

Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Children Missing from Education Policy

Reviewed: September 2022

1. Introduction

All Local Authorities' have a duty under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. New statutory guidance for Local Authorities' on children missing education was published by the Department for Education in September 2016. Whilst this guidance relates to children of compulsory school age, in Stoke-on-Trent, the Local Authority considers it good practice to track all children, including those who are not compulsory school age. The purpose of this policy is to identify children who are not receiving a suitable education and ensure that all children in Stoke-on-Trent have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and that fewer children disengage from the education system. This revised policy takes account of the changes in that guidance.

2. Definition of a Child Missing Education

Guidance published by the Department for Education in September 2016 (See Appendix 4) states:

"Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

3. Legislative Requirements

Section 436A of the Education Act "requires all local education authorities to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are not receiving a suitable education." Local authorities must also ensure that they 'monitor the numbers of children/young people in the authority who are not receiving an education, including those new to the area or the country.'

The Children's Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of the child and to share information. This principle underpins the local authority's policy for Children Missing Education, and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure children "do not slip through the net" and become missing.

4. Children at risk of missing education

Children can fall out of the education system and be at risk of going missing for a wide variety of reasons. Their personal circumstances or those of their families may contribute to disengagement from the education system if there are no systematic processes in place to identify them and ensure they re-engage with appropriate provision. These children are amongst the most vulnerable in the country.

The Department for Education identifies the following groups of children as being at particular risk of missing education:

a. **Pupils at risk of harm/neglect** – Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected schools should follow local child protection procedures. However, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children's social care (and the police if appropriate). Local authority officers responsible for CME should check that a referral has been made and, if not, they should alert children's social care. The Department's statutory guidance *Keeping children safe in education* provides further advice for schools and colleges on safeguarding children.

b. **Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families** – Research has shown that many children from these families can become disengaged from education, particularly during the secondary school phase. It is therefore important that schools inform the local authority when a GRT pupil leaves the school without identifying a new destination school, particularly in the transition from primary to secondary so that they can attempt to facilitate continuity of the child's education. Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly and their children can be at increased risk of missing education. Local authority Traveller Education Support Services (TESS), where these exist, or the named CME officer within the local authority, can advise schools on the best strategies for ensuring the minimum disruption to GRT pupils' education, for example dual registration with other schools or the provision of electronic or distance learning packages where these are available.

c. **Children of Service Personnel** – Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in the UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MoD Children's Education Advisory Service ([CEAS](#)) on 01980 618244 for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.

d. **Missing children and runaways** – Children who go missing or run away from home or care may be in serious danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation or abduction as well as missing education. Further sources of information about missing children are listed at the back of this document.

e. **Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System** – Children who have offended or are at risk of doing so are also at risk of disengaging from education. Local authority Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are responsible for supervising those young people (aged 8 to 18). YOTs should work with the local authority CME officer to ensure that children are receiving, or return to, appropriate full-time education. Where a young person was registered at a school prior to custody, the school may be able to keep the place open for their return.

f. **Children who cease to attend a school** – there are many reasons why a child stops attending a school. It could be because the parent chooses to home educate their child. However, where the reason for a child who has stopped attending a school is not known, the local authority should investigate the case and satisfy itself that the child is receiving suitable education.

g. **Children of new migrant families** – children of new migrant families may not have yet settled into a fixed address or may have arrived into a local authority area without the authority becoming aware, therefore increasing the risk of the child missing education.

Although not exhaustive, the list helps to identify some of the reasons a child may be missing from education. It is also important to consider those children who fail to transition successfully during mid-year points or fail to register with a school once the child has become compulsory school age.

5. Identifying a Child Missing Education

The Children Missing Education (CME) team work in partnership with schools and key partners including Children's Services Social Care, Housing, Health, Virtual School, Youth Offending, Education Otherwise, Early Help Lead, Admissions, SENMAS, Education Welfare, Learning Pathways, Police and voluntary organisations to enable a multi-disciplinary approach to identifying children missing education.

All officers of Stoke-on-Trent City Council have a joint responsibility for children missing education. If an officer becomes aware of any child who does not appear to be accessing education they should make a referral to the CME Team.

Anyone may make a referral to the CME inbox including members of the public as follows:

- By completing a CME Referral Form: either Form 1 (Transfer) or Form 2 (Tracking) the appropriate form should be sent to cme-offroll@stoke.gov.uk (Appendix 1 & 2)
- Email: cme-offroll@stoke.gov.uk

The CME Team will manage and co-ordinate the referral process, maintaining and updating the CME database and act as a link with schools and other agencies or authorities, referring or tracking pupils out of school. The CME Team will ensure that the referral procedures outlined in this document are understood and followed.

6. The Role of the Local Authority

Officers within the Learning Services area of the city council have direct involvement with the Local Authority's procedures for monitoring and safeguarding children deemed vulnerable, exploited, missing or trafficked. This is through the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Panel, Ending Gangs Youth Violence (EGYV), Prevent and all other agencies previously listed.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Local Safeguarding Children Board's Child Protection Procedures.

This policy is intended to inform local authority officers, schools, academies, governing bodies and other agencies about appropriate reasonable procedures for identifying and maintaining contact with children missing from education and those at risk of going missing from education.

This policy sets out how Stoke-on-Trent City Council fulfils its statutory duties in relation to children missing education and will also ensure that:

- Schools, academies, services and partner agencies are informed about their role in assisting the council in identifying children missing education;
- Robust multi-agency systems are in place to identify and track children missing education, or at risk of becoming so;

- Mechanisms available to re-engage pupils with education are clear.

A range of procedures and processes have been identified to limit the opportunity for children to go missing when they fall out of the education system, including:

- Identify and locate children missing education through working with other services and agencies;
- Ensure all CME referrals are recorded on a central register and monitored regularly;
- Re-engage those who have been missing without appropriate education;
- Identify children missing education through liaison with other local authorities and access to national databases;
- Develop existing systems to identify those at risk of becoming CME;
- Raising awareness through publicity.

7. The Role of Schools and Academies

If a child leaves a Stoke-on-Trent school or academy without receiving notification from the parent/carers as to which new school the child is transferring to, the school should refer in to the CME inbox on the Form 2 Tracking Form (See Appendix 2). This should be completed after the school have completed the relevant checks to identify the whereabouts of the child following 5 days of non-school attendance.

If a pupil is moving from a Stoke-on-Trent school to another Stoke-on-Trent or Staffordshire school and confirmation has been received that they have been taken on roll (CTF Transfer), Form 1 (Transfer) should be signed by the Head Teacher and sent in to the CME mailbox. If the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan or at any stage during enquiries, if information comes to light that raises child protection/safeguarding concerns a referral should be made to Social Care and/or the Police.

Schools should not remove any child from their roll without completing either Form 1 or Form 2 (Appendix 1 & 2) to ensure that all children removed from the school register are, in accordance with Regulation 8(h)(iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. **No school should remove a child's name from the roll without receiving notification from the CME Team.**

The CME Team monitors pupils who have been removed from roll to ensure that the legislation is followed.

8. Children Causing Concern in Education

Stoke-on-Trent Local Authority has a forum in place known as 'Children Causing Concern in education.' This multi-agency approach allows professionals from a number of key departments to identify pupils on roll at a school who may be at risk of becoming "missing from education." This multi-agency group meet fortnightly to review cases referred from schools, academies and teams within the Local Authority. A Children Causing Concern in Education form (appendix 3) should be completed and sent to children.causing.concern@stoke.gov.uk if schools have concerns that a child is at risk of becoming missing from education.

All offices of Stoke-on-Trent City Council and other partners have a duty to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information. In order to achieve the strategic aims of the CME Policy, all partner organisations will work in collaboration to ensure early identification and intervention regarding children who are not receiving education.

This form to be completed where a child is transferring school roll within Stoke-on-Trent or Staffordshire and a start date has been confirmed.

Stoke-on-Trent Transfer of Roll

Schools have a responsibility to secure good attendance and to involve external agencies if poor attendance occurs. After a **maximum of 5 days** of non-school attendance and after school has been unable to contact parents/ carers, the school should complete school actions overleaf. Together we will try and locate the child by carrying out a series of checks. (If you have Child Protection concerns, please contact 01782 235100).

Please fill in child/family details below and then complete relevant checks:

Child's Name: DOB:

Last Known Address (including postcode):

Current School:

Year Group:

UPN No:

Mother's Full Name:

Father's Full Name:

Carer's Full Name:

Parent/Guardian
Contact number:

EWO (if applicable):

Other Agency Involvement:

Date when pupil was last in school: %:

Other Relevant Information:

Please attach an additional sheet if required

Appendix 1**FORM 1**

This form to be completed where a child is transferring school roll within Stoke-on-Trent or Staffordshire and a start date has been confirmed.

SCHOOL CHECK:	DATE(S)	OUTCOME	COMPLETED BY
New School Contacted			
Contact with Other Agencies Involved with Family			
CTF Completed			

Please contact each student's new school to confirm child has gone on roll

Name of school that the child has transferred to:

Date of admission:

I confirm that I have filled in this form accurately and all of the above checks have been completed to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Person Completing Form:

Date:

Head Teacher Signature:

Date:

Once complete please email to:

cme-offroll@stoke.gov.uk

**This form to be completed ONLY
where a child fulfils one of the removal criteria on page 2**

Stoke-on-Trent Tracking of Child

Schools have a responsibility to secure good attendance and to involve external agencies if poor attendance occurs. After a **maximum of 5 days** of non-school attendance and after school has been unable to contact parents/ carers, the school should complete school actions overleaf. Together we will try and locate the child by carrying out a series of checks. (If you have Child Protection concerns, please contact 01782 235100).

Please fill in child/family details below and then complete relevant checks:

Child's Name:		DOB:	
Last Known Address (including postcode):			

Current School:	
Year Group:	
UPN No:	
Mother's Full Name:	
Father's Full Name:	
Carer's Full Name:	
Parent/Guardian Contact number and email address:	
Any other emergency contact details for the child (please state the relationship):	
EWO (if applicable):	

Other Agency Involvement: Please provide details of registered GP

Date when pupil was last in school		%	

Appendix 2

FORM 2

**This form to be completed ONLY
where a child fulfils one of the removal criteria on page 2**

Other Relevant Information and action already taken: If the family have provided a forwarding address or location please give details:

Please attach an additional sheet if required

In order to transfer, please confirm that the following checks have been completed:

Removal Reason		Please Tick
1. The child has moved to a new school outside of Stoke or Staffordshire		
Name of school:		
Date of admission:		
2. The parent has elected to educate their child at home *please complete the EHE checklist*		
3. Death of child.		
4. The child has been permanently excluded		
5. The child no longer resides within a reasonable distance of the school and has not attended for a period of 20 days.		
6. A child has been certified by a medical officer as not being in a fit state of health to attend any school before ceasing to be of school age;		
7. The child has been remanded into custody for a period of four months or more and the child will not be returning to the school upon release.		
8. Child has not attended school for a period of 20 days or more (please attach further evidence)		
9. Child cannot be located		

SCHOOL CHECK: (to be completed within the first 5 days)	DATE(S)	OUTCOME	COMPLETED BY
New School Contacted			
Contact with Other Agencies Involved with Family			
CTF Completed			

I confirm that I have filled in this form accurately and all of the above checks have been completed to the best of my knowledge. The child will not be taken off roll until EWS approval given.

Appendix 2

Form 2

**This form to be completed ONLY
where a child fulfils one of the removal criteria on page 2**

Signature of Person Completing Form:	Date:

Head Teacher Signature:	Date:

Once completed please return to:

cme-offroll@stoke.gov.uk

CHILDREN CAUSING CONCERN IN EDUCATION REFERRAL FORM

REFERRED BY

School/Organisation:

Contact Name:

Position:

Contact Number:

Email Address:

Date:

FORM COMPLETION

*All sections of this form must be complete to ensure an appropriate and safe placement.**If a section is not applicable put N/A.**NB: It is expected that a school will be proactive in acquiring information from a previous school, if there are exceptional circumstances that mean that the form cannot be completed in full, please provide details below:*

STUDENT'S PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname:

Forenames:

Date of Birth:

Male / Female:

Year Group:

Is this a Looked After Child?

Yes

☐

No

☐

Ethnicity:

UPN No:

ULN No:

(ULN No: Year 10 and above only)

Please provide student's permanent Home Address below:

(Including post code)

Appendix 3

PARENTS / GUARDIAN

Mother:		TEL No:	
Father:		TEL No:	
Guardian / Carer:		TEL No:	

Language

1 st Spoken Language :		Interpreter Language:	
2 nd Spoken Language:		Religion:	
Interpreter Required:			

SCHOOL

Is the student currently On Roll? If so, provide name of school:

Does the student receive free school meals? Yes ☐ No ☐

If the child is NOT On Roll, please provide the name of their previously attended school and reason for leaving in the boxes below

Previously Attended School:	
Reason for Leaving:	

Date	Reason for exclusion	Fixed term?	Permanent?

SEN

Is the young person on the SEN register? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please attach pupil passport and state level of support (please tick appropriate below):

School SEN Support

Appendix 3

☐
☐
☐
☐

MULTI AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

Is the young person involved in any of the below services or agencies? *(Please tick if yes)*

Educational Psychology	☐
Social Care	☐
YOT	☐
SEND	☐
CAMHS	☐
Education Welfare Service	☐
Speech Therapy	☐
SENMAS	☐
Early Help	☐
CIN	☐

Other *(please specify in box provided)*

REFERRAL TO CHILDREN CAUSING CONCERN IS BASED ON A CHILD PRESENTING WITH ISSUES IN AT LEAST 1 OF THE CATEGORIES BELOW:

(Please tick the relevant category for this referral)

ATTENDANCE (50% OR LESS) ☐

SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS ☐

MEDICAL ISSUES WITH NO EHC PLAN ☐

PARENTAL DISENGAGEMENT ☐

NEW/UNPLACED INTO CITY ☐

OTHER ☐ *(use box below to specify)*

Appendix 3

Please scan and attach any other information you believe is relevant.

PLEASE RETURN FORM BACK TO THE BELOW ADDRESS

Contact: 01782 235355

Email: Children.Causing.Concern@Stoke.gov.uk using [[Secure Portal]]

Appendix 4

Please click on the link below:

[DfE Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for local authorities](#)

Appendix 5

Elective Home Education – School checklist

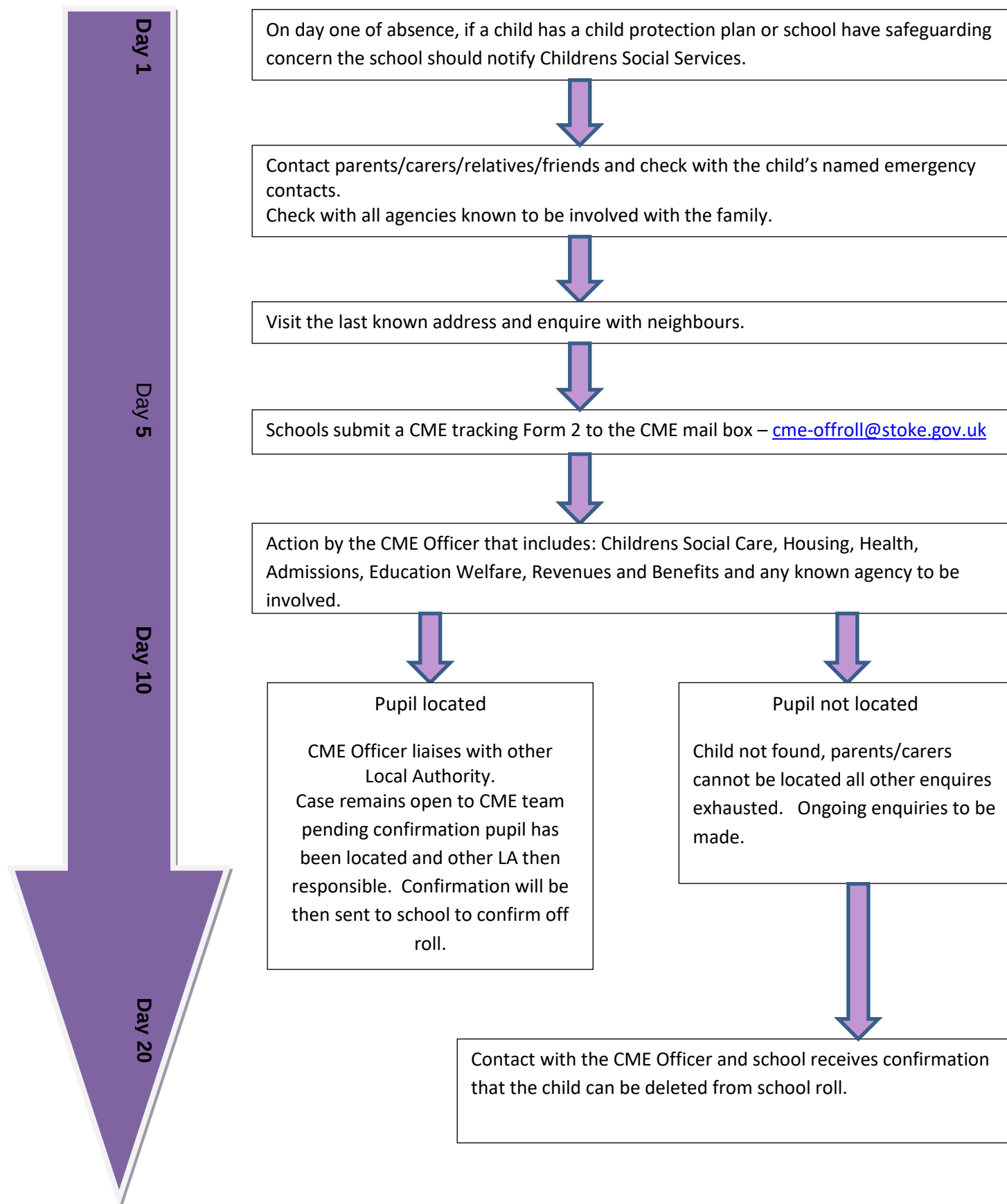
Name:		
EHE discussed prior to receiving de-registration letter If yes which member of staff?	Y/N	
Who wrote the de-registration letter?		
Key contact in school:		
Reasons for EHE if known:		
Action to be taken prior to re-registration (including support offered to address any issues)		
Does the pupil have an EHC Plan?		
Has the pupil ever been excluded? (FT & Perm ex)		
Please include the most up to date attainment information for English and Maths including SAT's/ predicted grades/ end of year assessments		
Are there any safeguarding concerns?	Early Help	
	CIN	
	Child Protection	
If yes what action has been taken?		
Education Welfare Service Involvements		
Are there any risks/issues that the EHE service should be aware of?		
Completed by: Name: Designation:	Date:	

Appendix 5

Please note that the pupil may only be removed from the school roll as of the date stated in the de-registration letter.

Please return this form with the CME Form 2 (tracking form) and a copy of the parental letter

Procedures for Schools



Useful Contacts:

Children Missing Education:

T: 01782 236220

E: cme-offroll@stoke.gov.uk

Education Welfare Team:

T: 01782 235355

E: Education.welfare@stoke.gov.uk

School Admissions:

T: 01782 234598

E: admissions@stoke.gov.uk

Elective Home Education Service:

T: 01782 236098

Virtual School for Cared for Children:

T: 01782 238043

Special Educational Needs Monitoring and Assessment Service (SENMAS)

T: 01782 231863

E: SENMAS@stoke.gov.uk

Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Referral Team:

T: 01782 235100

E: SRT.Referrals@stoke.gov.uk

Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Safeguarding Childrens Board:

T: 01785 277151

E: ssscb.admin@staffordshire.gov.uk