



Children Missing Education Policy

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Ebbfleet Green Primary School

Children Missing Education Policy

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1. Introduction

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.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

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. At Ebbsfleet Green, we focus our resources on effectively intervening early in the lives of vulnerable children to help prevent poor outcomes.

Safeguarding children and vulnerable members of society is a key priority for Government. The Home Office, 'Missing children and adults, a cross government strategy', outlines the government's objectives for all agencies to comply with:

- Prevention – reducing the number of people who go missing; for Ebbsfleet Green, this means working closely with all agencies to break the cycle for those who repeatedly go missing.
- Protection – reducing the risk of harm to those who go missing; for Ebbsfleet Green, this means ensuring that the cases of CME are reported to the local authority as quickly as possible.
- Provision – providing missing people and their families with support and guidance; for Ebbsfleet Green, this means signposting families to appropriate supportive agencies.

2. Legislation

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education on [children missing education](#) and the following legislation:

- Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (added by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- Education Act 1996 (section 7, 8, 14 and 19)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 4 and 38)
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2016

3. Definitions

3.1 Children Missing Education (CME)

CME refers to all children who are of compulsory school age and are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time. At Ebbsfleet Green, we refer a pupil to the local authority for further investigation if (s)he has been continually absent for more than 10 school days without permission; we have carried out reasonable checks and failed to establish the child's whereabouts and the reason for absence.

3.2 Compulsory School Age

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1st January and 31st March, they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1st April and 31st August, they are of compulsory school age on 31st August; if they turn 5 between 1st September and 31st December, they are compulsory school age on 31st December. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year they reach sixteen.

3.3 Parent

A Parent is defined in Section 576, Education Act 1996 as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person who has care of a child (having care of a child or young person means that the child lives with and is looked after by that person, irrespective of their relationship).

4. Causes

There are a number of reasons why children go missing from education, including:

- they don't start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the educational system;
- they are removed by their parents for a range of reasons;
- they cease to attend due to exclusion, illness or bullying;
- they fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area;
- the family move home regularly or there are problems at home.

5. Children at particular risk of missing education

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education so it is vital that local authorities make judgements on a case-by-case basis. Although not exhaustive, the list below presents some of the circumstances that should consider when identifying pupils who are most at risk of missing education:

5.1 Pupils at risk of harm / neglect

Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected, schools should follow local child protection procedures. However, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children's social care (and the police if appropriate). Local authority officers responsible for CME should check that a referral has been made and, if not, they should alert children's social care. The Department's statutory guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' provides further advice for schools and colleges on safeguarding children.

5.2 Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families

Research has shown that many children from these families can become disengaged from education, particularly during the secondary school phase. It is therefore important that schools inform the local authority when a GRT pupil leaves the school without identifying a new destination school, particularly in the transition from primary to secondary so that they can attempt to facilitate continuity of the child's education. Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly and their children can be at increased risk of missing education. Local authority Traveller Education Support Services (TESS), where these exist, or the named CME officer within the local authority, can advise schools on the best strategies for ensuring the minimum disruption to GRT pupils' education, for example dual registration with other schools or the provision of electronic or distance learning packages where these are available.

5.3 Children of Service Personnel

Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in the UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MoD Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) on 01980 618244 for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.

5.4 Missing children and runaways

Children who go missing or run away from home or care may be in serious danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation or abduction as well as missing education.

5.5 Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System

Children who have offended or are at risk of doing so are also at risk of disengaging from education. Local authority Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) are responsible for supervising those young people (aged 8 to 18). YOTs should work with the local authority CME officer to ensure that children are receiving, or return to, appropriate full-time education. Where a young person was registered at a school prior to custody, the school may be able to keep the place open for their return.

5.6 Children who cease to attend school

There are many reasons why a child stops attending a school. It could be because the parent chooses to home educate their child. However, where the reason for a child who has stopped attending a school is not known, the local authority should investigate the case and satisfy itself that the child is receiving suitable education.

5.7 Children of new migrant families

Children of new migrant families may not have yet settled into a fixed address or may have arrived into a local authority area without the authority becoming aware, therefore increasing the risk of the child missing education.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 Schools' duties

All schools have statutory safeguarding responsibilities (sections 157 & 175 of the Education Act 2002). Schools must investigate any unexplained absences. If a child fails to attend school, staff at Ebbsfleet Green must try to establish the family's whereabouts before making a CME referral. Ebbsfleet Green should:

- Use their contact telephone numbers to attempt to speak with the parent / carer or other family member;
- Speak to siblings and / or known relatives within the same school;
- Speak to friends of the child who is not attending;
- Speak with school staff of known siblings at other schools;
- Carry out home visits to attempt to ascertain if the family are still in the same home at different times of the day;
- Discuss concerns with the linked School Liaison Officer.

6.2 School Liaison Offer - response to CME referral

Upon receipt of a fully completed CME referral, a School Liaison Officer will assess whether the suspected CME issue may actually be a school attendance concern. The School Liaison Officer will investigate and conduct home visits to determine whether the child's absence from school is as a result of a child missing education or is an

attendance issue. The latter may involve the School Liaison Officer having to use statutory duties as appropriate.

Once the suspected CME investigations have been completed, the School Liaison Officer will advise the school, CME Team or relevant agency of the outcome and advise on an appropriate off-roll date where such advice is needed. Once a case has been referred to Kent County Council as a potential CME, schools must not delete a child from the school roll until advised by the School Liaison Officer. The advice provided by Kent County Council is strictly in line with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Where a disagreement arises, the regulations are used to reach a final decision in relation to off-rolling in order to ensure legal compliance.

6.3 CME Officers in Fair Access Service

The Kent Fair Access CME Team receives referrals from School Liaison Officers following an initial investigation. Referrals from external agencies and the general public are made directly to the CME Team via the Digital Front Door: [PIAS Digital Front Door \(DFD\)](#).

The CME Team have access to databases against which the child's details can be checked. The team contact partner agencies and colleagues in other Local Authorities to establish whether the children or young person is in receipt of education provision.

Where the CME Team receive a report that a child is not in receipt of education provision and an address is known, relevant checks are made and the family is contacted. Where the CME Team's initial tracking and contact fail to receive a response, the matter is referred to the School Liaison Officer to arrange a home-visit. Where the whereabouts of the child cannot be ascertained following an in-depth investigation, the CME Team carry out a risk assessment of the individual case.

6.4 Virtual School Kent

Virtual School Kent (VSK) consists of a team of Education Welfare Officers (EWO) who work to ensure every Child in Care (CiC) receives full and suitable education.

CiC attendance is monitored on a daily basis by the use of a contracted call centre agency (currently Welfare Call), quality assured by VSK. VSK Locality Teams are alerted by the specialist EWO team if attendance falls to 95%. They are also alerted if a CiC has been moved to a new care placement without prior planning so that a new school place can be identified in a timely fashion.

If a CiC to Kent County Council is identified as CME due to not being on the roll of a school, VSK ensures that the CME team are aware, but continues to take the lead with Social Workers and Admissions Officers in identifying a suitable education placement. If a CiC to Kent County Council is identified as CME due to being a Runaway or Missing from Home or care (RMFHC), the Social Worker follows the Kent County Council RMFCH protocol as identified in the DfE Statutory Guidance, January 2014 and VSK ensures that the CME Team are aware.

While School (Pupils Registration) Regulations 2006 set out circumstances in which a pupil should be deleted from a school register, it is accepted good practice that a CiC should not be off rolled by a school until a new school has admitted the CiC.

7. Practice and procedures

At Ebbsfleet Green, we enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which we have agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend our school.

If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, Ebbsfleet Green will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts, notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. We keep an accurate and up-to-date admissions register by encouraging parents/carers to inform us of any changes.

Through our daily registers, we monitor pupils' attendance, monitoring attendance closely and addressing poor or irregular attendance. We inform the local authority of children who have missed ten school days or more without permission and make referrals with regards to pupils' poor attendance.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, we will remove the pupil from the admission register; however, this will only happen when both Ebbsfleet Green and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. In addition, this will only apply if Ebbsfleet Green does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

We arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. Further information can be found in the [Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England](#) statutory guidance.

Appendix 1: CME guidance and checklist, detailing actions to be taken when a pupil is absent.

8. Referral Process

The first 10 days of unauthorised absence will be investigated by the school in line with the school's attendance policy. After 10 days of continuous non-attendance where:

- the child is not attending a new school and / or,
- the child has emigrated and / or,
- the child's whereabouts are unknown,

the school will notify KCC using the [PIAS Digital Front Door](#) so that a School Liaison Officer can make further enquiries.

With confirmation from the Local Authority, the child may then be removed from roll in line with Regulation 8 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The school will upload a Common Transfer File (CTF) for the pupil to the DfE Secure Data Transfer site (S2S) using the relevant code.

If necessary, the CME notification will then be forwarded to the CME team by the Inclusion and Attendance Service. The CME Team will carry out local, regional and national checks to locate the child and ensure they are receiving suitable education.

Before a school off rolls a pupil as a CME, this procedure must always be carried out - CME forms must not be sent directly to the CME team.

Appendix 1: CME guidance and checklist

Appendix 2: Referral guide

Appendix 3: CME Procedures flowchart

9. Safeguarding

For the purpose of this policy, 'reasonable enquiries' are defined as limited, investigative powers that we may action to determine a child's whereabouts and whether they may be in danger.

In line with the Children Act 2004, we will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm.

The DSL will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to children's social care or the police. If a referral is required, the DSL will submit an Interagency Referral Form which is available via www.KSCB.org.uk.

Where the whereabouts and safety of a child is unknown, Ebbsfleet Green, in conjunction with the LA, may carry out the following actions:

- Make contact with the parent / carer, relatives and neighbours using known contact details;
- Check local databases;
- Follow local information sharing arrangements, and making enquiries via local databases and agencies where possible;
- Check with UK Visas and Immigration and / or the Border Force;
- Check with agencies known to be involved with the family;
- Check with the LA and school from which the pupil moved originally;
- Check with the LA where the pupil lives, if this is different to where the school is located;

- Check with the Ministry of Defence Children's Education Advisory Service in the case of children of Service Personnel;
- Conduct home visits via an appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessments, and making enquiries with neighbours or relatives, if appropriate.

N.B.: This list is not exhaustive – Ebbsfleet Green and Kent County Council will use their judgement towards what reasonable enquiries are appropriate, once all the facts of the case have been taken into account.

10. Recording information in the school's admissions register

At Ebbsfleet Green, we will ensure that the admissions register is kept up-to-date at all times, and will encourage parents / carers to notify us of any changes as they occur, through existing communication channels such as regular emails.

Where a parent / carer notifies us that a pupil will live at another address, we will record the following information on the admissions register:

- the full name of the parent / carer with whom the pupil will live;
- the new address;
- the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent / carer notifies us that the pupil is registered at another school, or will be attending a different school in future, we will record the following information on the admissions register:

- the name of the new school ;
- the date when the pupil first attended, or is due to attend, that school.

When a pupil leaves, we will record the following information on our register:

- the date they left for another school;
- the name of the new school;
- the date when they are due to start attending their new school.

We will send a common transfer file (CTF) to our pupil's new school. If a pupil's next school is unknown, they're moving abroad, or moving to a non-maintained school, we will upload the CTF file to the 'lost pupil database' on the [DfE's School2School system](#).

If a pupil starts our school and the previous school is unknown, we will search for them in the school2school system.

Parents/carers are able to elect to educate their children at home, and will subsequently withdraw them from school. This can happen at any time, unless the pupil is subject to

a School Attendance Order. If a parent / carer notifies us, the pupil will be deleted from our admission register and the LA informed.

11. Removing a child from the admissions register

Ebbfleet Green will inform the LA of any pupil who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents/carers and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home-schooled;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school;
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order, and we do not reasonably believe they will be returning at the end of that period;
- have been permanently excluded;
- have died;
- have been registered at another school where it is not indicated this should be the case;
- are registered at more than one school but have failed to attend the school and the proprietor of any other schools concerned have consented to the deletion;
- have been granted authorised leave but have failed to attend school within ten academy days after the period of authorised absence ended, and:
 - o there is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school;
 - o the LA and school are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries.
- have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than twenty school days, and:
 - o the absence was not authorised;
 - o there is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school.

We will notify the LA that a pupil is to be removed from the admissions register as soon as any of the above criteria are met, and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is actually removed. If a pupil's name is to be removed from the admissions register, we will provide the LA with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent/carers with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of the parent/carers with whom the pupil lives;
- the full name and address of the parent/carers who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;

- the name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date, if applicable;
- the grounds for removal from the admissions register under Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), as outlined in this policy.

12. Using Common Transfer Files to transfer pupil information

The Department provides a secure internet system – [school2school](#) – to allow schools to transfer pupil information to another school when the child moves. If the school the child is leaving agrees, the local authority may do this on the school's behalf.

Ebbfleet Green adheres to the Common Transfer File (CTF) guidance by sending a CTF to the new school when a child leaves our setting.

The school2school system also contains a searchable area, where schools can upload CTFs of pupils who have left but their destination, next school is unknown or the child has moved abroad or transferred to a non-maintained school. If a pupil arrives in a school and the previous school is unknown, schools should contact their local authority who will be able to search the database.

There may be exceptional circumstances when standard rules for sending and receiving a CTF for a pupil might not apply. Each case would need to be judged on its merits in consultation with relevant parties. Circumstances when it is not considered appropriate to pass on details via a CTF might include a family escaping a violent partner; if the family is in a witness protection programme; or where there are concerns that the child is at risk of forced marriage. Guidance on how to share information in these circumstances is included in the CTF guidance.

13. Sharing information with others

Families moving between local authority areas can sometimes lead to a child who is unknown to any local authority and consequently missing education. Where a child has moved or where the destination of a child is unknown, local authorities should identify relevant local authorities – either regionally or nationally – and check with them in order to ascertain where the child has moved.

The local authority will raise awareness of its procedures with local schools, partners and agencies working with children and families. To assist them in tracing CME, the local authority has contacts with the Department for Work and Pensions, the UK Border Agency and HMRC.

Ebbfleet Green uses a secure internet system to allow us to transfer pupil information when a child moves education setting. When the school knows which school a pupil is moving to it will ensure that the Common Transfer File (CTF) is sent to the receiving

school via S2S as quickly as possible. The new school may then apply for the full school record.

14. Monitoring and review

The school will ensure that they regularly monitor and evaluate mechanisms to ensure that the policy is being consistently applied.

Any issues identified will be incorporated into the school's action planning.

The executive headteacher and the head of school will be informed of attendance concerns, as appropriate.

15. Links with other policies

This Children Missing Education policy links to the following policies:

- Attendance
- Safeguarding and Child Protection

Appendix 1: CME guidance and checklist

CME Guidance and Checklist

Timeline	Pupil: First Day of unexplained absence:	Year Group:	Date sent or done	Date of reply
From DAY 1 Of Absence	Normal School Attendance Action to be Undertaken: First day, daily calling is advised for any child who is absent without communication from parent. If the child is subject to a Child Protection Plan, a LAC or a known vulnerable child, Children's Social Care, must be informed at once or in line with agreed CP/LAC or CIN plans. A Child Missing Their Education is a Safeguarding Concern. If a child attends school erratically or ceases to attend school, for 'whatever reason', Schools are expected to undertake action to address this, following School Attendance Action and Safeguarding Procedures, as detailed in the Education Act 1996 and Subsequent Statutory Guidance (Documents Accessible via www.legislation.gov.uk): • 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. • 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. • 'Children Missing Education'. Any danger factors and/or the possibility of the child(ren) being exposed to CSE/FGM/Radicalisation and Gang Relations should always to be considered. Schools should undertake liaison with Children's Social Care and or the Police as appropriate.			
From DAY 2	The school should seek information from all available sources. For example: emergency contacts previously supplied by the family, staff, other parents, pupils. Other schools where siblings are known to attend, who may be aware of the family's circumstances as they may know, for example, that the family were intending to move or go on holiday. (Admissions can provide sibling information.) • Use all forms of communication as possible and 'keep records' (e-mails/telephone calls/letters). • If applicable, use translation services.			

From DAY 3	Where no communication has been received and / or no information has been obtained, a home visit is to be undertaken by school staff to ascertain 'child is safe': • If no response, a letter should be hand delivered, requesting contact and advising that if necessary, liaison with Children's Social Care and the Police will be initiated. • If schools are aware of any siblings at other schools, ring siblings schools to check for updated contact phone numbers and to see if they have any additional information.		
Between Day 3 & 10	School to continue with their actions and enquiries, adhering to School Action / CME and Safeguarding Procedures, to try and establish the whereabouts and safety of the child (ren) School to contact known involved agencies, seeking information from: • Children's Social Care (MASH Team) advising of concern and requesting any known information. • SEN, School Nurse, Health visitors, GP, Internal/external partner agencies & Housing etc....		
DAY 11	If there is no response to letters /email /phone messages and home visits - The school must liaise with their SLO (where applicable) or the CME Officer. • Joint reasonable enquiries should be undertaken School must send a letter to last known address advising of the possible removal from roll of the pupil, following 'twentieth' day of unauthorised absence. (Advising the parent/carer of that date). • School to request parent / carer makes contact with the school. Where appropriate seek advice & assistance from the Kent Child Missing Education Officer.		
Between day 11&20	School to continue with their actions and enquiries adhering to School Action / CME and Safeguarding Procedures, to try and establish the whereabouts and safety of the child (ren). • School to Continue to undertake school action to address absence.		

	• School to discuss with their SLO (where applicable) whether a referral to the AAS would be appropriate, i.e. In the case of 'Extended Leave of Absence' • SLO / CME Officer to support school in undertaking 'Joint Reasonable Enquiries'.		
Between day 15-& 20	If no communication received from parent / carer and / or child(ren) has not returned; • School to communicate (via Telephone / Email) with the CME Officer advising that the school intend to remove the pupil from roll on the identified date, should the pupil not return before-hand, seeking any additional advise/support.		
DAY 21	Whereabouts still unknown/child has not returned: Pupil(s) can lawfully be deleted from the Schools Admission Register as at the end of the 20th day as long as the 'Grounds for Deletion' under Regulation 8 of the Education Regulations 2006 as amended (Education Act 1996), have been met'. • The Head teacher/Proprietor of the Educational Establishment with responsibility for the contents of the Admissions Register, authorises the decision to remove the child(ren) from roll. • School to send a letter to the last known address informing parent / carer that pupil is now off roll and referred to the Kent CMEO as a 'Child Missing Education'. • School to inform parent / carer that Children's Social Care and the Police will be notified. • School to advise parent / carer of school place re-application process, should the family return to area (UK).		
DAY 21	Referral to be sent to the CMEO via e-mail cc'd to school's SLO. Schools are to attach a copy of this checklist, all correspondence/communications and an attendance certificate for the current and previous academic years, to the referral.		
Upon Receipt Of the CME	School (copy to SLO) receive confirmation from the CMEO that the referral has been accepted and that the pupil(s) will be placed on the CME database. Please note:		

Referral	If the CME procedure has not been followed appropriately and in accordance with legislation / regulations and statutory guidance, the referral will be returned to the school, with the requirement that the pupil's name is reinstated on the school roll.		
DAY 21 Onwards	School Administrator to undertake within 5 days: • Kent County Council On/Off roll webpage form to be completed School Administrator to undertake within 15 days: • Upload on to CTF & S2S websites, entering (appropriate code) into the destination field, 'Lost Pupils' Database, so any new school will be able to make contact.		

Appendix 2: Referral guide

Children Missing Education

Referral Guide

What do we mean by Children Missing from suitable Education (CME)?

A compulsory school-age child who is not on the roll of a school, not placed in alternative provision by a local authority, and who is not receiving a suitable education at home.

Why do children go missing from education?

There are a number of reasons, including:

- they don't start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the educational system;
- they are removed by their parents for a range of reasons;
- they cease to attend due to exclusion, illness or bullying;
- they fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area;
- the family move home regularly or there are problems at home.

What is the CME process for Schools?

The first 10 days of unauthorised absence will be investigated by the school in line with the school's attendance policy. After 10 days of continuous non-attendance where:

- the child is not attending a new school and / or
- the child has emigrated and/ or
- the child's whereabouts are unknown

the school should notify KCC using the [PIAS Digital Front Door](#) so that a School Liaison Officer can make further enquiries.

With confirmation from the Local Authority, the child may then be removed from roll in line with Regulation 8 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The school will need to upload a Common Transfer File (CTF) for the pupil to the DfE Secure Data Transfer site (S2S) using the relevant code.

If necessary, the CME notification will then be forwarded to the CME team by the Inclusion and Attendance Service. The CME Team will carry out local, regional and national checks to locate the child and ensure they are receiving suitable education. Before a school off rolls a pupil as a CME this procedure must always be carried out - CME forms must not be sent directly to the CME team.

Appendix 3: CME procedures flowchart

Children Missing Education

Procedures Flowchart

