

CME Children Missing Education Guidance for professionals

**+Pupils Missing Out On Education (PMOOE)
Guidance for schools**

May 2024

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Who are Children Missing Education (CME)

CME by definition

Children Missing Education (CME)

The Department for Education (DfE) defines CME as children of compulsory school age (5-16) who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. This includes children who are awaiting a school place and not attending or on the roll of a school.

Notes

Children missing education should **not** be confused with:

- children who are electively home educated (EHE) and the education is deemed suitable.
- children of non-compulsory school age.

Reduced Hours Provision (RHP) In Hampshire, those children on part-time timetables are covered by Reduced Hours Provision (RHP) protocols and guidance. If the child is engaged with any amount of education, they would not be considered a Pupil Missing Out On Education.

Elective Home Education (EHE) Hampshire County Council recognizes that home education is a key aspect of parental choice. EHE is equal, in law, to education provided in school. If the parents of a child on the roll of a school elect to home educate their child, this is covered by Elective Home Education (EHE) protocols and guidance. All home education notifications should be sent to Hampshire Home Education team as they would not be considered CME in the first instance.

Pupils Missing Out On Education (PMOOE)

Hampshire aims to support schools in the event a pupil on the roll of a school ceases to attend for 40 consecutive sessions (20 days). The CME service will seek to support the child, family and school. These cases are referred to as Pupils Missing Out On Education, PMOOE.

This would apply to a pupil:

- granted leave of absence by the headteacher, who then fails to return to school within 10 days immediately following the expiry of the agreed period.
- that has been continuously absent from school for 20 school days and there is no reason to believe that they have been prevented from attending due to sickness or any other unavoidable reason.
- who has accepted a place on roll but does not attend for the first day or subsequent 20 days (40 consecutive sessions in total).

Responsibilities of families

Parents, guardians, and any person/s with 'parental responsibility' have certain duties of care which include providing a home for the child as well as protecting and maintaining the child. They are also responsible for choosing and providing for the child's education.

This can include a child or young person attending a local school maintained by the Local Authority, an independent non-maintained school or the parent educate other than at school.

For children of compulsory school age, it is in fact a criminal offence for parents if they fail to secure regular school attendance for their child under section **444 (1) of the Education Act**.

It is possible that in instances where a family is non-compliant in their duties for their child's education the CME team (or school for instance of PMOOE) will refer details to Hampshire's Legal Intervention Team (LIT). This may result in a monetary fine, the issuing of a School Attendance Order – **Section 437 Education Act 1996** and / or Parenting Orders if ordered by the court - **under Section 8 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998**.

Responsibilities of a school

Schools, including Private, Academies and Free Schools have safeguarding duties and play a vital role in protecting children from continued CME status by offering places on roll and securing good attendance. All schools are required to have an admission register.

Schools can also contact the service for support, advice or guidance when a child is a PMOOE. In these instances, we would be grateful if the school could complete a CME tracking form and ensure they record, in detail, all actions they have taken to try and locate the child. We would expect a school to:

- make on-going attempts, beginning on the first day of any unexplained absence, to contact the pupil's parents either by telephone or text messaging
- make further attempts to contact the parents, either by letter or by home visiting
- contact any other schools where the pupil or their siblings are known to have been pupils
- check with the pupil's peer group to ascertain if they are aware of any change in the pupil's place of residency
- contact any relevant agency, for example the family welfare officer in the relevant armed forces in the case of a service child.

Schools have a duty to notify the CME service if, in the event, they are removing a child from roll, but the child does not have a verified school destination.

Note: Any referral to the CME services should always be made in addition to a school's regular safeguarding / attendance procedures and not in place of them.

Responsibilities of the Local Authority

The LA has a duty under **Section 436 A of the Education Act 1996** to establish (in so far as is possible to do so), the identities of children in its area who are Children Missing Education.

The obligation under **Section 436A of the Education Act 1996**, as outlined above, includes a duty under s437 of the Education Act to intervene if it appears that a child is not receiving a suitable education.

The CME service will investigate the circumstances of a child or young person going missing and explore all options to support the child or young person in engaging with education.

- Establish identities and maintain a register of CYP of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.
- Effective enquiries as part of consultation with families and working with schools to establish what, if any, reasonable grounds a child has to either be not in receipt of suitable education or fail to attend their named school.
 - Efficient processing to monitor and follow up on CYP at regular intervals until they are registered at a new school or receiving suitable education otherwise.
 - Return children to education who are established by the LA as not being registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.
- Escalation points in processes to Hampshire's Legal Intervention Teams (LIT) if a parent fails to satisfy their child as receiving suitable education or is otherwise not engaged / not compliant it may result in a School Attendance Order (SAO.)
- Effective tracking to establish the whereabouts of CYP if not known.
 - We have established data sharing agreements / processes / memorandums of understanding with NHS Health teams, Council Tax / Housing offices and HMRC which covers child benefit, universal credit as well as information held by Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Appointed named professional whom schools and other agencies can make referrals about children who are missing education.
- Robust Policy and Procedures to meet our duties and share notification routes with all schools in their area, and with local Partners and agencies working with children and families, such as GPs, other health professionals, clinical commission groups, police and other emergency services, housing agencies, children's homes, statutory and voluntary youth services, voluntary and community organizations, and Youth Offending Teams.

Safeguarding

This policy and the multi-agency protocols stipulated within this document, does not replace any of the Hampshire Safeguarding Childrens Board (HSCB) multi-agency procedures and are to be used in conjunction with them.

Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording any safeguarding and child protection concerns are to be always followed whilst understanding the increased risks to children missing from education.

If at any point there is reason to believe a child is in at risk of harm, neglect, or other type of abuse, a IARF (inter-agency referral form) should be completed and returned via Hampshire Children Services which is the single point of contact for all safeguarding and wellbeing concerns regarding children and young people in Hampshire.

Also, where appropriate, agencies can contact the police directly in accordance with their internal Safeguarding Procedures.

Contact us

Children Missing Education Officer

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Elizabeth II Court North
Winchester, SO23 8UG

Phone 01962 845363

Email cme@hants.gov.uk