



Child Missing in Education Policy

Reviewed - September 2024

Next review – September 2026

Missing from Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Children missing from education includes anyone:

- Who has been excluded from school and is not yet receiving full-time education;
- Who is out of school pending a managed move;
- Is on a part-time timetable;
- Newly arrived in the City and does not as yet have a school place;
- Has been withdrawn from school by their guardian but have not informed the Local Authority of an intention to electively home educate and have not had this agreed as appropriate;
- Is of statutory school age but has not been registered for a reception class entry;
- Has come to the end of a phase of education (e.g. primary) and has not registered for a secondary school placement;
- Has been detained, released and does not have or is not accessing a school placement or appropriate full-time alternative provision option.

This policy does not address children who are registered at a school who are not attending regularly. Schools already have a duty to monitor attendance and to take action, involving other agencies where appropriate.

As a result of daily registration, schools, including academies and free schools, are particularly well placed to notice when a child has gone missing. The law requires all schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers. Schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register.

School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. They should put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

During a normal transition phase (e.g. reception, primary to secondary), a child becomes the responsibility of the new school when the child has been 'allocated' a place. All schools need to adopt this principle to prevent children from 'falling through the net' and becoming missing/lost.

Once a child has ceased to attend school, the school should make all reasonable enquiries to try and ascertain the child's whereabouts, before making a referral to the Children and Families First Service. These include:

- Make telephone enquiries to the parent/carer/relatives;
- Write to the parents/carers/relatives;
- Visit the home of the child/relatives;
- Speak to the child friends to ascertain their whereabouts.

Where contact is successfully made with parents/carers but a pupil's attendance continues to cause concern i.e. below 85%, normal protocol to support attendance should follow.

After a maximum of 10 days if the whereabouts of the child and family are still not known following these checks, the school should complete the **Children Missing from Education (CME) Referral Form**.

Local Authority Guidance

Children Missing from Education (CME)

Children missing from education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

We have a legal duty to identify children missing education (CME) and to make sure they return to education wherever possible. Read the **CME statutory guidance**.

Refer a child

Children Missing from Education Referrals (CME referral form) can be completed by a school after a maximum 10 days' absence through a secure email address: CME@coventry.gov.uk.

Anyone with a concern that a child is missing from education can make a referral to the Attendance and Inclusion Team.

If you have submitted a [CME referral form](#), please consult us before removing a pupil from the school register.

For urgent concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing, which requires immediate action, please call the Coventry City Council MASH Team on 024 7683 3060 or email on mash@coventry.gov.uk.