

## Child Missing from Education Policy

(CME)

Last Reviewed: Next Review Lent 2024 Lent 2025

## 1 Introduction: Purpose and aims

This policy is a whole-school policy and is relevant to all staff and applies to all pupils from Early Years to Year 8. It serves to set out Repton Prep's role in ensuring that the risk of a child going missing from education is minimised. This is in relation to a child becoming a "Disappeared Child" as a result of unexplained absence from school rather than as a result of going missing from school during the school day, on-site or during trips and activities which take place away from the school site.

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately, children missing from education (CME) risk underachieving, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life, and it can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including abuse and neglect.

For the purpose of this policy, a 'child missing from education' is defined as a child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school, not placed in alternative provision by the Local Authority (LA), and not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition encompasses children who are receiving an education, but not one that is suitable, including children who are not receiving a full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, SEND.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with Repton Prep's Attendance and Absence Policy.

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to:

- Education Act 1996
  - 436A Duty to make arrangements to identify children not receiving education.
     A [local authority] must 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 of compulsory school age, who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.
- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
  - This places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and share information.

In order to fulfil the requirements of the Children Missing Education (CME) policy, the local authority has agreed to work in collaboration to ensure early identification and intervention of children who are not receiving a suitable education. All stakeholders have a responsibility for CME.

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016)
- The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 (as amended in 2018). The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2018)
- The Education (Provision of Full-Time Education for Excluded Pupils) (England) Regulations 2007 (as amended in 2014)
- DfE (2022) Working Together to Improve School Attendance

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#### REPTON PREP

 Framework for the inspection of association independent schools, including residential (boarding) schools and registered early years settings. Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework – December 2024 Effective from January 2024DfE (2023) Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023DfE (2018) Working Together to Safeguard Children

"There is a Children Missing Education (CME) named point of contact in every local authority. Every practitioner working with a child has a responsibility to inform their CME contact if they know or suspect that a child is not receiving education. To help local agencies and professionals find children who are missing education and identify those at risk of going missing in education, guidance was issued in July 2004."

Section 157 places a duty on local authorities in relation to their education functions, the governing bodies of maintained schools and governing bodies of further education institutions (which includes sixth form colleges); to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students under 18 years of age attending further education institutions. The same duty applies to independent schools (which includes academies/free schools) by the regulations made under 157 of this act.

Amendments to the above legislation were made in July 2016 and came into force as of September 2016.

## DfE Guidance regarding Children Missing Education was updated in September 2016.

- DfE (2016) Children Missing Education DfE (2021) School Admissions Code
- Derbyshire County Council Children Missing Education Policy

This policy operates in conjunction with the following School policies:

- Repton Prep Safeguarding and Child Protection policy
- Admissions Policy
- Attendance and Absence Policy

## 2 Categories of Missing from Education

All children of compulsory school age, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs and disabilities they may have. 'Children Missing Education' (CME) are:

- those children who become missing from education and their whereabouts are unknown,
- those not registered at a school and are not receiving a suitable education otherwise (i.e. Elective Home Education or alternative provision),
- children on part-time timetables or those who cease to attend the school where they are a registered pupil.

These children can be at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation and in later life becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training). A child missing from education is a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll and who is not receiving a suitable education otherwise.

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Children missing from education fall into 2 broad categories:

- A) CME WASP (Without a school place) those whose whereabouts and circumstances are known to the local authority but who have, for whatever reason, been out of education for 4 school weeks or more.
- B) CME Missing those who are 'lost' children who have apparently disappeared, usually with their families, and neither the School or the local authority knows neither where they are, nor anything of their circumstances.

This policy aims to cover the second of these two categories: missing and unexplained absence from school.

There are certain vulnerable groups who are more likely than others to become children missing education. They are as follows:

- young people who have committed offences
- children living in domestic abuse refuges
- children of homeless families perhaps living in temporary accommodation
- young runaways
- children with long-term medical or emotional problems
- looked after children
- children with a Gypsy/Roma/Traveller background
- young carers
- children from transient families
- teenage mothers
- children who are permanently excluded from school
- migrant children whether in families seeking asylum or economic migrants
- children moving out of independent schools/academies/free schools
- children whose parent(s) are in the Armed Forces

## 2.1 Children who are vulnerable to harm whilst missing from education

Some children are more vulnerable to going missing from education and consequently may be at risk from harm whilst out of school because of their circumstances, and staff should be aware of the following:

• Children who are at risk of harm may be kept from school in order to cover up abuse or may not be attending school due to neglect. If a child is missing school and there are concerns about their safety or welfare, staff must follow child protection procedures and make a referral to Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP) as appropriate. Staff can seek advice from the Starting Point team on a "no names" basis if they are unsure about what action to take.

- Children from overseas may have been trafficked into the UK for the purposes of exploitation and modern slavery, for example for domestic servitude, forced labour or benefit fraud. In these cases, the child will be enrolled at the school for a short time before disappearing, having been moved on for exploitation. Derbyshire schools and Derbyshire Schools Admissions team should be aware of any adult who is seeking a school place for a child for whom they are not a close relative. For further guidance, please see the Derbyshire guidance on safeguarding trafficked children.
- Schools should also be aware that young girls may be taken out of school for the purposes of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or forced marriage. Schools should be vigilant to families taking extended holidays abroad, or failing to return from holiday, especially where an older sibling is thought to have experienced FGM or forced marriage. For further details, please see government guidance available on the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (DDSCP) website.
- Young people who regularly miss school are vulnerable to extra-familial harm and exploitation. Pupil absence may also be an indicator that a young person is already at risk or being exploited. Schools should be aware of young people who regularly do not attend and also those who go missing from school during the course of the school day. Schools should also be vigilant to exploiters targeting schools and collate and report any evidence of young people getting into cars with older teens or unknown adults. For further information, please see the DDSCP guidance on CSE and modern slavery and trafficking.
- Children may not be attending school because they have run away from home or care and may be at risk whilst away. It is important that schools are aware of pupils who may have run away, particularly children who may have run away from home but not been reported missing by parents. For further information on the role of schools, children's centres and education staff, please see the DDSCP missing children protocol.
- Some children may be taken out of school because parents wish to home educate. Parents have a right to home educate but where schools have concerns about the safety and welfare of a child who is about to be removed for home schooling, a referral should be made to the Derbyshire Elective Home Education team to ensure contact is made with the family.
- Although in many schools it is difficult for pupils to leave the school building during the school day, schools need to be aware of instances where pupils are regularly absenting themselves from schooling during this time and take appropriate action to monitor post-registration truancy. Cases should be discussed with a key member of staff in school such as the Deputy Head Pastoral and Boarding, Head of Year or DSL/DDSL, and the Head should be kept updated. An action plan put in place to ensure that staff report any absence and these are followed up by an agreed lead professional.

## 2.2 Risk Assessment

When assessing risk, the school should consider the following:

- Is the child known to Derbyshire CME or elsewhere?
- Is the child looked after or looked after previously?
- Is the child currently subject to a child protection plan or a child protection investigation?
- If not, does the school have any current concerns about the child?
- Is the child known to DDSCP as a child in need?

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- Have there been previous concerns or previous involvement with DDSCP or elsewhere?
- Is the child known to the Early Help service?
- Is this a mobile family?
- Is there a history of poor attendance?
- Have parents previously been subject to proceedings in relation to attendance?
- Are there any immigration issues?
- Is the child vulnerable because of disability or mental and emotional wellbeing?
- Is the child at risk of contact with concerning adults, including contact online?
- Has the child been known to associate with adults who pose a risk to children?
- Is the child at risk of CSE? (A separate CSE risk assessment should be carried out).
- Is the child at risk due to FGM, forced marriage or abduction and consequently at risk of being removed from the UK?
- Is the child at risk of extra familial harm and/or exploitation?
- Is the child a young carer?
- Is there a history of domestic abuse and violence in the family?
- Is there a history of parental mental ill health or substance misuse?
- Is the fact that the child is missing unusual?
- Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk?
- Is the child in the process of being assessed for special education needs/Education Health and Care plan?
- Is there an indication that the child may be subject to radicalisation or extremism?
- Is there a history of disruption to education such as multiple fixed term or permanent exclusions, frequent changes of school for the child or a sibling or a history of concerns about the child's behaviour at school?

## 3 Reporting unexplained absences from school

Repton Prep staff are responsible for being alert to children going missing, particularly on repeat occasions, missed appointments or unusual school attendance as this may help identify the risk of abuse, neglect (including sexual exploitation) and help to prevent the risks of going missing in the future.

Repton Prep staff are responsible for being aware of the school's procedure for managing unauthorised absence and children missing from education. They should use their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated to the DSL/DDSL.

Repton Prep holds more than one emergency contact number for all pupils so additional options are available when trying to make contact with an adult when a child goes missing in education.

In order to monitor children who fall into this category the School will:

- Record daily attendance all unexplained or unauthorised absences are followed up
- Monitor school attendance registers to identify any trends in absence
- Contact parent/guardian/carer, if no explanation is given as to absence
- Request a doctor's note for any periods of prolonged illness, or frequent absence requests
- Request school records from previous school (if applicable)

- The school will inform the Child Missing Education (CME) Team at Derbyshire County Council of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more
- Likewise the school will report after five days to Derbyshire CC if a child leaves the school with no forwarding school (or with no forwarding address)
- Likewise the school will report after one day to Derbyshire CC a child in receipt of a Child Protection Plan who has unexplained absence.

## 3.1 Removing a child from the admissions register

The school shall also inform the CME Team at Derbyshire CC of any pupil whose name is about to be removed from the school's admission register at non-standard transition points, under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the statutory 2016 DfE guidance *Children Missing Education*. At Repton Prep our non-standard transition points are any national curriculum years other than Year 2 (end of Pre-Prep) and Year 8 (Prep).

Further details can be found in Appendix B - Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register.

## 3.2 Children for whom there are Child Protection or other Serious Welfare Concerns

Repton Prep's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will immediately contact the Children's Services through starting point and/or the Police if any of the below apply to a child who may become missing:

- has a Child Protection Plan
- is subject to serious concerns about their health, safety or welfare
- is living in a family where there are concerns about domestic abuse, substance abuse, mental health problems or learning difficulties
- may be in contact with a person who poses a risk of harm to children and young people
- may be at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation
- is subject to a Care Order
- is looked after by the local authority
- may be the victim of, or involved in, a crime
- may be taken out of the country illegally (e.g. abducted)
- may be taken out of the country for an illegal act (e.g. forced marriage, female genital mutilation, child trafficking)
- is privately fostered

A subsequent referral should be made to the CME Coordinator on the same day. The CME Coordinator will check that a referral has been made and if not should alert the relevant agency.

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## 3.3 Notifying the CME team

Notification of Children Missing Education must be made to the CME Team or any issues relating to a child missing from education can be discussed on 01629 535 741; <u>CS.CMECoordinators@derbyshire.gov.uk</u>.

Further details can be found in Appendix A: Child Missing from Education (CME) School Flowchart.

This will assist the local authority to:

- fulfil its duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing from education
- follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse, neglect, or radicalisation.

## 4 Tracking and Monitoring

- **4.1** Guidance was introduced by the DfE, as of September 2016, to ensure Local Authorities and schools make procedures even more robust to prevent children becoming 'missing'.
- **4.2** Derbyshire County Council has effective tracking and enquiry systems in place and an appointed named person (CME Co-ordinator) to whom schools, other agencies and the public can make referrals regarding children who they believe are missing. Schools should refer children by day 11 at the latest and earlier if there are concerns identified.
- **4.3** In the case of secondary schools including academies, independent schools and free schools, notification must be given to the local authority prior to removing a child from school roll either by 'phone or by sending a leaver form securely to the CME team.
- **4.4** There are protocols for cross-checking and sharing data between local authority services and joint working arrangements are in place with services such as Children Services, Housing, Health, Police, Youth Offending Team, Probation and other Local Authorities.
- **4.5** The CME Co-ordinator can also access information through the CME database (Synergy) regarding children where a destination school is not known and take appropriate action.

## 5 The Role of Access and Inclusion Team

The Access and Inclusion Team oversee Derbyshire's vulnerable groups (in respect of access to education) by collating data on children without a school place, children who have been out of education for more than 12 weeks and children on part-time timetables. They work closely with the CME team to ensure appropriate support is given or that children return to school in a timely manner. The CME leadership team have oversight in relation to strategy and operational practice.

The duties and responsibilities of these teams include:

• Tracking CME through a dedicated CME coordinator

- Ensuring all notifications of CME are recorded correctly on the relevant databases
- Investigate relevant databases e.g. S2S, Lost Pupil database
- Coordinating casework in relation to investigating CME including working closely with relevant services and agencies to determine appropriate provision for the child
- Ensuring admissions into school through the admissions process and the authority's Fair Access Protocol where required
- Reviewing and monitoring cases held until re-engagement in education is successfully secured through the Education Planning Group Pupils Missing out on Education
- Providing relevant reports for the performance groups and relevant boards, including the Service Directors' CME "Line of Sight" meetings.
- Hold regular CME meetings to review complex and urgent cases
- Raise awareness of the CME Policy and practice including training events for schools, school governors and partner organisation.

## 6 **Procedures for Dealing with Different Scenarios**

The following scenarios have been taken from the Derbyshire County Council document: *Guidance for head teachers and business managers where children are at risk of missing education:* 

## 6.1 New pupils who do not arrive as planned

If new pupils do not arrive, please follow up as soon as possible. Do not assume they will have gone elsewhere or remained at their previous school. If a child is expected to start at Repton Prep and they do not arrive you must inform Derbyshire CC within 5 days (or immediately if any safeguarding concerns) evidencing efforts to engage.

Pupils must be put on roll on the agreed start date. Where a child does not arrive on the agreed start date, the new school should use existing internal absence procedures.

If an application is made to transfer schools during the year (outside of the normal admissions process), the leaving school should keep the child on school roll up until the starting date agreed with the new school.

## 6.2 Pupil is on roll but not attending

The School should attempt to contact the parent/carers on the first day of absence, where there is no prior explanation for the absence. Follow your internal school attendance procedures.

Days 0-10, the School should continue to make efforts to engage the family; recording their contact: telephone conversations, texts, e-mails, letters, home visits. Liaising with professionals who may be involved. School should consider what action to take if attendance is unauthorised.

## 6.3 Whereabouts confirmed to be known but not attending education or engaging with School

Pupil and family meet the threshold for Early Help. Absence meets the threshold for enforcement action as outlined in the Derbyshire Code of Conduct. Make a referral to Multi Agency Team via Starting Point evidencing what action has been taken.

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DO NOT remove from roll, until advised.

# 6.4 Whereabouts unknown - evidencing reasonable efforts to locate/make contact with the family

SR1a Referral is made to CME no later than day 10 when there is no explanation for absence and checks have been completed by the School (as per 'Child is on roll but not attending' guidance above).

For details of how to refer see contact information on Derbyshire Schools Net. Please clearly state any safeguarding concerns you may have.

DO NOT remove from your roll until CME advise. They will complete initial checks and confirm when they can be removed from roll.

## 6.5 Pupil leaving Repton Prep to attend another school

School must request and record details of:

- New Family Address
- Destination School Details
- Confirmation they have started at the Destination School

You must contact the new school and agree a start date. The leaving school should keep the pupil on school roll up until the starting date agreed with the new school. The pupil must be put on roll at the new School on the agreed start date. Where the child does not arrive on the agreed start date, the new school should use existing absence procedures.

You cannot remove from roll without all 3 pieces of information. If you do not receive the above, a SR1a referral should be made to CME.

## 6.6 Family indicate they are returning home for family, cultural or health reasons

School need to consider the circumstances of the absence in deciding which code to use. Where schools support or allow such absences, a return date should be agreed. Parent should be informed that if the family do not return on the agreed date, attendance procedures will be followed.

## 6.7 Pupil is permanently excluded from Repton Prep

LA Inclusion Team to be contacted by phone on the day of exclusion. The LA will respond and continue to work with you through the process.

DO NOT remove from your roll, until advised.

## 6.8 Missing school for extended periods due to ill health

If a child has been out of school for over 15 days due to illness/mental health without supporting evidence, consideration of a referral being sent to the CME team should be given.

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## 7 Contact Details:

Any concerns about children missing education should be referred to:

Email for all <u>cs.cmecoordinators@derbyshire.gov.uk</u>

For advice:

Claire Keating - Children Missing from Education Team Manager Tel: 01629 538400 Email Claire.Keating@derbyshire.gov.uk

Further contact numbers for Derbyshire County Council can be found in Appendix C.

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#### Appendix A



#### REPTON PREP

Appendix B - Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register

Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations 2006

Reg 8(1)(a)	Where a pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.		
Reg 8(1)(b)	Except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that he is registered as a pupil at another school		
Reg 8(1)(c)	Where a pupil is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion.		
Reg 8(1)(d)	In a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at the school		
Reg 8(1)(e)	Except in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered		
Reg 8(1)(f)	<ul> <li>In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that –</li> <li>(i) The pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted;</li> <li>(ii) The proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and</li> <li>(iii) The proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.</li> </ul>		
Reg 8(1)(g)	That he is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age		
Reg 8(1)(h)	That he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and –		
	<ul> <li>(i) At no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2);</li> </ul>		

	I		
	<ul> <li>(ii) The proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and</li> <li>(iii) The proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is</li> </ul>		
Reg 8(1)(i)	That he is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court of the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.		
Reg 8(1)(j)	That the pupil has died		
Reg 8(1)(k)	That the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and –		
	<ul> <li>(i) The relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school; or</li> <li>(ii) The pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form.</li> </ul>		
Reg 8(1)(I)	In the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or city college for the technology of arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school		
Reg 8(1)(m)	That he has been permanently excluded from the school		
Reg 8(1)(n)	Where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception or high class at the school		
Reg 8(1)(o)	Where –		
	<ul> <li>(i) The pupil is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy</li> <li>(ii) Charges for board and lodging are paid by the parent of the pupil; and</li> <li>(iii) Those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end</li> </ul>		
	of the school term to which they relate.		

## Appendix C – Useful Contacts at Derbyshire County Council

#### We all have a responsibility for a child's attendance! <u>Do not</u> assume that somebody else will be dealing with it, speak to a Service to check!

	hild protection			
For all immediate concerns regarding the safety and welfare of the child:				
Starting Point	01629 533190			
Professionals Advice Line	01629 535353			
Descuents for Compart	StartingPoint@derbyshire.gov.uk			
Requests for Support	www.derbyshire.gov.uk/startingpoint			
Level Authority Declarated Officer (LADO)	Godkin House, Park Road, Ripley, Derbyshire, DE5 3EF			
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	01629 533 190			
Send LADO Referral Forms to	Professional.Allegations@derbyshire.gov.uk			
Out of Hours – Call Derbyshire	01629 532 600			
Police	101			
All information on keeping Children Safe in Education in Derbyshire, including Contact Details for the Child Protection Manager Schools to be found at Derbyshire Schools Net 01629 531 933				
Safeguarding Children Training	Safeguarding.Training@derbyshire.gov.uk			
Derbyshire SchoolsNet	https://schoolsnet.derbyshire.gov.uk/home.aspx			
Children Missing Education (CME)	01629 535 741 CS.CMECoordinators@derbyshire.gov.uk			
Derbyshire Virtual School	01629 538 028			
(Children in Care)	VirtualSchool@derbyshire.gov.uk			
(				
Exclusions	01629 535 802			
Exclusions	CS.InclusionTeam@derbyshire.gov.uk			
	CAMHS			
North Derbyshire – Urgent Care	07901 330724			
Derby City & South Derbyshire	030 123 3124			
Elective Home Education (EHE)	01629 532 843 CS.EHE@derbyshire.gov.uk			
	01629 535 295			
Children's Services Out of School Tuition	OOST@derbyshire.gov.uk			
(OOST)				
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities				
Service (SEND) including EHCP process	SEN.Admin@derbyshire.gov.uk			
Fair Access	01629 535 802			
	CS.InclusionTeam@derbyshire.gov.uk			
	01629 537 479			
School Admissions and Transport	Admissions.Transport@derbyshire.gov.uk			
Educational Development (Obilities in	01629 533 815			
Educational Psychology (Children's	CS.EducationalPsychology@derbyshire.gov.uk			
Services)				
	01629 532 830			
Register/Registration Queries	EWS.HQ@derbyshire.gov.uk			

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