

Children missing education (CME)

The children missing education (CME) service identifies, tracks, and follows up all children who are not receiving suitable education, with the aim of ensuring they are helped to access education as quickly as possible.

- [Attendance, CME and CMOE guide](#) This document creates an agreed framework for your school and Ealing's school attendance, children missing education (CME) and children missing out of education (CMOE) service to work together.
- [Guide to completing CME referral via Gateway](#)

We liaise regularly with other agencies likely to encounter children missing education. The public can refer any child they understand not to be in education.

Children missing education are:

- children of compulsory school age, and
- not on a school roll or in alternative suitable educational provision for more than 20 school days.

As part of the Education Act 1996 we have a statutory duty to identify and track CME and maintain a CME register.

CME safeguarding

There is a natural overlap with safeguarding as children missing education are at risk of under-achieving, abuse, and exploitation.

The reporting of children missing education is part of every school's safeguarding duty.

The designated safeguarding lead and dedicated attendance lead must be aware of the school's duties and responsibilities in the key areas of attendance, admissions, leavers and CME and children missing out on education (CMOE)..

They should ensure that all staff are similarly aware so that they can raise any concerns they have and ensure that the necessary safeguarding procedures are instigated, when appropriate.

Schools should make referrals regarding children missing education to Ealing's CME officer. If you need any advice on whether a child is missing education please contact the CME Officer for advice. Here is more information on [Children missing education \(CME\) referrals](#)

Leavers

The safe processing of leavers prevents pupils from falling through the gaps and becoming CME, making them more vulnerable to underachieving, abuse, and exploitation. The following key information must be recorded for all leavers from Nursery to Year 11, whether they are staying in the UK or moving abroad:

- The contact details of parent they will be living with
- The pupil's new home address (if they have moved)
- The pupil's new school details
- Confirmation that they have been admitted to their new school

If you are unable to obtain this information the pupil is CME and you should refer to the [CME process](#) for further guidance.

More information on [when to remove a pupil from roll](#)

Children missing out on education (CMOE)

Children missing out on education relates to pupils on part time timetables and/or attending alternative provisions, or who are school refusers (not attending school at all). Here is more information on [Children missing out on education](#)

Required returns

The returns below are required of all schools in Ealing, regardless of setting:

- [Reporting September reception class and year 7 non-arrivals](#)
- [Statutory weekly leavers and joiners](#)
- [In-year applicant - non-coordinated schools only](#)
- [Notification of child missing out on education \(child in part time or alternative provision\) - CMOE](#)

Children abroad on extended, unauthorised leave

The Department for Education advises that schools should keep all pupils on roll if they know where they are, and the parent has stated that they will be back. As no more specific guidance as to the length of acceptable absence or the detail schools should have regarding the exact location of the pupil is available, we have put together guidance for schools on how to manage pupils who are abroad for extended periods.

This guidance only applies to pupils the school knows to be abroad. It does not apply to pupils in the UK who fail to attend or to pupils whose location is unknown. These pupils should be discussed with your Link Attendance Officer or the CME Officer. Please see the relevant toolkit for the full guidance document.

- [Pupils on extended, unauthorised leave abroad guide for SEN schools](#)
- [Pupils on extended, unauthorised leave abroad guide for mainstream schools](#)

When families are in the UK but located far from school

Please see the guidance on [Reasonable journey time to and from school](#)

Leavers to be educated other than in school including elective home educated (EHE)

Ideally, parents who are withdrawing their children to educate them other than in school should notify the school in writing (either by email, letter or completing a leaver's form). This is not absolutely required.

Schools should offer to meet with parents to ensure they understand that elective home education (EHE) is a major undertaking and that they will be wholly responsible for their child/ren's education in terms of both curriculum and cost. Please see the following [Elective home education \(EHE\) off-rolling](#)

Related services

[Children missing education \(CME\) service 2025/26](#)

Contact:

- **Children missing education**, School attendance service: cme@ealing.gov.uk 020 8825 5517

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- [Yes](#)
- [Neutral](#)
- [No](#)

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