

London Borough of Havering Children Missing Education Policy 2025/2026

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Index

1	Introduction.....	2
2	Children Missing Education (CME) Definition	2
3	Children at particular risk of missing education	2
4	Roles and Responsibilities	3
5	Safeguarding	4
6	Contacting the Local Authority.....	4

1 Introduction

All children must receive an efficient, full-time education that is suitable for their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs.

This policy and procedure document outlines the guiding principles adopted by the London Borough of Havering in accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) Children Missing Education (CME) guidance. It establishes a framework for identifying children who are not registered as pupils at a school and who are not otherwise receiving appropriate educational provision.

[Keeping Children safe in Education 2024](#) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and to share information. This principle underpins this policy and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure that there is a robust response to identifying and responding to children who are missing from education.

[Children Missing Education statutory guidance for Local Authorities](#) addresses the statutory duty placed on Local Authority's to identify children not receiving a suitable education and to identify children missing from education in their area under section 436A of the Education Act 1996.

2 Children Missing Education (CME) Definition

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

- not enrolled at a registered school, and
- not receiving suitable education in any alternative setting (such as home education or other approved provision).

Children missing education face a heightened risk of underachievement, exposure to harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and are more likely to become NEET (not in education, employment or training) in the future.

3 Children at particular risk of missing education

There are various circumstances in which a child may become classified as Children Missing Education (CME). It is therefore essential that each case is assessed individually, taking into account its specific context and details. While not an exhaustive list, the following examples highlight situations where children may be particularly vulnerable to missing education:

- Children at risk of harm/neglect
- Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families
- Children of Service Personnel
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System
- Children who cease to attend a school
- Children of new migrant families
- New arrivals in the borough, either from another Local Authority (LA) or from abroad
- Failure to start appropriate provision and never enter the system
- Stopped attending, due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parents/carers
- Failure to complete a transition between schools
- Children experiencing mental health problems/ Medical Needs
- Children at risk of a forced marriage
- Children at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children
- Looked after Children (LAC)
- Young Carers

4 Roles and Responsibilities

• The London Borough of Havering

Local Authorities (LA) have a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered as pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise.

The LA should consult the parents of the child when establishing whether the child is receiving suitable education. Those children identified as not receiving suitable education should be returned to full-time education either at a school or in alternative provision (AP). Prompt action and early intervention are crucial to discharging this duty effectively and in ensuring that children are safe and receiving a suitable education.

The LA has robust policies and procedures in place to fulfil its statutory duty in relation to children missing education (CME). Effective tracking and enquiry systems ensure that children at risk of missing education are promptly identified. A multi-agency CME panel, convened monthly, plays a key role in coordinating timely interventions. This panel brings together relevant professionals to ensure that appropriate support is provided and that children missing education are swiftly reintegrated into suitable educational provision.

The LA will work jointly with schools where a child has been absent for 20 days and the school has not been able to establish contact with the parents through reasonable enquiries.

• Parents and Carers

Parents/Carers have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education. Some parents may elect to educate their children at home and may withdraw them from school, unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order.

• Schools / Alternative Education Provisions

DfE Statutory Guidance states that “All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify the local authority when they remove a child’s name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations. This duty does not apply when a child’s name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points.

Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. If this is not successful, the school must complete a [CME referral form](#) requesting joint enquiries with the LA before deleting the child’s name from the register.

If a pupil has not returned to school for ten consecutive school days following a leave of absence, or is absent without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, their name may be removed from the admissions register **only after both the school and the local authority have jointly** undertaken reasonable enquiries to determine the child's whereabouts and circumstances, and either remain unable to do so or have determined there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will return to school.

In deciding there are no reasonable grounds to believe the child will attend the school again, **both school and local authority must agree**, including that there are no reasonable steps that could be taken (either jointly or separately) to secure the child’s attendance. Neither ground for deletion applies if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the child is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

Schools must provide all required details, including the child's new address and educational provision if applicable, before removing a child from the register. If this information is unavailable, they must refer the case to the local authority CME officer and wait for instructions before taking the child off the school register.

5 Safeguarding

The Local Authority is dedicated to ensuring that all agencies and practitioners working with children understand their responsibilities concerning Children Missing Education (CME) and the associated safeguarding implications. Our partners acknowledge that it is incumbent upon every individual and agency to prioritise the prompt re-engagement of children into educational provision.

Should there be concerns that a child believed to be missing education may be at risk of harm, a referral to Social Care via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub should be considered with reference to the Havering Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Threshold Guidance.

[Referral to Children/Young Person Services](#)

6 Contacting the Local Authority

When schools, multi-agency partners, or individuals are made aware that a child is not registered or attending a school, they must inform the CME Officer by completing the [CME Referral Form](#).

To contact the Children Missing Education Team, please email: CME@haverling.gov.uk