Durham Trinity School & Sports College

Nurture, Believe, Thrive, Succeed

# Children Missing From Education Policy (CME)
# September 2026

**This policy follows the procedures laid out in the DCC Children Missing from Education Guide 2023/24 'A guide to children missing from education for schools and settings'**

**Rationale**

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed a statutory duty on all LAs to make arrangements to identify children missing from education in their area.

**Durham County Council is committed to ensuring that:**

• all pupils who go missing or who are lost from schools in County Durham and move to other areas are located as soon as possible.

• It supports other LAs to locate their own missing pupils should such pupils move to County Durham.

**Statutory Guidance**

Children Missing Education - Statutory guidance for local authorities – September 2016

Keeping Children Safe in Education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – September 2026

Pupil Registration Regulations - 2006

Durham Trinity School & Sports College will NOT remove a child from roll unless we have recorded and shared the following information with the local authority:

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

# 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 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 considers 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

## Procedures to safeguard missing children

**1.** If there are specific safeguarding concerns, Durham Trinity School & Sports College must contact the family's dedicated social worker or the First Contact Service on 03000 267979. If a child may be in immediate danger phone 999. The police can also be contacted on 101 if there is an urgent child welfare concern. Also contact Jane Lewin on 03000 265826 or jane.lewin@durham.gov.uk

**2.** It is important to establish whether or not the child/family is still resident at the known address. Where the whereabouts of the family remain unclear, Durham Trinity School & Sports College will call the First Contact Service on 03000 267979 and inform of Child Missing from Education.

**3.** School should share any known risks which may impact on visiting the home and steps already taken to trace the child. FCS will triage referral to One Point Duty Officers on an Early Help Assessment. School should detail:

- efforts made to trace the family to date
- whether there are any known risks which may impact on visiting the home

The case will be allocated to a member of the One Point service who will make up to three visits to the family home (see flowchart in appendix 1).

**4.** If the pupil is known to be of Gypsy, Roma or Traveller ethnicity, school can contact the GRT Team on 03000 267800 who will carry out further checks within the community.

**5.** If the family are still resident (or they have moved to another address within reasonable travelling distance of the school) and the child has not attended school for 5 or more days, a referral should be made to Attendance Improvement Officers to consider whether enforcement action is required.

**6.** If the child is located out of the area, he/she should remain on the school roll until admission to another school is confirmed, at which time the child's Common Transfer File (CTF) should be forwarded to that school.

**7.** If the child is not found, One Point officer will feed this back to the school who will then inform the local authority CME Officer Fiona Rutherford on 03000 265013 or fiona.rutherford@durham.gov.uk (see Appendix 2 for the information required in this referral). If the GRT team cannot trace a child, this should be fed back to the CME officer as above.

**8.** After four school weeks (20 school days), should efforts to trace the child be unsuccessful, the school should remove the pupil's name from the roll and create a 'lost' Common Transfer File (CTF). This is a statutory requirement (The Education (Pupil Information)(England) Regulations 2000). The CTF should be uploaded onto the DfE s2s secure site where it will be held in the Lost Pupil Database.

**9.** If enquiries through national CME contacts are unsuccessful, the child's name will be entered on the CME Register.

**10.** When removing a child from roll, schools should ensure information on the pupil's destination is entered on the Schools MIS system. Where the destination of the child is unknown at the time of leaving but the school receive subsequent information as to the child's whereabouts, the school should update the system with this new information. The CME register held centrally in the School Places and Admissions Office is reviewed on a regular basis. Updating the system with new information will greatly reduce unnecessary phone calls to schools from the officers trying to track pupils.

**11.** There is a separate CTF procedure to be followed in the case of pupils who leave a County Durham school to go to a base where the destination is known, but the receiving school is unable to accept a CTF (for example, leaving to go to an independent school, a school outside of England or Wales, or to be electively home educated). In this case, once the school has been formally notified by the parent/ carer of their intentions they should remove the pupil's name from the school roll and send the CTF to the s2s database, thereby sending the CTF to the database of pupils who have moved out of the maintained system.

**12.** Should a pupil leave a County Durham school in order to be home educated, on receiving written confirmation of the parents' intentions, Durham Trinity School & Sports College should send a copy of this to ElectiveHomeEducation@durham.gov.uk . The pupil can then be removed from the school roll.

**Pupils being admitted to a County Durham School**

**13.** When a pupil is added to the admission register, Durham Trinity School & Sports College should contact the pupil's previous school and request a Common Transfer File (CTF**)**

**14.** It is important to inform Admissions if the child's previous school should not be notified of the destination school (e.g. when a family is escaping domestic violence).

**Management Information Systems**

Durham Trinity School & Sports College provides information on admissions and leavers electronically via the Arbor system.

**Headteacher:** Mrs R Grimwood
**Chair of Governors:** Mrs M Mulholland
**Ratified by Governors: 04.11.26**

**Date***:* September 2026
**Date for review:** September 2028

APPENDIX 1

# ATTENDANCE FACT SHEET

## CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCAION

**Purpose**: Children missing from education is a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues and the appropriate processes must be followed and reported to the Local Authority.
**Applies to:** Children Missing from Education of compulsory school age.

There are several reasons why a pupil may miss education. This process is for those who are:

- Going to be taken off roll under one of the grounds in the admissions and deletions guidance, including Elective Home Education.
- Missing from education (not irregular school attendance) and their whereabouts unknown.

1. If the **pupil is leaving school** the school must follow the statutory processes for admissions and deletions before taking a pupil off roll – including the appropriate grounds for removal and destinations.
    a. If a young person is transferring to another school, the current school must speak to the new school to confirm the transfer, the start date and on the day of the transfer contact the school to check the young person has started. The pupil can then be transferred and taken off role. The statutory return is then completed.
2. If a pupil is leaving school due to Elective Home Education, then the appropriate notification needs to be made to the Elective Home Education team and a statutory return completed. (see EHE Fact Sheet)
3. **If a pupil registered at school is not attending, contact cannot be made with the parent or pupil and the pupil's whereabouts are unknown then school 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.**

**This is a potential safeguarding issue, and an investigation must be carried out to attempt to locate the pupil.**

- Contact the previous school to make enquiries about the possible reason for absence – if the pupil is new to your school – check contact details and if appropriate, request them to help to contact the family.
- Check if there are siblings at other schools and contact those schools as part of the investigation to locate the pupil.
- If social care is involved, inform the social worker to ask for support to contact the family.
- If there continues to be no contact and school is not aware of any reason why the pupil is missing **a home visit must be made**.
- If the family / young person is not at the address, has moved, the house is empty the **LA needs to be notified of a Child Missing from Education.**
- The Local authority will make local and national enquires. **Do not remove the pupil from roll until advised.**

Notify the Local Authority through the Attendance Improvement portal. There is also a local guide for further information.



APPENDIX 2

# Children Missing from Education (CME)

School identifies possible missing pupil.

**Are there safeguarding concerns?**

No

Yes

Contact the family's designated social worker. If your concern needs immediate action, **call the First Contact Service on 03000 267979 or dial 101** if there is **an urgent child welfare or safeguarding concern.**

Also contact school's Leadership Advisor for more advice.

**School commences checks:** contact emergency numbers, conduct home visits (resources permitting). Establish if family have moved away.

Pupil cannot be removed from school roll until they are located in another school or they have been missing for 20 school days and they cannot be located.

Pupil located and has transferred schools.

**No home visits** able to be carried out and family not located.

**Home visits carried out** and family still not located.

**School** to inform Fiona Rutherford (CME Officer) 03000 265013 **if pupil cannot be located,** by sending a CME notification form to: **missingeducation@durham.gov.uk**

Remove pupil from school roll. Upload CTF using the secure s2s site.

Is the pupil's ethnicity Gypsy, Roma or Traveller?

Yes

Contact the Equalities & Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Education Team on 03000 267800 who will carry out further checks.

Information is passed to CME Officer. National checks are undertaken.

School creates CTF using:

**9.** The establishment number of the new school as destination code.

**10.** Seven "M"s (MMMMMMM) as destination code for a child moving to a school outside England and Wales, to a Private School or into Elective Home Education.

No

Where the whereabouts of the family remain unclear, school **to call the First Contact Service on 03000 267979** and inform of a **Child Missing from Education.**
School to share any known risks which may impact on visiting the home and steps already taken to trace the child. **First Contact Service will triage referral via early help triage worker.**

One Point Service allocate officer who will undertake up to 3 home visits within a 2 week period to try to locate child/young person. **Outcome to be discussed with school.**

CME Officer fails to locate child after 20 school days.

Inform school that pupil can be removed from roll.

School creates CTF using seven "X"s (XXXXXXX) as destination code.
File will be uploaded to the lost pupil database and retained.

Where there are 5 consecutive days or more of unauthorised absence school also make telephone referral to Attendance Improvement Officers (education) to consider if attendance enforcement action may be required.

**If located** and still at current address, OPS to inform school in order for school to follow up as non-attendance issue. School to complete Children's Services Referral if additional needs identified.

**If the child is subsequently located by the school, CME officer must be informed so that the case can be closed.**