

CME Children Missing Education Guidance for professionals/schools

Including Pupils Missing Out On Education (PMOOE)

Autumn 2025

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Purpose of this document

The purpose of this CME (Children Missing Education) guidance document for professionals/schools is to establish a set of principles which all Hampshire schools, services and partner organisations can adhere to, in order to ensure that children living in Hampshire are safely on roll at a school, placed in alternative educational provision, or adequately electively home educated at the parents' request.

This guidance also aims to ensure an effective and consistent approach by all schools, in the event that a child is not attending school or engaged in education for an extended period.

This guide also intends to ensure that the Council meets its statutory duties in relation to the provision, the safeguarding and the welfare of children. It does not replace any of the current child protection procedures or existing safeguarding procedures. Therefore, this guidance should be read in conjunction with existing safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.

Definition – Who are Children Missing Education (CME)

Children Missing Education (CME)

[Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK](#)

The Department for Education (DfE) defines CME as children of compulsory school age (5-16) **who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.**

CME includes children who:

- are in the process of applying for a school place
- have been offered a school place for a future date but have not yet started
- are receiving elective home education (EHE) that has been assessed as unsuitable
- have been recorded as CME for an extended period, for example where their whereabouts is unclear or unknown

CME **are not** children who:

- are registered at a school, even if they are persistently or severely absent from that school
- are receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school (for example, pupils who are electively home educated or attending alternative provision) which is suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have
- are EHE but the local authority has not had an opportunity to assess whether the education being provided is suitable

- children of non-compulsory school age
- children on part-time timetables overseen by Reduced Hours Provision (RHP) protocols and guidance. If the child is engaged with any amount of education, they would not be considered as CME or a Pupil Missing Out On Education.

Pupils Missing Out On Education (PMOOE)

Cases are referred to as Pupils Missing Out On Education, (PMOOE) if a pupil has been:

- 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
- 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
- accepted for a place on roll, but does not attend on the first expected day of a new academic year at a compulsory Key Stage transition (i.e. Year 3 and Year 7), or 20+ consecutive days (40 sessions) at any other point.

Responsibilities of a school

Schools, including Independent, 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.

If a pupil is identified as CME or PMOOE, we require schools to complete our online CME referral form and ensure it includes, in detail, all actions school 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 email, letter or by visiting the home, or a combination of these
- contact any other schools where the pupil, or their siblings, are expected to appear
- 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.

The online CME referral form for schools can be found here:

<https://educationforms.apps.hants.gov.uk/p/school-forms>

In the event of any subsequent change in circumstances, updates or queries on an existing referral, please inform the CME team, via email at

CME@hants.gov.uk quoting the original MENDIX reference number.

For any other general advice or queries not related to an existing referral, please use the 'Ask for Advice' MENDIX form.

Schools are **not** able to off-roll a pupil for Ground 9(1)(i*), para 252 without working with the Inclusion Support Service. Where a pupil has been located and their circumstances discovered, but they have not returned to school, **a joint decision** is required between the school and the local authority, before this Ground is used.

* for the full list of statutory Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register, please refer to the DfE's: [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

Ground 9(1)(g), para. 243 states: In circumstances where parents are moving away and withdrawing their child but are unable to say how their child will continue with their education, for example, the family are relocating but have not been able to secure a place at a new school in advance. Once the pupil has completed their final day at school and moved out of the area, the school must delete the pupil's name from the admission register and the pupil's information should then be transferred to the Lost

Pupil Database via the S2S system.

In these circumstances, schools also have a duty to notify the CME team, via the Mendix referral form, as above.

Pupils that are not attending for other reasons (such medical, EBSA, refusers), which are not listed above on page 1, can be supported through various other teams under the Inclusion Support Service (see Appendix 1).

Note: Any referral to the CME team should always be made in addition to a school's regular safeguarding / attendance procedures (including an IARF if appropriate) 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.

We follow the statutory guidance provided by the Department for Education: [Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK](#)

The CME team will investigate the circumstances of a child or young person missing from education by:

- acknowledging referrals received within 5 working days
- recording and tracking all referred pupils
- investigating the whereabouts and circumstances around education provision; this may include liaising with Border Force, other local authorities, local councils (housing), DWP, etc, with associated timeframes, especially where incomplete or incorrect information has been provided (addresses and parental emails)

- providing signposting as appropriate
- reporting back to schools upon the resolution of the case or providing updates throughout the academic year (for example half-termly).

Hampshire aims to support schools for PMOOE cases where there are potential underlying reasons for the absences of 40 consecutive sessions (20 days). The Inclusion Support Service will seek to support the child, family and school through its various teams such as:

- Attendance Support
- Medical Referrals
- Reduced Hours Provision
- Elective Home Education
- Legal Intervention Team.

Please make contact with the relevant team – see Appendix 1 for contact details.

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 and those children where the parent has chosen to 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**.

Safeguarding

This policy, and the multi-agency protocols stipulated within this document, do 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 at risk of harm, neglect, or other type of abuse, an 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 Team

Children's Services
Inclusion Support Service
Elizabeth II Court
Winchester SO23 8UG

Referral Form: <https://educationforms.apps.hants.gov.uk/p/school-forms>

Email: cme@hants.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Other services

Attendance Support attendance@hants.gov.uk

Medical referrals medicalreferral@hants.gov.uk

Reduced Hours Provision ReducedHoursData@hants.gov.uk

Elective Home Education electivehomeeducation@hants.gov.uk

Legal Intervention Team LIT@hants.gov.uk