

## **Reasonable enquiries checklist for untraceable non-attenders and CME Hard to contact families – prolonged unexplained failure to access education**

1. From time to time a child previously unknown to Children's Services, with no previous attendance difficulties, stops attending school and no communication about the reason is received from parents. Similarly, parents of children who have been identified and referred as CME (those without any school place), will sometimes be hard to contact/trace.
2. The reasons for this are varied - a misunderstanding of process, a family emergency outside of London or the UK or a simple oversight e.g., one parent believing the other to have informed the school or the Local Authority of a planned move of school or house. All are a potential concern and need to be followed up by appropriate professionals.
3. If unknown to Social Care or Family Support, such cases should be referred to the ACE team in the Education Department: staff will begin reasonable enquiries, keeping involved professionals informed of outcomes.
4. If checks cannot establish the whereabouts of the child, the Headteacher should be informed and is responsible for deciding whether the child's name can be legitimately removed from the school roll. The decision should be based on the information provided, as well as the Headteacher's knowledge of the child and family.
5. Reasonable enquiries are a requirement of statutory regulations. The list below is a guide to what staff in Children's Services should consider in such cases, but each case will be different.
  - Telephone contact, including all school emergency contacts
  - Two home visits, one by appointment, one speculative
  - Written contact - e.g. email contact, letters, including SAE for parents or carers to respond
  - Social Care check
  - Housing Department
  - Health checks
  - Police - Missing Persons Unit
  - Child Benefit
6. Having made these checks, the member of staff undertaking the enquiries should record their findings in writing to school staff, and only at this stage confirm that "reasonable enquiries" have been finished. A *Record of untraceable child of statutory school age* [1. 9. ace record of untraceable child.docx \(live.com\)](#), should be completed by the relevant caseworker in Children's Services, detailing enquiries made and submitted to the Head of ACE for final sign off. If there is no more information and school staff have no specific and substantiated concerns, the child's name can be removed from the roll.
7. Only when a Local Authority has specific and significant safeguarding concerns should contact be made with other Local Authorities and this will normally be undertaken by the police or social care colleagues. Communications will *not* automatically be sent to all Local Authorities whenever a child moves out of an area as this should only be done in cases with a high level of safeguarding concerns.

