London Borough of Havering
Children Missing Education (CME) Policy
2026/2027

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Policy Version Control

Academic Year	Amendment/Policy Changes	Section(s) Updated
2024/2025	Updated to reflect School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, revised attendance and deletion from roll requirements, and strengthened safeguarding and information-sharing arrangements.	All
2025/2026	Updated to reflect Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance (September 2025), revisions to attendance regulations, enhanced expectations for schools regarding vulnerable children, and updated Local Authority processes for CME tracking and intervention.	All
2026/2027	**Full policy review undertaken. Updated terminology, clarified statutory responsibilities of schools, parents and the Local Authority, strengthened safeguarding arrangements, and refreshed procedures to reflect current legislation and guidance.**	**All**

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This policy sets out the London Borough of Havering's arrangements for identifying, preventing, tracking, safeguarding and supporting Children Missing Education (CME), ensuring compliance with its statutory duties and safeguarding responsibilities.

The policy provides a clear framework for schools, parents/carers, Local Authority services and partner agencies to work together to ensure that every child of compulsory school age receives a suitable education and remains visible within safeguarding systems.

1.2 Aims

This policy aims to:

- Ensure all children receive a suitable education.
- Prevent children from becoming missing from education.
- Promote safeguarding and welfare.
- Support early identification and intervention.
- Clarify the responsibilities of parents, schools, the Local Authority and partner agencies.
- Promote effective multi-agency working.
- Ensure compliance with statutory legislation and guidance.
- Prevent unlawful off-rolling and the inappropriate use of Elective Home Education.
- Support vulnerable children to access and remain engaged in education.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to:

- Local Authority services.
- Maintained schools.
- Academies.
- Free schools.
- Independent schools.
- Alternative Provision settings.
- Partner agencies working with children and families.
- Parents and carers.

1.4 Statutory Framework

This policy should be read alongside the relevant legislation and statutory guidance.

Primary Legislation

- Education Act 1996 (Sections 7, 8, 13A, 14, 19, 436A, 437 and 444)
  Education Act 1996 [legislation.gov.uk]
- Education Act 2002 (Section 175)
  Education Act 2002, Section 175 [legislation.gov.uk]
- Children Act 1989
  Children Act 1989 [legislation.gov.uk]
- Children Act 2004
  Children Act 2004 [legislation.gov.uk]
- Children and Families Act 2014
  Children and Families Act 2014 [legislation.gov.uk]
- Data Protection Act 2018
  Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010
  Equality Act 2010

Statutory Guidance

- Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities
  Children Missing Education Guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
  Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
  Working Together to Safeguard Children

2. Principles

The London Borough of Havering will:

- Place children and young people's welfare at the centre of all decision-making.
- Recognise parents' legal duty to secure suitable education for their child.
- Ensure safeguarding remains paramount in all CME activity.
- Work collaboratively with schools and partner agencies.
- Promote early identification and intervention.
- Take appropriate action where a child is not receiving suitable education.
- Ensure information is shared lawfully and proportionately.
- Challenge any practice that may constitute unlawful off-rolling.
- Promote inclusion and equality of opportunity.

3. Definition of Children Missing Education

Children Missing Education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who:

- Are not registered pupils at a school; and
- Are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

Children who are persistently absent but remain on a school roll are **not** automatically considered CME. Such cases should be managed through attendance, safeguarding and inclusion procedures.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Parents and Carers

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs, either through regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child receives suitable full-time education.
- Engage with schools and the Local Authority when concerns arise.
- Provide accurate information regarding their child's whereabouts and educational arrangements.
- Respond promptly to requests for information relating to their child's education.

4.2 Schools

Schools must:

- Promote and monitor attendance.
- Follow attendance procedures where a pupil remains on roll but is not attending.
- Undertake reasonable enquiries when a child's whereabouts are unknown.
- Work with parents, carers and relevant agencies to establish a child's whereabouts and educational arrangements.
- Notify the Local Authority when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Submit a CME referral where reasonable enquiries have been exhausted and there are concerns that a child may not be receiving suitable education.
- Provide all relevant information to support CME enquiries.
- Continue to cooperate with the Local Authority until the child's educational status has been established.

4.3 Local Authority

The Local Authority will:

- Receive and review CME referrals.
- Undertake reasonable enquiries to establish a child's whereabouts and educational status.
- Work with schools, neighbouring authorities and partner agencies to trace children who may be missing education.
- Maintain accurate records of CME enquiries and outcomes.
- Seek evidence that suitable education is being provided where a child is not on a school roll.
- Support children to access suitable education as quickly as possible.
- Consider formal powers, including School Attendance Orders, where appropriate.
- Work with safeguarding partners where concerns exist regarding a child's welfare, safety or whereabouts.

5. Children Missing Education

5.1 Risks Associated with CME

Children missing education are at increased risk of:

- Abuse and neglect.
- Child sexual exploitation.
- Child criminal exploitation.
- County lines involvement.

- Serious youth violence.
- Radicalisation.
- Poor educational outcomes.
- Becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

5.2 CME Prevention

Schools and the Local Authority will work together to:

- Promote attendance and inclusion.
- Identify concerns at the earliest opportunity.
- Monitor vulnerable children.
- Support educational transitions.
- Share information effectively.
- Escalate concerns promptly where necessary.

6. Safeguarding Arrangements

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility.
Children who are missing education may be particularly vulnerable to:

- Neglect
- Exploitation
- Domestic abuse
- Serious violence
- Radicalisation
- Mental health difficulties

Where concerns arise, agencies must follow local safeguarding procedures without delay.
Where children are subject to statutory intervention, including:

- Child Protection Plans.
- Child in Need Plans
- Education, Health and Care Plans
- Youth Justice involvement

Appropriate multi-agency oversight must remain in place, and all agencies are expected to recognise the safeguarding implications of CME and work proactively to locate children and re-engage them in education.
Where there is reason to believe that a child may be at risk of significant harm, a referral should be made to Children's Social Care through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in accordance with Havering Safeguarding Children's Partnership procedures. Report a concern with a child | London Borough of Havering

7. Children Missing Education Process

Important: A child is not a Child Missing Education (CME) if they remain on a school roll, regardless of their attendance. Non-attendance by a registered pupil is an attendance and safeguarding matter and must be managed through the school's attendance, safeguarding and inclusion procedures.
A child should only be referred to the Local Authority CME Service where the school has exhausted all reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and educational arrangements.

During this process, the pupil must remain on the school roll and joint enquiries will be undertaken by the school and the Local Authority CME Officer.
The purpose of these enquiries is to:

- Establish the child's whereabouts.
- Determine whether suitable education is being provided.
- Assess whether there is a reasonable prospect of the pupil returning to school.

A pupil **must not be removed** from the admission register solely because their whereabouts are unknown.

A pupil may only be removed from roll in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations and following consultation with the Local Authority. Where joint enquiries conclude that all reasonable enquiries have been exhausted, there is no evidence that the child will return, and the statutory grounds for deletion have been satisfied, the school may remove the pupil from roll and complete the relevant Destination Leaver documentation.

Step	Action	Lead	Outcome
1	Attendance concern identified	School	Managed through attendance and safeguarding procedures.
2	Reasonable enquiries undertaken	School	School exhausts all reasonable enquiries to establish whereabouts and educational arrangements.
3	Submit CME Referral form via LBH Children Missing Education Referral Form - Havering Online Forms - Section 1	School	Referral submitted to the Local Authority CME Service.
4	Joint enquiries undertaken	School / LA	Pupil remains on roll while enquiries are completed.
5	Joint enquiry outcome	School / LA	Child located, educational provision confirmed, or enquiries exhausted.
6	Removal of pupil from school register – **only when agreed with LA** https://www.havering.gov.uk/schools-education/school-support/14	School	Only considered where agreed with the Local Authority and statutory deletion criteria are met.
7	Child recorded as CME	LA	Child entered onto the CME register where appropriate.
8	CME tracking and support	LA	Ongoing enquiries and support to secure suitable education.
9	Case closure	LA	Child located and receiving suitable education.

8. Recording, Monitoring and Data Sharing

The Local Authority will maintain accurate records of:

- CME referrals received.
- Enquiries undertaken and outcomes achieved.
- Children recorded as CME.
- Children supported to access suitable education.
- School roll deletion notifications and destination information.

Information will be shared in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and relevant safeguarding legislation.
Information sharing must be:

- Lawful.
- Necessary.
- Proportionate.
- In the best interests of the child.

Schools, Local Authority services and partner agencies are expected to cooperate and share relevant information to identify, locate and support children who may be missing education.

9. Review and Governance

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where changes to legislation, statutory guidance or local procedures require amendment.

The Local Authority will monitor compliance and evaluate the effectiveness of local CME arrangements through:

- Analysis of CME data and trends.
- Monitoring referral and case outcomes.
- Review of safeguarding concerns linked to CME.
- Feedback from schools and partner agencies.
- Review of changes to legislation and statutory guidance.

Any amendments to this policy will be communicated to schools, Local Authority services and relevant partner agencies to ensure ongoing compliance with statutory duties and best practice.