with Social Carer Early Help, have you contacted the worker to discuss/support joint working?
* Does the child have other siblings at different schools, have you contacted the other school?
* Have you made a home visit to ascertain they still live at the address?
* Have you rung, text, and email every contact you hold for the student?
* Have you emailed the pupil? (using pupils school email address)
* Have you completed a contact data exercise recently, to ensure they hold correct contact details for all students?
* Do you know for certain that the pupil has access to IT to complete online learning?
* You can contact Attendance Advisory to check whether the family are still registered at the address?
* Have you contacted their Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP) if they purchase our service AASSA?
* Have you contacted the service they purchase to assist in non-school attendance?
* **If there are safeguarding concerns, then refer to social care. You can use the online portal to refer or if you believe the child to be at risk of imminent harm please call 01634 334466**

Once all of these have been tried, Attendance Advisory and Children Missing Education (CME) [cme@medway.gov.uk](mailto:cme@medway.gov.uk) will assist, however if the family and children are still living in Medway this is a school issue not a CME as they have a school place in Medway.

**Key Contacts**

**Safeguarding**

01634 33 1662 **No Name Consultation Line** – 9:30-12:30 Monday – Friday

This line should **NOT** be used in the case of children who are at **risk of immediate harm** or where a **clear disclosure** has been made.

**In this case the DSL / Headteacher needs to call Children’s Services First Response Service on**

**01634 334466**

**For advice and support to school on all education safeguarding related issues.**

[**kate.barry@medway.gov.uk**](mailto:kate.barry@medway.gov.uk) **LA Education Safeguarding Officer**

**01634 331017**

**Attendance and Child Missing in Education**

[**christine.clarke@medway.gov.uk**](mailto:christine.clarke@medway.gov.uk) **LA Attendance & Advisory Team Manager**

**01634 334331**

[**cme@medway.gov.uk**](mailto:cme@medway.gov.uk) **LA Children Missing in Education Officer**

**01634 337308**

[**aassa@medway.gov.uk**](mailto:aassa@medway.gov.uk) **Attendance & Advisory Team**

**01634 337310**

**Please note: the ASSA team are available during 8am – 4pm Monday - Friday**

**Policy and Procedure**

Schools need to have a clear policy in place about how unexplained absences are dealt with. This should include:

**• determining when the first phone call to a family should be made (it is recommended that the call is made in the same morning);**

**• what should happen if there is no contact made with the family;**

**• when a visit should be completed and who will be tasked with undertaking this visit;**

**• what should happen if there is no answer upon visiting.**

This will however also require schools to make the differentiation between a welfare concern and an attendance issue – this should be done on a case by case basis considering everything that is known about the child and their family, and schools will need to determine who in the school is deemed to be able to make this decision.