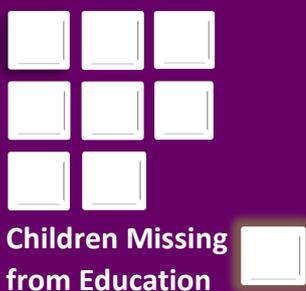




# Children Missing from Education Guide 2023/24

A guide to children missing from  
education for schools and settings



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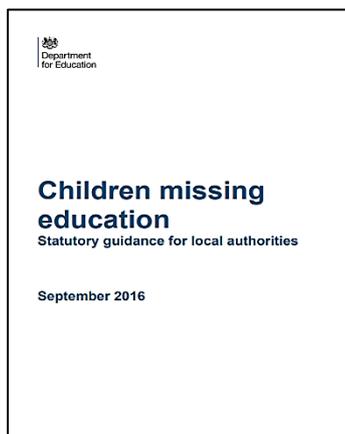
## Introduction

All children, 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 they may have.

Children Missing Education (CME) 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.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Local authorities should focus their resources effectively in intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

# Statutory Guidance



- ✓ [Pupil Registration Regulations](#) 2006
- ✓ [Children Missing Education](#) - Statutory guidance for local authorities – September 2016
- ✓ [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges



All schools, including academies and independent schools, **must notify their Local Authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name** from the school admissions register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the Pupil Registration Regulations.



All schools must **notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register** at a non-standard transition point.



Schools must make **reasonable enquiries** to establish the whereabouts of the child, **jointly with the local authority**, before deleting the pupil's name from the register.

## Definition of CME

In addition to the [CME statutory guidance](#), in [recent guidance](#) supporting CME and elective home education termly DfE statistical returns, additional clarification was provided on which children are to be considered CME for statistical purposes via termly LA returns.

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.

### CME does not include children who:

- are older or younger than compulsory school age,
- are receiving suitable EHE, or the local authority has not had an opportunity to assess whether they are receiving suitable EHE,
- are registered at a school, even if they are persistently or severely absent,
- the local authority have confirmed the child / family are no longer resident in the local area (if there is evidence to suggest the child has moved to a different local authority area or country, contact should be made with the named person in the new authority/country using secure communication methods. The local authority should maintain a record of the child's details until they are located or attain school leaving age.).

### CME does include children of compulsory school age who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education elsewhere, even if these children:

- are in the process of applying for a school place, even children within the first 15 days of the application process,
- have been offered a school place for a future date but have not yet started,
- are receiving EHE, if this education is unsuitable,
- have been recorded as CME for an extended period: for example, where their whereabouts is unclear or unknown (the local authority should maintain a record of the child's details until they are located or attain school leaving age).

An EHE child whose education is deemed unsuitable should no longer be classified as an EHE child and should be classified as CME. The DfE would expect that a local authority classify a child as CME once they have deemed that the child is not receiving suitable education (the point at which a notice of intention to serve a school attendance order has been issued and the matter continues to be unresolved).

## General Information

### Unauthorised absence from school

School/Academy to follow school non-attendance procedures, information on the School's Portal. Advice may be sought from the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Team via the allocated Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO).

### Safeguarding

Every child should be accounted for, their whereabouts known, or a referral made to the appropriate service. Where there are specific safeguarding concerns, with children believed to be at risk of actual harm, they should be referred to First Contact and/or the Police.

### Guidance for removing a child from the school roll

**PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE A CHILD FROM YOUR ROLL UNLESS YOU HAVE RECORDED AND SHARED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION WITH THE LA:**

- The full name of the pupil,
- The full name and address of the parent/carer with whom the pupil resides,
- Contact details for the parent/carer.

The pupil's future address and destination school, if applicable, the grounds in regulation 8 of the Pupil Registration Regulations under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register.

**All other deletions potentially breach statutory guidance**

### Own admission authorities

Academies and Trusts which are their own admission authorities must inform the School Admissions team of any enquiry/application and outcome. This is necessary to identify any vulnerable child requiring a place and avoid a child being out of education for an undue length of time [schooladmissions@durham.gov.uk](mailto:schooladmissions@durham.gov.uk)

Admissions must be informed within five days of a pupil's name being added to the admission register.

### Independent schools

The same procedures should be followed as those in Academies.

## Specific scenarios

### School allocation intake and in-year transfers

If allocated children do not arrive, this must be followed up as soon as possible with attempts to contact the parent/carer. It should not be assumed that they have gone elsewhere or remained at the previous school/academy. Best practice is for school to attempt to engage with parent/carer via telephone, text, email, letter, home visit, etc.

If school discover the place is no longer required (for example because the child has been admitted elsewhere, parent has decided to educate at home, etc) admissions or CME must be informed so their record can be updated (and registered EHE if applicable).

Where attempts to contact parent or locate the child through other enquiries are unsuccessful, a CME referral can be made.

If an application for in-year transfer has been made, the leaving school should keep the pupil on roll until the start date agreed with the new school. If the transfer is the result of a house move and the pupil no longer lives within a reasonable distance of the leaving school, the school can make a CME referral and the LA may agree to removal from roll after confirming their whereabouts and adding them to the CME register to track.

Where a start date is agreed with parent/carer or Admissions, the pupil must be added to the admission register on the agreed date. If the pupil does not arrive on that date, the school should commence non-attendance procedures.

### Child is on roll but not attending

If the child/family is still resident at the known address, they are not within the Children Missing from Education remit and school/academy should follow non-attendance procedures.

### Transfer – child has started at another school

School to inform the LA via a Leavers Report or by emailing:

[missingeducation@durham.gov.uk](mailto:missingeducation@durham.gov.uk) that the pupil is being removed from roll.

Admission must be confirmed by the destination school.

### **Whereabouts known after moving but not yet on roll at another school/academy**

There are many reasons a pupil may not be admitted immediately after moving. For example, unexpected move due to DV, no places available in local schools, awaiting Fair Access Panel or appeal, and so on. If the pupil is still living within a reasonable distance of the previous school, they are expected to continue to attend until the transfer is complete and cannot be removed from roll. If the pupil's new address is not within reasonable distance, a CME referral can be completed. When confirmed by the destination local authority that a school application is in process, CME can advise school to remove from roll and the pupil will be tracked by CME until admission. Do not remove from roll until advised.

### **Whereabouts unknown after reasonable efforts to locate/make contact with family**

Examples of reasonable enquiries are listed in Keeping Children Safe in Education Annex A. CME referral can be made as soon as school enquiries are completed. It must be established that the pupil is no longer at the known address (it is a non-attendance issue if they are still there) CME will make enquiries with local and national services and agencies. If the pupil cannot be traced, school can remove from roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. Do not remove from roll until advised.

### **Parents/Carers indicate they wish to Home Educate (Elective Home Education)**

School must notify the LA immediately when a parent requests removal of their child to be educated at home by completing the EHE data sheet and include a copy of the parent's written notification of EHE. Further information on the process is available in EHE guidance.

### **Child moving out of the country**

School must request and record details of:

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

Where possible school should make every effort to confirm child's attendance at their new school abroad.

### **Family indicate they are going abroad for family, cultural or health reasons**

School/Academy 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, they risk the child being removed from roll and having to reapply if/when they do return.

If School/Academy consider the length of the proposed absence is unreasonable, the pupil may be removed from roll when they leave the UK. Parents should be informed in writing and it should be made clear they are expected to arrange suitable education in the destination country.

All such absences, if remaining on roll, would be coded as holiday or other authorised absence, depending on the circumstances. Educated off-site is not appropriate as school are unable to fulfil their safeguarding responsibility if the pupil is not being seen.

**School/Academy discovers a child of statutory school age is not in a school or alternative education provision (e.g. sibling of a pupil who is on their roll)**

Direct referral to CME providing:

- Child's Name
- Date of Birth
- Details and contact details of parent/carers
- Family's Address
- Any known circumstances

**Child not in receipt of full classroom-based education (25hrs)**

Student should be included in the Pupils Missing Out on Education (PMOOE) return to the LA.

**Child Permanently Excluded**

LA Inclusion Team to be contacted by phone on the day of exclusion. The LA will respond and continue to work with school through the process. Do not remove from your roll, until advised.

**Children Looked After (CLA)**

If a CLA child is moving placement and no longer attending, school should liaise with the Virtual School and the child's Social Worker. Do not remove from roll, until advised.

### **Families travelling in connection with trade, business or occupation**

If a traveller family indicate they are to travel for work purposes, school / academy should request details of where they will be travelling and when they aim to return. If they do not return within 10 days of the expected return date please follow attendance procedures and consider making a referral to CME. Do not remove from roll, until advised.

### **Equalities Team / English as an Additional Language**

Support is available for families for whom English is not their first language. A family may be experiencing difficulty applying for a school or communicating with the school or the child may require support with integration [eal@durham.gov.uk](mailto:eal@durham.gov.uk)

## Notify the LA of a CME

Please use the [notification form](#) available on the schools portal to notify the LA of a CME. This should be emailed to the missing education email address below. Please ensure that you provide as much information as you can about the steps that have already taken to trace the family under 'CME actions' on the form. The actions are the key actions recommended in the [CME statutory guidance](#), but the list of actions is not exhaustive.

Email: [missingeducation@durham.gov.uk](mailto:missingeducation@durham.gov.uk)

Telephone: 03000 265902

It is extremely important that the **LA is notified following school checks** a timely way to ensure that LA enquiries can also be undertaken in a timely way given the requirement for 'joint' reasonable enquiry. It is important to ensure children are receiving an efficient, suitable full time education as soon as possible and to ensure their **safety and wellbeing**.

## School's Portal

Durham school's portal has a '[Behaviour, Attendance and Vulnerable Groups](#)' section which houses key resources and contact information.

The [Vulnerable Groups](#) page provides links for schools and settings to notify the LA of a child missing from education. Wider links are also available connected to children missing from education.

