

# **Children Missing Education (CME) Policy 2021/2022**

**(Missing and whereabouts not known,  
destination school not known or missing out  
on education)**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Purpose of this Document**

The purpose of the CME Policy is to establish a set of principles which all schools, services and partner organisations adhere to in order to ensure that children living in Slough are safely on roll at a school, placed in alternative educational provision or adequately electively home educated at the parents request.

This policy also intends to ensure that the council meet its statutory duties in relation to the provision and the safeguarding and the welfare of children. It does not replace any of the current child protection procedures or existing safeguarding procedures and therefore this policy should be read in conjunction with existing safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures.

### **1.2. Slough Borough Council's Strategic Direction**

Slough Borough Council is committed to delivering high quality local services and supporting Slough residents as early as possible. By growing a place of ambition and opportunity, our vision is that Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful.

SBC recognises the fundamentals of a child missing education, not only in the way that it impacts on the individual's potential achievement, but also in relation to their safety and welfare. These children are regarded as a shared responsibility across the children's workforce in Slough in the same way that safeguarding is everyone's business. Children missing education features in Slough's Safeguarding Children's Board key priorities.

### **Legislative Framework**

Legislative Framework informing this policy include:

- [Education and Inspections Act 2006 \(section 4 and 38 \)](#)
- [Section 436A of the Education Act 1996](#)
- [Education Act 1996 \(section 7, 8, 14 and 19\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#)
- [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(Amendment\) \(England\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021](#)
- [Children Missing Education - DfE Statutory Guidance 2016](#)

## 2. Who are Children Missing Education (CME)?

### 2.1 CME by Definition

Children Missing Education CME are children of compulsory school age (5-16) The DfE defines CME as: 'Children of compulsory school age who

- are not registered pupils at a school and
- are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school
- who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more).'

Children Missing Education should **not** be confused with:

- children who are on roll at a school but are not in regular attendance.
- children who are receiving Home Education (known as Elective Home Education)
- children whose parents have applied for a school place, and the referrer has confirmation that the application is in process via SBC's Admissions Service

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.

'Suitable education' is defined as efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any additional educational needs.

### 2.2. Impact of Poor School Attendance or Missed Education

Statistics show that children who suffer from a history of poor attendance, or have periods of missed education, are more likely to face future issues in relation to:

- Homelessness
- NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training)
- Anti-social/ Criminal behaviour /Child Criminal Exploitation
- Social disengagement
- Mental health issues
- Substance abuse
- Neglect and emotional abuse
- Sexual exploitation/ involvement in the sex trade /Child Trafficking
- Teenage parenthood
- Physical health issues
- Forced marriage
- Poverty
- Radicalisation

### 2.3. Children at particular risk of missing education

There are certain vulnerable groups who are more likely than others to become children missing education. They are as follows:

- young people who have committed offences
- children living in domestic abuse refuges
- children of homeless families perhaps living in temporary accommodation
- young runaways
- children with long-term medical or emotional problems
- looked after children
- children with a Gypsy/Roma/Traveller background
- young carers
- children from transient families
- teenage mothers
- children who are permanently excluded from school • migrant children whether in families seeking asylum or economic migrants
- children moving out of independent schools/academies/free schools
- children whose parent(s) are in the Armed Forces
- 

Slough Borough Council is committed to supporting children missing education by ensuring:

- All pupils who may be missing from Slough schools, including independent schools, academies and free schools, are located without delay
- Support is given to other Local Authorities to locate missing children who may have moved into Slough
- Make use of the DfE's central School2School (s2s) database
- Joint reasonable enquiries are made with schools and designated Local Authority (LA) staff to locate children who are missing from school as soon as possible
- All children living in Slough are in receipt of a suitable education in accordance with their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have
- All children living in Slough are safeguarded and their welfare promoted

### 3. A Multi-agency Approach

#### 3.1. Responsibilities of Partner Agencies

- The Department for Children, Schools and Families (now Department for Education) document "[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)" published in March 2010 (updated 2018) states: Every practitioner working with a child has a responsibility to inform their CME contact if they know or suspect that a child is not receiving education.
- The **Children Act 2004** places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the safeguarding and welfare of children and to share information so that children and young people do not 'slip through the net' and become missing. There is a fundamental principle that all SBC professionals and partners have some level of responsibility around the issue of children missing education in terms of ensuring that children are identified and tracked, referred appropriately, with needs assessed and coordinated interventions put in place. Therefore, as notification can be received from within the local authority, external agencies, the public, schools, children and young people and other

local authorities, it is vital that all agencies understand and use the referral route appropriately and consistently.

- **CME Referral Pathways Diagram**, outlining CME procedures and arrangements, is cited in **Appendix A**.
  - The **CME Referral Form** can be cited in **Appendix B**.
  - **Guidance on how to complete CME Referral** can be cited in **Appendix C**.
- The vulnerability of many children missing education requires that practitioners across all agencies and services use multi-agency approaches to identify and re-engage these children and their parents to return to appropriate education quickly and to develop action plans and make relevant referrals to ensure successful reintegration. The responsibility for reducing the risks of children missing education is carried out through a strategic and multi-agency framework where all agencies share information on the identification of children and young people missing education

### 3.2. Responsibilities of the Local Authority

- The LA has a duty under **Section 436 A of the Education Act 1996** to establish (in so far as is possible to do so), the identities of children in its area who are of compulsory school age but are not registered pupils at a school or receiving some other form of suitable education otherwise than at a school, for example at home, privately or in alternative provision.
- The obligation under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996, as outlined above, includes a duty under **s437 of the Education Act** to intervene if it appears that a child is not receiving a suitable education.

The SBC Attendance Service are responsible for managing local procedures in line with this statutory guidance. These procedures include:

- Produce a written Policy & Procedure
- Ensure there are embedded arrangements to identify and provide services for children missing education
- Identify and provide clear notification routes and processes for key stakeholders
- investigate and track CME referrals made by schools, other agencies and other LAs
- maintain a database of CME
- use the Missing Pupils function of the schools to schools site for tracking CME
- ensure appropriate monitoring and tracking systems are in place
- deliver training/briefings to schools and agencies to support the CME function, as required
- support schools to make an effective contribution to the referral and tracking processes
- monitor and review effectiveness of CME processes
- support and encourage schools to transfer files via S2S
- information share with other service services including Early Help, Social Care, YOT etc.

- provide reports to senior managers and the local safeguarding childrens board
  - ensure representation at regional and local meetings
- **Section 157 of Working Together 2013** places a duty on local authorities in relation to their education functions, the governing bodies of maintained schools and governing bodies of further education institutions (which include sixth form colleges); to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are either pupils at a school or who are students under 18 years of age attending further education institutions.
  - **Section 175 of the Education Act 2002**, places a duty on local authorities to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

### 3.3. Safeguarding

This policy and the multi-agency protocols stipulated within this document, does not replace any of the local safeguarding board (LSCB) multi-agency procedures and are to be used in conjunction with them.

Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording any safeguarding and child protection concerns are to be followed at all times whilst understanding the increased risks to children who are missing from education.

If at any point there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a MARF (multi-agency referral form) should be completed and returned via Slough Children First front door which is the single point of contact for all safeguarding and wellbeing concerns regarding children and young people in Slough. Also where appropriate, agencies can contact the police directly in accordance to their internal Safeguarding Procedures.

### 3.4. Responsibilities of Schools

- Schools also have safeguarding duties under **section 175 of the Education Act 2002** in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their pupils. Schools have a key role in ensuring that children do not become CME.
- All schools are required to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils must be placed on both registers.

[Amendments to the DfE Guidance regarding Children Missing Education \(CME\)](#) were made in July 2016.

The main changes to legislation from September 2016 are as follows: [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#).

From 1 September 2016, under **The Education (Pupil Registration (England) (Amendment)) Regulation 8 of the Education (pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**, all schools, including independents, are required to:

- notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulation which can be cited in **Appendix D**. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school – unless the local authority requests that such returns are to be made.
- record details of the pupil's residence, the name of the person with whom they will reside, the date from which they will reside there, and the name of the destination school (where they can reasonably obtain this information)
- inform their LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school
- provide information to their LA when registering new pupils within five days, including the pupil's address and previous school (where they can reasonably obtain this information).

### **3.5. Responsibilities of Parents/Carers**

- Under **Section 7 Education Act 1996**, parent/carers of every child of compulsory school age shall 'cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any specific educational needs (s) he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.
- Where parents wish to remove their child or children to be electively home educated (EHE) they must give written notification to the school and the school must take the child's name off the school roll and notify the Local Authority. Please refer to [SBC EHE Policy - September 2021 \(Draft\)](#)
- Electively home educated children are not considered to be missing education. The Slough Attendance team hold a register of children with an EHE status.
- If the LA receives no information on the education being provided for a child i.e. a parent that is home educating their child is refusing to provide a report, the LA can assume that the child is NOT receiving a suitable education and look to proceed with a SAO.

## **4. Key Stakeholders and Agencies**

The SBC Attendance Service works in partnership with key stakeholders and agencies (both statutory and non-statutory), that contribute to the identification, location, information sharing and interventions for children missing education. These include:

- Early Help Hub
- Social Care
- SEND Team
- Elective Home Education Teachers
- Admissions/Exclusions & Fair Access
- Detached Community and Youth Work Team
- Alternative Education Providers
- NEET Service
- Youth Offending Team
- Virtual School
- Health Nurse
- Local Authorities

- Schools
- Parents/Carers
- General Practitioners/Medical professionals
- UK Border Force Agency
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Police

## 5. SBC Procedures and Processes

### 5.1 SBC's Attendance Service Procedural Guidance

Guidance was introduced by the DfE, as of September 2016, to ensure Local Authorities and schools make procedures even more robust to prevent children becoming 'missing'. Please refer to [SBC's Attendance Service Procedural Guidance](#) document which explains the procedures and referral processes/pathways for:

- 1) Children Missing Education/Pupil Tracking Referral (CME)
- 2) Deletions from the School Roll
- 3) Elective Home Education Referral (EHE)
- 4) Persistent Absence Referral (PA)
- 5) Warning Periods and Penalty Notices (WP/PN)

### 5.2 Pupil Tracking

The SBC Attendance Team will manage the co-ordination of the referral process and ensure notifications are recorded and actioned as appropriate and that referral channels are understood by all stakeholders. Whichever route the information comes through, it is the responsibility of the Attendance & CME Officers to:

- Ensure accurate compilation of data and actions related to identifying CME.
- Maintain and update the CME registers report on the education database.
- Undertake the tracking process of pupils when their whereabouts are unknown. (The [CME/Pupil Tracking Process Flowchart](#) is cited in **Appendix E**)
- Co-ordinate casework, contributing to assessments to determine appropriate provision for a child and providing updates on the CME register for Senior Officers.
- Bring complex CME cases to the Fair Access Panel.
- Circulate the CME notification referral form and process to all agencies
- Each year send the schools a reminder that they must obtain full details and to remind them of the CME and off roll procedures
- Issue an Attendance Order if the family do not engage. It enables the local authority to name a school for the parent to ensure the child attends. This legal sanction can be applied where a parent refuses to enrol their child in a school or fails to satisfy the local authority that their child is receiving suitable education, if the local authority deems it is appropriate that the child should attend school. This is used as a last resort in CME situations. ([Legal action to enforce school attendance - GOV.UK](#))
- The CME Officer, will carry out checks using the education database, pupil census data and other functions to try to ensure that those children and young people who were previously on a school roll and are no longer on that roll have been admitted to another educational provision.

### 5.3 Enquiry Systems

To assist with the tracing of a CME, the Attendance team have access to the following:

- ICS Protocol Liquid Logic
- S2S (School to School)
- DWP LMS

- Key to Success
- MASH (on written request)
- Housing information (on written request)
- Council Tax information (on written request)
- Youth Offending Service (YOS) (on written request)
- Health/NHS Spine Database (on written request)
- DfE Get Information about Pupils (GIAP) database
- DfE S2S Database/ Lost Pupil Database

## **6. Review and Publication for the Policy**

- A review of the policy will take place annually or more frequently in light of future legislative changes.
- The policy will be shared with all Slough schools and partner agencies and is available on the Slough Borough Council Website

## **7. Management of the CME Policy**

- Strategic oversight of this Policy sits with the SBC's Associate Director of Education & Inclusion.
- Operational delivery of this Policy sits with the SBC's Attendance Manager.
- This Policy is shared with SBC's Children's Safeguarding Board.

## 8. SBC - Attendance Service Contact Details

### Attendance Manager:

Anjli Sidhu                      Tel: 07395 258177 [Anjli.Sidhu@slough.gov.uk](mailto:Anjli.Sidhu@slough.gov.uk)

### Attendance/CME Officers

Farah Malik                      Tel: 01753 787663  
Iram Basharat                      Tel: 01753 787681  
Sharon James                      Tel: 01753 787670  
Thandiwe Manjelo                      Tel: 01753 787670

### Referrals for CME & Attendance

#### *For School Attendance Queries*

Attendance Service Main Line:                      01753 787670  
Attendance Service Email:                      [attendance@slough.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@slough.gov.uk)

#### *For CME Queries:*

Pupil Tracking Main Line:                      01753 787670  
Pupil Tracking Email:                      [pupiltracking@slough.gov.uk](mailto:pupiltracking@slough.gov.uk)

### Other Useful Contacts

- **Slough School Admissions**
  - [Slough School Admissions website](#)
  - 01753 875728
  - [admissionshelpline@slough.gov.uk](mailto:admissionshelpline@slough.gov.uk)
  
- **SEND Team**
  - 01753 787676
  - [sendteam@slough.gov.uk](mailto:sendteam@slough.gov.uk)
  
- **Slough SENDIAS Service**
  - [Slough SENDIASS website](#)
  - 01753 787693
  - [Sendiass@slough.gov.uk](mailto:Sendiass@slough.gov.uk)
  
- **[Family Information Service](#)**

01753 476589  
[fis@slough.gov.uk](mailto:fis@slough.gov.uk)
  
- **Slough Children First**
  - [Slough Children First website](#)
  - For General Enquiries  
01753 476562
  - Early Help Hub
    - For immediate referral  
**01753 875362**  
[Sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk](mailto:Sloughchildren.referrals@sloughchildrenfirst.co.uk)
  
- **Emergency Duty Team (out of hours)**

01344 786543 – [EDT@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:EDT@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)
  
- **Police**
  - **999** – to report immediate risk
  - **101** – for non-emergency queries

## Appendices

Links to Documents cited in Appendices

<b>Appendix</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Link</b>
<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>CME Referral Pathways Diagram</b>	<a href="#">CME Referral Pathways - flowchart</a>
<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>Child Missing Education (CME) Referral Form</b>  Part A - CME / Pupil Tracking Part B - Reason for Pupil Removal from School Part C - School to School Transfer Part D - New Starter (In-year) Part E - Elective Home Education	<a href="#">SBC - CME Referral Form</a>
<b>Appendix C</b>	A Guide to Completing SBC's Referral Form	<a href="#">A Guide to completing SBC's CME Referral Form</a>
<b>Appendix D</b>	Grounds for deleting a pupil of compulsory school age from a school register (set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended)	<a href="#">Grounds for deleting a pupil from school roll - section 1.8.(1)</a>
<b>Appendix E</b>	CME/Pupil Tracking Flowchart	<a href="#">SBC - CME-Pupil Tracking - Flowchart</a>