

Children Missing in Education

CME definition

A Child Missing in Education (CME) is a child of compulsory school age who is not registered as a pupil at a school and is not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

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, the roll.

Statutory guidance: Children missing education (DfE, updated September 2025):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

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.

Where a pupil's absence is unexpected or unexplained, the School will make immediate enquiries. If the pupil's whereabouts or education arrangements remain unclear, the School will refer to and work jointly with the relevant local authority CME team without delay. A pupil will only be removed from the admission register where a ground in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 is met. For the relevant absence grounds, this includes joint reasonable enquiries by the School and local authority before deletion from roll.

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 The School will also report a child who is withdrawn to Home Educate and will work with the parents to ensure continuity of education.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

On the first day of non-attendance, the School Secretary will make a telephone call to the home address 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 2026
Next Review	Autumn 2027

2026–2027 statutory and guidance update

This policy has been reviewed against the DfE statutory guidance Children missing education, updated 8 September 2025, which is statutory for schools as well as local authorities.

The School will make prompt reasonable enquiries for unexpected or unexplained absence and continue to work jointly with the local authority after a CME referral where required.

Admission-register additions and deletions will be notified to the local authority in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.