

Robert Peel Primary School

Child Missing Education Policy



Date policy last reviewed:

September 2025

Signed by:

_____ Headteacher

Date: _____

_____ Chair of Governors

Date: _____

Statement of Intent

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.

The Local Authority has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and help them back into education. This policy highlights what our school will do to help the LA with its duty.

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 an LA, and not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition also encompasses children who are receiving an education, but not one that is suitable, including children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, SEND.

This policy does not address pupils who are considered to be absent from education, which is where a registered pupil is not attending regularly, including where they are persistently or severely absent from school. Procedures for addressing instances where pupils are not attending regularly are instead set out in the school’s Attendance Policy.

The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education will be explained to staff. All staff will receive annual safeguarding and child protection training, including an update on the various safeguarding concern possibilities that CME could represent, any changes to the early help process and staff members’ role in this process.

Attendance and Children Absent from Education

Robert Peel Primary School promotes good attendance and understands that persistent or unexplainable absences can be an indicator for children with welfare and safeguarding concerns. Knowing where our pupils are during school hours is an extremely important aspect of our safeguarding practice. Consequently, in our school we ensure that information is shared between the DSL and those responsible for attendance.

Our staff are aware that patterns in absence can be indicators of safeguarding concerns such as child exploitation and are alert to the signs of children who may be at risk of travelling to conflict zones or honour-based abuse.

Likewise, our school understands that a parent failing to inform us that a child has an authorised absence could be a cause for concern and thus will follow our attendance procedures in these circumstances in order to locate the child and ensure that they are safe. In line with best practice, all children are expected to have at least two emergency contact numbers for emergencies.

Robert Peel has a duty to investigate unauthorised absences to establish if safeguarding concerns are evident and we also recognise that Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to ensure that all children and young people of compulsory school age receive suitable and appropriate education. We will, therefore, support the Local Authority in ensuring that this duty is carried out effectively.

Robert Peel pays due regard to the DFE Guidance on Working Together to Improve School Attendance in the way that attendance at school is promoted and managed at local level. There are

specific duties in respect of Children Missing Education (CME) and there are strict guidelines in respect of both the definition of CME and the legalities of deleting a pupil from a school roll as per the following guidance:

DFE Guidance on Children Missing Education The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Where a pupil leaves our school, the Local Authority will be notified as soon as grounds for the deletion are met but no later than when the name is deleted from the register.

The grounds for deletion include where a pupil:

- has been taken out of school by their parents and is being educated outside the school system e.g. is in elective home education,
- has ceased to attend school and no longer lives within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered,
- has been 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/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age,
- is in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the school does not reasonably believe they will be returning at the end of that period,
- has been permanently excluded.

Child Missing Education Procedures from CBC

1. Introduction

1. All professionals working with children, as well as the wider community can help by remaining vigilant to children's safety and wellbeing. The law states that 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.

2. The DFE defines CME as:

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.

This definition is adopted in this document, with an understanding that suitable EHE is a valid alternative provision.

3. Although the focus of this document is on the procedures around CME in Central Bedfordshire, the work should be seen within the wider context of the LA in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children living within the area.

4. If you know of or suspect that a child is not receiving an education, or you know of a child who has gone missing from a school, please contact: Children Missing Education Team on 0300 300 6220 or 0300 300 5087 or 0300 300 6479 Email: cme@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

5. If you think a child is being harmed or at risk of being harmed, please contact the Access and Referral Hub on 0300 300 8585, who you can talk to about your concerns. They will give you advice or may investigate the circumstances. All child protection calls are treated in confidence.

6. The Department for Education guidance “Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities September 2016” sets out the key principles to enable local authorities in England to implement their legal duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, children missing education. The process outlined, is followed by the Local Authority in its delivery of the above duties.

7. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities in England and Wales to make arrangements to identify children and young people of compulsory school age missing education in their area.

2. Context

1. This policy is intended to inform LA staff, school staff, headteachers, governing bodies, other agencies and the public about how we minimise and prevent CME. It relates to children who are of compulsory school age, who do not currently have a school place, or their educational provision is unknown.

2. The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and to share information appropriately. This principle underpins CBC’s policy on CME, and there is an expectation that all agencies and professionals will work together to ensure that children are participating in education, whether at an educational provision or at home.

3. There are certain points at which children are most at risk of becoming missing from education, and the most common reasons for this include:

- Children not registered by parents/carers at school when they reach compulsory school age.
- Children not registered for a school at standard transition points.
- Frequent house moves, periods of homelessness or time spent in refuges.
- Family breakdown.
- Parents “withdrawing” children from school for an unauthorised reason.
- Schools off-rolling pupils without the correct checks and procedures being followed.
- Exclusion (lawful and unlawful).
- Children whose educational status is unknown, and it is therefore not possible to identify whether the child is receiving a suitable education

3. The duty of the local authority

1. As a LA, we have a duty under s436A of the Education Act 1996 to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in our area who are of compulsory school age but who are not registered pupils at a school or receiving some other form of suitable education.

Part of this duty therefore requires us to have details of those pupils registered at all schools who are ordinarily resident within CBC.

2. CBC has a duty to act in accordance with the Statutory Guidance. This requires us to “put in place arrangements for joint working and information sharing with other local authorities and relevant partner agencies that come into contact with children and families”.

The guidance makes clear that such “partner agencies” will include all types of education providers both maintained and independent schools, and local authorities are recommended to maintain a database of all school age children, along with how they are being educated.

3. As outlined above, the obligation under s436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify children who are not receiving a suitable education includes a duty under s437 of the same Act to intervene if it appears that a child is not receiving a suitable education. Local authorities also have a duty under s175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children through their educational obligations.

4. CBC Procedures

1. If the LA has reason to believe that a child is not receiving a suitable education, there is an expectation that this will be investigated. In the case of children previously unknown to the LA, this may simply be confirmation that the child is being provided with a suitable education at a school or otherwise.

2. When the CBC CME team receive a referral of a child believed to be CME they will enter the child’s details on the CME database. (Referrals may come from within or outside the LA, using the CBC CME E-Form).

a) If the child is located, the CME Officer will notify the referrer and give advice on any further action.

b) If the child is thought to be within another LA, the CME Officer will contact this LA for confirmation and to ensure that the child is tracked into education.

c) If the child is not found within the LA, the CME Officer will advise the referrer and discuss next steps.

3. The CME team will then establish whether the child living in CBC, is currently registered with a school or being provided with suitable education. If this is confirmed the child will be not recorded as CME.

4. If the CME team are informed that the child is being home educated, the case would be referred to the Elective Home Education team. Once the local authority is satisfied that the child is receiving a suitable education, the child will be closed as CME and opened as EHE.

5. If the CME team cannot establish that the child is in receipt of education. Contact will be made with the parents requesting them to confirm the arrangements they have made for their child’s education. Home visits may be completed if required.

6. Where the child’s whereabouts is unconfirmed, reasonable enquiries will be made. Such enquiries may involve:

a) Contacting the child’s last known school/local authority.

b) Making enquiries of other agencies including health.

c) Liaising with the CBC Benefits teams.

d) Liaising with CBC housing department and other housing providers.

e) Contacting Children’s Services.

f) Completing home visits.

g) Contacting family and friends of the child.

The term “reasonable enquiries” grants schools and local authorities a degree of flexibility in decision-making, particularly as the steps that need to be taken in each case will vary. The term “reasonable” also makes clear that there is a limit to what the school and local authority is expected to do.

7. If the EHE team cannot establish that a child is being provided with a suitable education, then a referral will be made to the CME team. If between the EHE and CME team they are not able to establish that a “suitable education” is being provided, they may seek a legal remedy, i.e. a School Attendance Order.
8. If a child is known to be residing in CBC and we cannot confirm the education provision, the CME team will share the information with the Access and Inclusion Manager and the Legal Intervention team. The School Attendance Orders process (SAOs) will be initiated, when parents who fail to satisfy the local authority that their child is receiving suitable education, if the local authority deems it is appropriate that the child should attend school.
9. Each referral will remain on the CME database until it is confirmed that the child is in receipt of suitable education, confirmed as living outside the UK or transferred to another CME team.
10. Children that have been on the CME database for over 12 weeks, will be reviewed at CME panel and further action taken as necessary.

5. The role of schools

1. Schools have a key role to play in ensuring that children do not become CME. Schools are responsible for maintaining attendance registers and monitoring pupil attendance in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations (England) 2006 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016
2. Schools are expected to complete reasonable enquiries if a child does not attend school. This should include trying to contact the parents/carers. If the school have information that shows the family have moved or are not at the usual address, the school should carry out reasonable further enquiries for up to 10 days and, if these prove unsuccessful, refer the child to the CME team.
3. If a child fails to return from an agreed holiday, the school should follow their normal procedures for investigating the absence, using “reasonable enquiries”.
4. If a child is absent from school because they are believed to have moved away, school are still required to keep the pupil on roll whilst making reasonable enquiries and refer to the CME team.
5. Schools must inform the EHE team when a pupil has been removed from their roll to be home educated. They should do this by forwarding a copy of the parent’s written correspondence (this can be a letter or email) together with a completed referral form
6. It is the decision of the Headteacher of the school as to when to remove a child from roll.
 - i) Deletion under regulation 8(1)(f) or (h) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, the ground for deletion only arises when the school and local authority ‘have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is’. The deletion should not happen before the enquiries have failed.
 - ii) Deletion under regulation 8 (e) the school should have substantiated the information, that the child is no longer living within a reasonable distance from the school before deleting from the register and complete a CME referral.
7. If you have any safeguarding concerns, or the child has a social worker, please contact the Central Bedfordshire Access & Referral Hub directly by calling 0300 300 8585. 8. There is statutory guidance governing when schools can delete children from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

9. Removal from roll guidance can be found on our web page. This includes a quick reference sheet which lists all the reasons why a pupil can be taken off roll.

10. When a pupil is taken off roll at a non-standard transition point a notification of off roll form must be completed.

11. Where a pupil leaves a school without a known destination, (which will have been referred to CME see 4.4.) the school should also upload the child's records to the secure area of s2s known as the Lost Pupils Database. Any school then admitting the child without previous school history can request their LA to search the Lost Pupils Database for the child's records.

12. When a child is newly registered, Schools must provide information to their LA when registering new pupils within five days, including the pupil's address and previous school. Schools are now required to complete an e-form which can be found on the Central Bedfordshire Performance Hub at the link below: <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schools-portal/administration/inclusion/newly-registered-children.aspx>

13. Schools should pay particular attention to the section entitled "School Responsibilities" regarding notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity for those children who move onto and off school rolls at non-standard transition points. Please also give regard to the section entitled "Making reasonable enquiries".

CME tracking sheet



Child's Name: _____

Within First 5 Days	Date Completed	Details
Check with all members of staff who the child/young person may have had contact with.		
Check with the pupil's friends		
Telephone calls made to any numbers held in the school records. (if this is an automated system please make telephone contact manually)		
Attempt telephone contact with all known emergency numbers.		
Speak to other agencies that have been working with the family.		
Check with any schools known to have siblings or relatives on their roll		
Within days 5-10	Date Completed	Details
Write to address of emergency contact (if known).		
Speak to your School Attendance Officer for advice.		
Inform the parent/carer of the child in writing that you are concerned about their unexplained absence from school and that a referral to CME may be required if no contact is made.		
Conduct a home visit if you have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so.		
Have you left any / or received any whatsapp voice notes		
Have you spoken to the GRT site manager and / or TELO (where relevant)		
Have you sent an email to the family.		
Complete CME referral form /contact CME Officer		

Following a CME referral being made, schools should remain vigilant and contact the named CME Officer should any further information come to light, including contact from another school or Local

CHILD MISSING EDUCATION CHECKLIST FOR SCHOOLS



Central
Bedfordshire

Actions to be taken by schools when:

- A pupil has gone missing (for 10 consecutive school days) and **no contact** can be made with parent/carer to establish reason for absence;
- A pupil has ceased to attend the school and forwarding address of the family / New school details are not known;
- When a child has not returned from holiday within 10 schools days of the expected date of return and there has been no contact with the family.

If there are any safeguarding concerns or this child is known to Childrens Social Care a referral to 'Access and Referral' (0300 300 8585) should be made immediately

Within the first 10 school days schools are **required** to carry out 'reasonable enquiries':-

Within the first 5 days:

- Check with all members of staff who the child/young person may have had contact with;
- Check with the pupil's friends;
- Telephone calls made to any numbers held in the school records. (if this is an automated system please make telephone contact manually);
- Attempt telephone contact with all known emergency numbers;
- Speak to other agencies that have been working with the family;
- Check with any schools known to have siblings or relatives on their roll.

Within days 5-10:

- Write to address of emergency contact if known;
- Speak to your School Attendance Officer for advice;
- Inform the parent/carer of the child in writing that you are concerned about their unexplained absence from school and that a referral to CME may be required if no contact is made;
- Conduct a home visit if you have been unable to successfully locate the child's whereabouts and it is safe to do so;
- Submit the following documents to the CME officer at Central Bedfordshire Council:
 - completed referral E-form including a CME Tracking Sheet
<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/ChildMissingEducation.ofml>
 - registration certificate
 - copies of any letters/emails sent to the parents and any other relevant documentation

Please note: a referral will not be accepted without ALL of the above documents.

A Child Missing Education referral must be made (if the child is not found) after 10 schools days of missed education & no contact.

Following a CME referral being made, schools should remain vigilant and contact the named CME Officer should any further information come to light, including contact from another school or Local Authority.

CME Officer contact details:

Samantha Barrington / Victoria Kesseru - Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education Officer,
Access and Inclusion Service Direct Dial: 0300 300 6479 | Email: cme@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk