

Children Missing in Education

CME definition

A Child Missing in Education (CME) is defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as “a child of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who has been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more)”.

The School is fully aware of its duty to ensure that children do not go ‘missing in education’ (CME) and of the requirement to report to Suffolk CME whenever a child of school age is either admitted to, or removed from, roll.

Statutory guidance can be found at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Children missing education, particularly repeatedly, may be an early indicator of safeguarding concerns including abuse, neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation. It could also be a sign of criminal exploitation including involvement of County Lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school’s unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures. MASH will be referred if any of the above safeguarding concerns are raised.

In the case of a child of school age joining another school, the School Secretary will make contact with that school to ensure that the child has registered and is attending prior to reporting to CME.

If a child misses more than 10 consecutive school days, the local authority will be informed immediately.

If a child does not attend school without reasonable explanation and if, following extensive enquiries, the whereabouts of the child cannot be ascertained, the School Secretary or Headteacher will report the child as Missing from Education to Suffolk CME. The School will also report a child who is withdrawn to Home Educate and will work with the parents to ensure continuity of education.

To ensure that we have the best possible chance of speaking to parents in the event of a child missing education, it is our policy to have a minimum of two contact telephone numbers for every child in the School.

First day calling

Within the first day of non attendance, a telephone call to the home address would be made by the School Secretary, if Parents/Carers have not called in already. If they do not respond to a telephone call then an email or text message would be sent.

Member of staff responsible	Headteacher
Last Review	Autumn 2025
Next Review	Autumn 2026