What do we mean by children ‘missing out’ on education?

Children who are termed ‘missing out’ on education are those who do not attend full-time education at school or in alternative provision. Full-time education is defined as 25 hours per week for 39 weeks per year; if a young person is not receiving this entitlement at school or in alternative educational provision, they are considered to be ‘missing out’ on education. This guide should be read alongside the guide on children missing education.

All children are entitled to an education; section 7 of the Education Act 1996 specifies that it is the responsibility of their parents to ensure that they receive a full-time education. Parents can choose to deliver this education themselves outside of school; this is elective home education (guide).

In addition to the responsibilities of parents to ensure their children receive a full-time education, everyone working with children, young people and families has a collective responsibility to ensure support for children’s educational entitlement. This contributes to our ambition to make Leeds a child friendly city and the best city in the UK to grow up in.

Why might children miss out on education?

There may be times in a child or young person’s life when they cannot access 25 hours of education per week; a reduced timetable or other alternative arrangement may be appropriate in those circumstances. It is the responsibility of those working with children and young people to check that any such arrangements are planned in accordance with an assessment of the child’s educational, social, emotional and health needs and regularly reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the child or young person, which may change over time.

There are a number of reasons why a child or young person may not be able to attend full-time education at school or alternative educational provision and will therefore be termed ‘missing out on education’, e.g. children and young people who:

- Have medical needs, in relation to either physical or mental health and are accessing the medical needs teaching service (MNTS)
- Are young mothers of compulsory school age; there is no obligation for girls to attend education provision during an 18-week maternity leave period. The Pupil Tuition Team offer some home-based tuition
- Have particular social and behavioural difficulties which may require personal learning plans. These plans may involve children and young people not attending their usual school full-time and can include accessing alternative provision.

Children or young people who have had problems with their attendance may also have personalised learning plans as part of their re-integration to full-time education, which can include part-time timetables where they do not access a full 25 hour curriculum, and may access flexible learning options such as e-learning. Any such arrangements must have parental consent, in accordance with parents’ responsibilities towards their child’s education. Plans should be time-limited and regularly reviewed.
What is in place to track children 'missing out' on education?

Ofsted expect the local authority to identify and track children and young people who may not be accessing 25 hours, as noted in their November 2013 report on pupils missing out.

Our procedures in Leeds have recently been updated to ensure that we can track children and young people who may be 'missing out' on education and ensure that the local authority and related services, including schools and academies, are doing everything possible to ensure we maximise young people's access to education. This tracking is also developing to include working with practitioners to identify young people at risk and putting in place effective interventions, where possible, to prevent them from missing out on their entitlement.

What should practitioners do to help?

There are a few simple questions that practitioners should ask in relation to every child they work with, to ensure they are not missing out on education:

- Is the child on roll at a school?
  - If they are not, are they being educated at home? Children who are electively home educated are not considered to be missing out - their parents have a responsibility to provide a suitable education. Please see the elective home education guide for further information
  - Are they being offered, and attending for, 25 hours education a week, either at school or in alternative provision?
  - If they are not receiving 25 hours a week, has this been agreed as part of a plan to meet their individual needs?
  - Is the plan reviewed regularly to ensure that the arrangements are still appropriate for the child’s current circumstances?

If the answer to any of these questions is no, or any other concerns emerge about the education provision of any child or young person, practitioners need to speak to their line managers about raising the issues with the relevant school or education provider. Early identification is particularly helpful, to ensure that we minimise risk of missing out and support the young person appropriately.

Who are the key contacts?

For more information about children and young people missing out on education, or to request advice with specific cases, please contact:

- Admissions (for children not currently on a school roll) tel: 0113 222 4414
- Medical needs tel: 0113 336 8060
- Education support for school-age parents and access to Pupil Tuition Team: john.may@leeds.gov.uk, tel: 0113 395 1214

For all other queries or advice relating to children missing out on education, tel: 0113 39 51183.

One minute guides homepage