

# Children Missing Education (CME) Policy

**August 2025**



This policy applies to all West Berkshire schools and Council Officers who come into contact with children of compulsory school age. Its purpose is to ensure the early identification of children missing education and those at risk of becoming CME.



**West Berkshire**  
C O U N C I L

## Children Missing Education (CME) Policy – August 2025

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### 1.Version Control

Date:	October 2024
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Owner:                     Melissa Perry, Principal Education Attendance  
Officer

Version	Date	Description
Version 1	July 2016	Policy originally produced in July 2017.
Version 2	January 2023	Complete review of policies in line with statutory guidance and Elective Home Education policy review to improve operational processes
Version 3	October 2024	Reviewed in line with Working together to improve school attendance August 2024
Version 4	August 2025	Reviewed and made concise

This policy applies to all West Berkshire schools and Council Officers who come into contact with children of compulsory school age. Its purpose is to ensure the early identification of children missing education and those at risk of becoming CME.

All relevant parties are expected to adhere to and cooperate fully with the procedures outlined in this policy to safeguard children's right to education and promote their welfare

For this guidance, a parent means:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

The term 'school' should be taken to mean educational settings where pupils are on roll.

The term "Children Missing from Education (CME)" refers to all children of compulsory school age who are neither on a school roll (CME1), not being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period (usually agreed as four weeks or more) (CME2).

CME are recognised as a vulnerable group of children and can go missing from education for a number of reasons, including (but not limited to):

- Failure to start appropriate provision and, therefore, never enter the education system.
- Failure to return to school following a fixed term exclusion.
- Withdrawal from school by parents.
- Failure to complete a transition between educational settings (e.g. being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to another local authority area).
- Those who have become caught in a variety of complex barriers to education including bullying, family crises such as eviction, homelessness, bereavement or being a young carer.
- Those who have ceased to attend due to long-term medical conditions or disabilities.
- Those at risk of sexual exploitation, including children who have been trafficked to, or within, the UK.
- Those at risk of criminal exploitation or radicalisation.
- Those at risk of 'honour' based violence including forced marriage.

## 2. Purpose and Scope

This policy outlines West Berkshire Council's statutory responsibilities for identifying, tracking, and supporting children missing education (CME), in line with the Education Act 1996 and DfE CME Guidance (August 2024). It applies to all children of compulsory school age not on a school roll or receiving suitable education otherwise.

West Berkshire Council fulfils its statutory duty by appointing an officer with responsibility for children missing education, the CME Officer. The CME Officer maintains a list of children known to be missing from education and takes appropriate actions, working with partners where necessary.

The most recent changes to the *Children Missing Education* (CME) policy in England were updated in August 2024. These updates align the CME guidance with the *Working Together to Improve Attendance* statutory guidance and the *School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*. Key adjustments include:

1. **Stronger Emphasis on School Attendance:** The updates prioritise identifying children missing education and improving school attendance to ensure early intervention. Schools and local authorities are required to collaborate more closely in tracking attendance and promptly addressing any issues.
2. **Data Monitoring Enhancements:** New regulations mandate local authorities to monitor and report CME cases more rigorously, ensuring accurate data collection on children who are missing from education or are at risk.
3. **Greater Multi-Agency Collaboration:** There is an increased focus on joint efforts between schools, social services, police, and health services to identify and support CME cases. This change is designed to streamline efforts across agencies and provide a more comprehensive safety net for vulnerable children.

These changes aim to enhance the capacity of local authorities and schools to respond to and prevent cases of children going missing from education, particularly through improved attendance management and collaborative working.

### **3. Legal and Policy Framework**

This policy is underpinned by:

- Education Act 1996 (Sections 7, 436A, 437)
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and 2016
- Children Act 2004
- DfE statutory guidance including Children Missing Education (2024)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

### **4. Definition and Risks**

Children Missing Education are those of compulsory school age not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education otherwise. CME are at increased risk of exploitation, neglect, and poor long-term outcomes. Early identification and multi-agency response are essential.

### **5.Reducing the risk of Children Missing Education**

West Berkshire Council has several processes and procedures aimed at reducing the risk of children going missing from education. These include:

- Fair Access Protocol
- Regular monitoring of school attendance and audit of school registers by schools and the Education Attendance Team
- Ongoing monitoring of school exclusions.
- Monitoring pupils' transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3.
- Monitoring of children on the Local Authority's EHE database.
- Monitoring Children in Care through Virtual School.
- Multi-agency meetings to discuss pupils where there are concerns.
- Links between the Education Attendance Team and the Gypsy, Roma and Traveler (GRT) community.
- Advice to schools (e.g. when a pupil's name can be removed from the school roll).
- Joint agency working with pupils at risk of Criminal Exploitation and/or Sexual Exploitation and radicalisation.

### **6. Identification and Referral**

CME may be identified through school absence, failure to transition, exclusion, withdrawal from roll, or referrals from professionals or the public. Schools must notify the local authority of pupils missing 10+ days or removed from roll outside standard



transitions. School referrals should be made using the CME Online Referral Form. [Children missing education \(CME\) Referral Form - West Berkshire Council](#)

For members of the public who are aware of children not in school, please refer by sending an email to [cme@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:cme@westberks.gov.uk).

For partner agencies, please refer using the CME Online referral form [Children missing education \(CME\) Referral Form - West Berkshire Council](#)

Agency	Contact
<b><i>If it is suspected that there is immediate danger/risk of harm to the child dial 999.</i></b>	
West Berkshire	Contact Advice & Assessment Service (CAAS)  01635 503090 <a href="mailto:child@westberks.gov.uk">child@westberks.gov.uk</a>
Emergency Duty Team (out of hours)	01344 351 999  <i>After 5pm or on weekends and bank holidays.</i>
Thames Valley Police	0845 8505 505 <a href="http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk">www.thamesvalley.police.uk</a>
NSPCC	0808 800 5000 <i>24 hour helpline</i>
Childline	0800 1111 <i>24 hour helpline</i>

## 7. Local Authority Duties

Children missing education are often among the most vulnerable in society. They may be at increased risk of harm, exploitation, and long-term disadvantage. Groups particularly at risk include:

- Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Children in Care (formally known as Looked After Children)
- Children known to Children's Social Care or Early Help
- Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities
- Children of new migrant families or asylum seekers

- Children involved with the Youth Justice System
- Children at risk of exploitation, trafficking, or radicalisation
- Children with long-term health conditions or disabilities
- Children experiencing family breakdown, homelessness, or domestic abuse

The impact of missing education can be profound. It is linked to poor academic outcomes, reduced life chances, increased risk of unemployment, mental health issues, and social isolation. CME can also be a key indicator of wider safeguarding concerns, including neglect and abuse.

Under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996, West Berkshire Council has a legal duty to 'make arrangements' to identify children of compulsory school age who are not receiving a suitable education. This includes:

- Maintaining a CME register and tracking all referrals
- Proactively monitoring data to identify those at risk or already missing
- Making reasonable enquiries to locate children whose whereabouts are unknown
- Coordinating multi-agency responses to assess risk and support re-engagement
- Issuing formal notices to parents where education is not evidenced
- Taking enforcement action where necessary, including School Attendance Orders or referrals to Children's Social Care

The CME Officer leads this work and chairs half-termly CME panel meetings to review cases, agree actions, and ensure that no child is left without access to education. The Council works closely with schools, health, social care, police, and other partners to fulfil its safeguarding responsibilities and uphold every child's right to an education.

## **8. School Responsibilities**

Schools must maintain accurate registers, monitor attendance, notify the LA of prolonged absence or roll removals, and generate Common Transfer Files (CTFs) when pupils leave. Schools must not remove pupils from roll without LA confirmation and in conjunction with Annex A (see appendix 3).

Schools play a critical statutory role in identifying and preventing children from becoming missing from education. They are often the first point of contact for children and families and are therefore well-placed to recognise early signs of disengagement or vulnerability. Schools must take proactive steps to ensure that all pupils are accounted for, supported, and safeguarded.

Before making a referral to the CME Officer, schools should exhaust all reasonable steps to locate the pupil and support re-engagement. These actions include:

- Monitoring attendance rigorously and identifying patterns of concern.
- Building strong, trusting relationships with pupils and families to encourage open communication.
- Ensuring all pupil records are accurate and up to date, including contact details and emergency contacts.
- Implementing robust first-day absence procedures and escalating concerns promptly.
- Having clear internal policies for managing attendance and CME concerns, aligned with statutory guidance.
- Conducting home visits where appropriate to establish the child's welfare and educational status.
- Ensuring that pupils are only removed from roll in accordance with the grounds set out in Annex A (Appendix 3).
- Communicating clearly with parents about attendance expectations, leave of absence procedures, and the consequences of unauthorised absence.
- Using a range of communication methods (letters, phone calls, texts, home visits) to engage families.
- Reporting safeguarding concerns immediately through the appropriate channels.

In addition to these preventative measures, schools have specific legal duties:

- **Notify the Local Authority** when a pupil is added to or removed from the admissions register at a non-standard transition point.
- **Submit a School Exit Form** (Appendix 4) and upload a **Common Transfer File (CTF)** via the school2school (s2s) system within 15 days of a pupil leaving.
- **Inform the Local Authority** of any pupil who fails to attend regularly or has missed 10 consecutive school days without permission.
- **Jointly make reasonable enquiries** with the Local Authority before removing a pupil from roll after 20 days of unauthorised absence or 10 days following an authorised absence, unless there is a valid reason such as illness.

Schools must not remove a pupil from roll until the CME Officer or Education Attendance Team has confirmed it is appropriate to do so. This ensures that no child is lost from the education system and that safeguarding responsibilities are upheld.



## **9. Safeguarding and Enforcement**

Children missing education may be at an increased risk of harm, exploitation, or neglect. Prolonged absence from education can be a key indicator of wider safeguarding concerns, including emotional abuse, neglect, or criminal and sexual exploitation. Educational neglect occurs when a parent or carer fails to ensure their child receives a suitable education, either by not enrolling them in school or by failing to provide adequate home education. West Berkshire Council has a statutory duty under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 and the Children Act 2004 to identify and respond to such risks. All CME cases are reviewed in line with the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership Threshold Criteria, and referrals to Children's Social Care are made where appropriate to protect the child's welfare.

The LA will make reasonable enquiries and may refer to Children's Social Care, issue a 15-day notice to satisfy, or use legal powers including School Attendance Orders or prosecution where appropriate.

## **10. Elective Home Education and NEET**

When a parent notifies a school of their intention to home educate, the school must inform West Berkshire Council's Elective Home Education (EHE) Officer immediately. Whilst there is no legal basis currently for not removing a pupil from roll at the time of notification, if there is any doubt from the school regarding education provision or safeguarding, then contact should be made with the EHE Officer for advice. The EHE Officer will make initial contact with the family, provide guidance, and request information about the educational provision. If the education is deemed suitable, the child will be monitored annually through visits or written reports or as requested if the need arises.

If the EHE Officer determines that the education is unsuitable or if the parent fails to provide sufficient evidence, a referral will be made to the Children Missing Education (CME) Officer. The CME Officer will issue a formal 15-day notice to the parent, requesting evidence that the child is receiving a suitable education. If the parent fails to respond or the education remains unsuitable, the local authority may initiate enforcement action, including issuing a School Attendance Order (SAO).

All EHE cases referred to CME are added to the CME register and discussed at half-termly CME panel meetings. The CME Officer will coordinate multi-agency responses, conduct home visits where necessary, and liaise with other local authorities if the child has moved. The child will remain on the CME register until they are confirmed to be in receipt of suitable education or reach the end of compulsory school age.

This process ensures that children who are electively home educated are safeguarded and that their right to a suitable education is upheld in line with Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 and the DfE's 2024 guidance.

The CME register is shared with the NEET team to support post-16 transitions and prevent disengagement.

## **11.Contacts**

If in any doubt or requesting advice and guidance please contact [cme@west.berks.gov.uk](mailto:cme@west.berks.gov.uk).

## **12. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually or in response to changes in legislation or guidance.

## Appendix 1 – CME Referral Form

[Children missing education \(CME\) Referral Form - West Berkshire Council](#)

OR



# CME/EHE/Pupil Exit Referral Form

## Referral Form

**Click here to select reason for completing this form**

For CME notifications and Pupil Exit notifications to [cme@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:cme@westberks.gov.uk)  
or for De registration to Elective Home Education notifications to [EHE@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:EHE@westberks.gov.uk)

Pupil Details			
Surname	Click or tap here to enter text		
Forename	Click or tap here to enter text		
Other Name(s)	Click or tap here to enter text		
Date of Birth (DD/MM/YYYY)	Enter date here	UPN	Enter text
Home Address	Address line 1		
	Address Line 2		
	Town		
	County		
	Postcode		
Gender	Select from dropdown		
Ethnicity	Click or tap here to enter text.		
Home Language	Click or tap here to enter text.		
Religion	Click or tap here to enter text.		
Primary Parent/Carer			
Name	Click or tap here to enter text.		

Tel Number	Click or tap here to enter text.
Email	Click or tap here to enter text.
<b>Other Parent/Carer</b>	
Name	Click or tap here to enter text.
Tel Number	Click or tap here to enter text.
Email	Click or tap here to enter text.

<b>School Details</b>			
Name of school			
Contact Name			
Contact Email			
<b>Education Details</b>			
National Curriculum Year	Enter here	SEN status	Select from options
Currently on roll	Choose an item.		
Reason for removal or deletion from school roll **(Appendix A Regulation 8 of the CME Policy)**	Click or tap here to enter text.		
Date last attended	Click here to enter a date.		
<b>New School (if applicable)</b>			
Name of school	Click or tap here to enter text.		
Contact details	Click or tap here to enter text.		
Start date	Click here to enter a date.		
<b>Attendance (Please attach registration certificate)</b>			
Current Attendance %	Click or tap here to enter text.		

Is this Child/Young Person Currently (Please tick all that apply)			
A child in care	<input type="checkbox"/>	Refugee/Asylum Seeker	<input type="checkbox"/>
Subject to CP or CIN plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	From GRT Family	<input type="checkbox"/>
In temporary accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Subject to Early Intervention	<input type="checkbox"/>
EAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	In receipt of Pupil Premium	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Current victim of bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other Agencies Currently Involved with the child/family (Please provide a contact name and email/telephone number for each agency involved)	
Social Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Education Psychology <input type="checkbox"/>
Education Welfare	<input type="checkbox"/> School Nurse/Health <input type="checkbox"/>
CAMHS	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Offending Team <input type="checkbox"/>
SEN Team	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="text" value="enter text"/>

Details for Other Involved Agencies		
Enter agency name	Contact Name	Contact email/Tel number enter text.
Enter agency name	Contact Name	Contact email/Tel number enter text.
Enter agency name	Contact Name	Contact email/Tel number enter text.
Enter agency name	Contact Name	Contact email/Tel number enter text.

Details of Part Time Timetable (Maximum 6 weeks) (if applicable)	
Start date	Click or tap to enter a date.
Hours/days per week	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date back on full timetable	Click or tap to enter a date.

Details of Siblings		
Sibling Name	Date of Birth	School Name

Click or tap here to enter text.	Select or type date	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Select or type date	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Select or type date	Click or tap here to enter text.
Click or tap here to enter text.	Select or type date	Click or tap here to enter text.

Action taken by school/referrer (Please include dates and details)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Telephone Call	Click or tap here to enter text
<input type="checkbox"/>	Letter/email	Click or tap here to enter text
<input type="checkbox"/>	Home visit	Click or tap here to enter text
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please give details)	Click or tap here to enter text

Please attach the following documents to support this request		
Academic information	Please select	Click or tap here to enter text
Registration certificates	Please select	Click or tap here to enter text
Pastoral reports	Please select	Click or tap here to enter text
Chronology of meetings held, and plans agreed	Please select	Click or tap here to enter text
Other (please state)	Click or tap here to enter text.	

Relevant Personal or Home Circumstances
-----------------------------------------



Please include details regarding parental involvement and family structure and any sensitive information that a worker should know before contacting or visiting the family.  
Click or tap here to enter text

Referrer Details			
Name	Click or tap here to enter text.		
Service	Click or tap here to enter text.	Position	Click or tap here to enter text.
Email	Click or tap here to enter text.	Tel Number	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date	Click or tap to enter a date.		

Please return completed form for CME notifications and Pupil Exit notifications to  
[cme@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:cme@westberks.gov.uk)

Please return completed form for EHE notifications to  
[EHE@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:EHE@westberks.gov.uk)

## Appendix 2

### INDIVIDUAL/AGENCY REFERRAL FOR CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION



Please complete with as much detail that is known to you

CHILD NAME		DOB		NCY	
HOME ADDRESS					
POSTCODE					
CURRENT SCHOOL		DATE LAST ATTENDED			
PARENTS/Carer NAME					
HOME NUMBER		MOBILE NUMBER			
EMAIL ADDRESS					
PARENTS/Carer NAME					
HOME NUMBER		MOBILE NUMBER			
EMAIL ADDRESS					
SIBLINGS NAME				DOB	
SIBLINGS NAME				DOB	
SIGNIFICANT OTHER (e.g. aunt/uncle/grandparent) or EMMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS					

ADDRESS		
PHONE NUMBER		
EMAIL ADDRESS		
Do you know if the child is vulnerable?	YES / NO	
Please outline your concerns:		
NEW HOME ADDRESS		POSTCODE:
CONTACT NUMBER		
NEW SCHOOL NAME & ADDRESS		POSTCODE:
CONTACT NUMBER		
REASON WHY YOU THINK THAT THE		

CHILD IS MISSING EDUCATION – please provide evidence if possible	
Does the parent know that you are making this referral?	

## Appendix 3 – Annex A

Annex A: Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register	
Grounds for deleting a pupil of compulsory school age from the school admission register set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended	
1	8(1)(a) - where the 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.
2	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 has been registered as a pupil at another school.
3	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.
4	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 school.
5	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.
6	8(1)(f) - in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that — (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; (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 (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.

7	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.
8	8(1)(h) - that he has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and — (i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2); (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 (iii) the proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
9	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 or 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.
10	8(1)(j) - that the pupil has died.
11	8(1)(k) - that the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and— (i) the relevant person has indicated that the pupil will cease to attend the school; or (ii) the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the school's sixth form.
12	8(1)(l) - in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school.
13	8(1)(m) - that he has been permanently excluded from the school.
14	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 higher, class at the school.
15	8(1)(o) where— (i) the pupil is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy; (ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the pupil; and (iii) those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.