



Children Missing Education (CME) Policy

1. Background

1.1 Definition of children missing education,

As described in the 2016 statutory guidance for local authorities: "Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving education otherwise than at a school".

A Child Missing from Education (CME) is defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as "a child of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who has been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more)." [Stat guidance template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/statutory-guidance-template)

1.2 Children Missing from Education should not be confused with:

- Children who are on roll at a school but are not in regular attendance.
- Children who are receiving Elective Home Education known as EHE.
- Children whose parents have applied for a school place, and the application is being dealt with via the school admissions and in year school admissions service.

1.3 This document is intended to inform Local Authority (LA) staff, head teachers, governing bodies of schools and other involved agencies about the policy and procedures to be followed in order to prevent children becoming Children Missing Education (CME). It also sets out the arrangements Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council will make in order to carry out its legal duties.

1.4 Unless otherwise specified, 'school' means all schools whether maintained, non-maintained or independent schools, including academies and free schools, alternative providers and pupil referral units.

This policy recognises the importance of reducing the risk to children who are missing from education, and it is envisaged that this will be best achieved by establishing, implementing and maintaining the following actions and processes:

- Awareness raising with the general public regarding our need to know about any children missing from education – this to include publicising details of the authority's nominated person for Children Missing from Education.
- Clear procedures for all schools where a child on the school roll is believed to have gone missing from education, through schools making CME referrals to the Inclusion Team.
- Advice regarding deleting children from the school roll.
- Procedures to identify and locate children who go missing from education – through liaison with the other services and agencies who are most likely to hold information on such children and young people.

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- Procedures to locate children missing education through liaison with other local authorities, and through access to national databases, e.g. UK Visas and Immigration, the North West CME Network, Key2Success, and DfE 'missing pupils' on school2school ("s2s").
- Maintaining a regularly updated database of all local children of all children in receipt of EHE (i.e. not on the roll of any school but who are receiving education otherwise than at school) - and having procedures in place to ensure that these children are receiving a suitable education.
- Procedures to re-engage missing children & young people with appropriate educational provision through school admissions processes.

2. Legislation and guidance

2.1 Blackburn with Darwen has a duty, under section 436A of the Education Act 1996, to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in this area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. This duty only relates to children who are of compulsory school age.

In preparing this policy, the Local Authority has had regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- 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)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- Children Missing Education, Statutory Guidance for local authorities, August 2024
- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which places a duty on local authorities to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

If there are concerns about the welfare or safety of a pupil who is leaving, or has left a school, schools should follow their immediate safeguarding procedures. Local Authority teams can be contacted on the following numbers:

Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) 01254 666400
Emergency Duty Team (outside office hours): 01254 587547

2.2 Attendance Framework

The local authority's attendance framework will define the different roles and responsibilities of all those concerned in ensuring that children attend school regularly and the actions that may be taken to achieve this. The authority has also produced a Discretionary Leave of Absence form to assist parents and schools when families are requesting a term time leave of absence (Appendix A)

3. Children at particular risk of missing education

3.1 Many thousands of children and young people in England do not attend full-time education. Children who are not receiving suitable education are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk, and this can include engagement in anti-social or criminal behaviour, social disengagement, and/or sexual exploitation.

There are numerous reasons why children go missing from education. Some particular groups of children, who are more vulnerable to missing education, have been identified as:

- Children and young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE);
- Children and young people at risk of extremism and radicalisation;
- Children at risk of forced marriage;

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- Children and young people at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM);
- Children living in women's refuges;
- Children in homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation, houses of multiple occupancy or Bed & Breakfast accommodation;
- Children from Gypsy/Roma/Traveller background;
- Children of Armed Services Personnel;
- Young runaways who go missing from home or care;
- Young people supervised by the Youth Justice Service who have committed criminal offences and are returning from custody;
- Children with long-term medical or mental health needs;
- Children who have particular social and behavioural difficulties and have personalised learning plans: this means that, by arrangement, they do not attend their usual school full-time;
- Children who have complex needs and no suitable school place is available;
- Looked after Children (LAC);
- Children in private fostering arrangements;
- Young carers;
- Children and young people from transient families, i.e. those pupils who have experienced high levels of mobility between different education providers;
- Children permanently excluded from school;
- Children informally excluded from school and/or those placed on long-term part-time timetables;
- Children and young people of statutory school age who rarely attend school and have personalised learning plans as part of attempts to reintegrate them into full-time education;
- Children taken off their school roll further to failure to return from unauthorised (or authorised) leave of absence;
- Children entering or leaving the independent schools sector;
- Teenage mothers of compulsory school age;
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees, or the children of asylum seeking families;
- Children of new migrant families and EC nationals who have the right of abode in the UK – this now includes a significant number of asylum seekers granted status by other EC countries who have subsequently moved to the UK;
- Others who have come from abroad to live and/or work in the Borough and are waiting for a school place

4. Monitoring and tracking

4.1 Each local authority is required to have effective policies and procedures in place to identify children missing education. All schools have an allocated inclusion officer who they can contact for advice regarding missing children, or those at risk of becoming missing from education.

Referrals for children missing education are submitted via the online referral form which can be found here <https://forms.office.com/r/f2LvmGwvUm>

Enquires can be made via the cme@blackburn.gov.uk inbox which is monitored daily.

4.2 Local authorities are required to have robust arrangements in place for joint working and appropriate information sharing with other local authorities and agencies which come into contact with families and children, including ensuring that there are effective tracking and enquiry systems in place. Prompt action and early intervention are crucial to ensuring that children are safe and receiving a suitable education.

Below are the relevant partner agencies, critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education:

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- All schools – including maintained schools, academies, free schools, independent schools, special schools and studio schools
- Health
- Police
- Children’s Social Care
- Youth Justice Service
- Housing
- Third Sector Partner Agencies

4.3 When all reasonable checks have been exhausted, and the child cannot be located, their name will be added to the “amber” list. The “amber” list allows the inclusion team to undertake regular checks on children who remain unfound to identify if any further information has become available which may provide the location of the child.

These pupils will be recorded as UNABLE TO TRACE FAMILY (all reasonable checks have been completed and the family/child cannot be located)

These checks are carried out via Get Information About Pupils (GIAP), Protocol and the Revs & Bens system. Colleagues from the school nursing team also undertake regular checks of children known to the “amber” list.

Cases will only close to CME once one of the following criteria have been met:

- CLOSED - confirmed abroad (overseas where confirmed by someone other than a parent or relative)
- CLOSED – abroad and new school and/or home address provided by parent or relative (written information of child’s new address/school in another country)
- CLOSED - found in another LA (the child is known in another LA and/or school places have been applied for in the new LA)
- CLOSED - found in BWD school (the child has been confirmed on roll at a school within Blackburn with Darwen)
- CLOSED - no longer CSA (the child is no longer compulsory school age)
- CLOSED - not known to BWD/returned to referrer
- CLOSED - now EHE (school/the LA have received confirmation that the child is now undertaking elective home education)

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5. Deleting a child from the school roll (and adding new pupils)

5.1 A child's name may only be removed from the school roll on any one of the grounds set out in Regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Full details of Regulation 9 are set out in Appendix B of this policy. The School Attendance Regulations 2024 apply to all schools in England (including academies, free, and independent schools). Under these Regulations:

- A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted. A pupil's name must not be removed for any other reason and doing so could constitute off-rolling.
- In accordance with regulation 13(4) to (6), a school must make a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register (a deletion from roll form). This does not apply where the pupil's name is deleted at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in the school's most senior class (for example, pupils who leave primary school at the end of Year 6), unless the local authority has requested such information under Regulation 13 (6).
- All deletions from school roll must be sent to schoolrollnotifications@blackburn.gov.uk using the deletion from roll form
- Where a school notifies the local authority that a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register, as set out in regulation 13(4), the school must provide the local authority with the following information about the pupil from the admission register:
 - full name;
 - address;
 - the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
 - at least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency;
 - if applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil will start living there;
 - if applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school;
 - the reason set out in regulation 9(1) or (3) under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register.

A school cannot retrospectively delete a pupil's name from the admission register or attendance register. The admission register and attendance register must be an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. A pupil's attendance or absence must be recorded up until the date that the pupil's name is deleted from the admission register.

5.2 Regulation 13 (1) also require all schools to notify the authority within five days of registering a new pupil. (NB - This does not apply to the September intakes to Reception and Year 7 - this information is collated by the LA through a different process or may be requested by the LA under Regulation 13 (3)). When registering a new pupil, schools must provide the LA of all the particulars of the new pupil that are entered into their admission register (including providing details of the pupil's address and previous school) Schools must inform the LA of any new pupils added to their school roll using the on-roll notification form which can be requested from admissions@blackburn.gov.uk

5.3 The 2024 Regulations require schools to **jointly** make reasonable enquiries with the authority to establish the whereabouts of Children Missing Education. Where a child has been reported missing and then subsequently returns to that school, the school should inform the LA immediately.

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5.4 There are specific requirements/considerations in relation to removing a child's name from the school roll under some of the permitted grounds. Please note this further relevant information for the following grounds:

(f) Education otherwise than at school

Where a parent wishes to educate their child otherwise than at school, the parent must give **written notice** of that intention to the school before the child can be removed from roll. The school must share that written notification with the Local Authority, who will then make further contact with the parent with regards to the child's future elective home education. [Elective Home Education Policy \(blackburn-darwen.org.uk\)](http://blackburn-darwen.org.uk)

(g) Child no longer ordinarily residing within a reasonable distance of the school **AND** the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again;

- Parents have informed school of their new address, which is no longer a reasonable distance from the school, and
- the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again, and the pupil is not a boarder at the school

(h) Child failing to return for more than 10 school days following a period of authorised leave of absence and their whereabouts are unknown, or the pupil's location and circumstances are known, but the School and Local Authority agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again.

If there is reason to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, then the pupil's name cannot be removed under this ground.

(i) Child continuously absent for more than school 20 days and their whereabouts are unknown or the pupil's location and circumstances are known, but the School and Local Authority agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again.

If there is reason to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, then the pupil's name cannot be removed under this ground.

6. Governance

For Blackburn with Darwen, the named persons responsible for children missing education (CME), from September 2024 are:

Principal Inclusion Officer	Inclusion Officer	Inclusion Officer
Catherine Salt	Sharon Norcliffe	Gillian Ferdowsian
10 Duke Street	10 Duke Street	10 Duke Street
Blackburn	Blackburn	Blackburn
Lancashire	Lancashire	Lancashire
BB2 1DH	BB2 1DH	BB2 1DH
01254 666756	01254 666832	01254 266388
Catherine.salt@blackburn.gov.uk	Sharon.norcliffe@blackburn.gov.uk	Gillian.ferdowsian@blackburn.gov.uk

Management of this document

This document is approved by the Deputy Director for Education.

Strategic oversight – Service Lead

Operational delivery - Principal Inclusion Officer and Inclusion Team

Review and evaluation of this policy will be undertaken regularly, in accordance with the guidance [Children missing education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk).

In Blackburn with Darwen this will be bi-annually or more frequently should there be any legislative changes.

Next review date: Sept 2026

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APPLICATION FOR DISCRETIONARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Name of School _____

DfE Number _____

If you wish to request discretionary leave of absence for your child, please complete this application form and return it to the Headteacher as soon as possible and in advance of making any travel arrangements. Please note that there is no entitlement in law for parents to take their children out of school during term time without first obtaining permission from school.

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority must do so. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA). (For full details please see code C1)
- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable. (For full details please see part-time timetable) 18

Exceptional circumstances: All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of schools maintained by local authorities and special schools not maintained by local authorities, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. If you do take your child out of school without securing advance permission or he/she fails to return to school on the agreed due date, you are likely to be issued with a Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Fines will be issued in accordance with the National framework for penalty notices and the local code of conduct.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS, AND EVERY DAY IS IMPORTANT

Child's First Name	Child's Surname	D.o.B.	Year Group	Gender
				Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>

Parent (s) / Carer (s)			
First Name		First Name	
Surname		Surname	
Relationship to Child		Relationship to Child	
Address		Address	
Contact Telephone		Contact Telephone	
Email Address		Email Address	

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Request Details				
Reason for Request				
Destination (City & Country)				
Date of Departure		Date due back in School		Number of missed school days
Emergency contact in Blackburn with Darwen (inc. contact number)				
Parent/Carer's Signature		Date Request made		

School Section			
Date of meeting/conversation with parent/carer		Leave Authorised	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Exceptional circumstances considered			
Head teacher's/Principal's signature		Date	

For absences of 10 days or more please forward this form prior to the child's departure to education.welfare@blackburn.gov.uk

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Appendix B

Grounds for deleting a child from the school roll

Pupil regulation - grounds for deletion	DFR form reason	Guidance/situation which must apply before removing the child from the school roll
(a) The pupil has been registered at another school	The pupil has been registered at another school (other than dual registration)	The leaving school has <i>confirmed</i> with the new school that the child has been placed on roll, or the new school has agreed an expected first day of attendance with a person who has control of the child's attendance.
(b) The pupil has not continued at the school following completion of nursery education	Pupil was attending nursery provision but did not transfer to reception or a more senior class at the school.	The leaving school has <i>confirmed</i> with the new school that the child has been placed on roll, or the new school has agreed an expected first day of attendance with a person who has control of the child's attendance.
(c) The pupil is also registered at one or more other schools and the other schools have agreed the deletion	Dual registration has ended and pupil is now confirmed full time at one school	The leaving school has <i>confirmed</i> with the new school that the child has been placed on roll, or the new school has agreed an expected first day of attendance with a person who has control of the child's attendance. Parents of the pupil have been made aware the pupil is no longer dual registered.
(d) The pupil has a school attendance order which has been changed to name another school	Another school has been named on the order instead	Both schools are aware of the school attendance order (SAO) and the new school has <i>agreed</i> an expected first day of attendance with a person who has control of the child's attendance.
(e) The pupil had a school attendance order which has been revoked	The SAO has been revoked	The pupil was the subject of a school attendance order naming the school, but the order has been revoked and the school have been notified of this by the local authority.
(f) The parent of a pupil has notified the school <i>in writing</i> that the pupil will be leaving the school to be educated otherwise than at a school	Received written notification from parents that the pupil is going to be home educated or otherwise	School have received <i>written</i> notification from the parents that they intend to remove the child from roll, to take responsibility for their education. *If an SAO was revoked and parents choose to educate otherwise than at a school, ground (e) should be used **If the child is attending a special school this must be agreed with the Statutory Assessment Team before removing the child from the school roll to undertake EHE
(g) The pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school	Pupil has ceased to attend and no longer resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school.	All the indicators must apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents have informed school of their new address, which is no longer a reasonable distance from the school, and • the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again, • and the pupil is not a boarder at the school

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<p>(h) the pupil has not returned following a leave of absence.</p>	<p>Inclusion Officer has informed school to remove from roll</p>	<p>All the indicators must apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupil has not attended school within the ten school days immediately after the end of the period that the leave was granted for, • the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause, and • the school and the local authority have jointly* made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances, but: (i) they have not succeeded, or (ii) they have succeeded but they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any reasonable steps that could be taken (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance. <p>*BOTH school and LA have completed reasonable enquiries and failed to locate the child.</p>
<p>(i) The pupil has been continually absent from school for 20 school days*</p>	<p>Inclusion Officer has informed school to remove from roll</p>	<p>All the indicators must apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At no point during that period did any of the circumstances in regulation 10(3) Table 2 or 10(4) Table 3 other than the ones for codes G, N, or O apply. • the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or an unavoidable cause, and • the school and the local authority have jointly** made reasonable efforts to find out the pupil's location and circumstances, but: (i) they have not succeeded, (ii) or they have succeeded but they agree that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend the school again, taking into account any reasonable steps they could take (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance. <p><i>*This ground cannot be used in any case where the pupil could reasonably be supported to return to school regardless of whether that support has been provided. It cannot be used where a pupil is absent because of a health reason. It also cannot be used in cases where attendance legal action to cause the pupil to return to school could reasonably be taken instead. In such cases, the appropriate support or enforcement should be taken rather than the pupil's name being deleted from roll.</i></p> <p>**BOTH school and LA have completed reasonable enquiries and failed to locate the child</p>
<p>(j) The pupil is detained under a sentence of detention</p>	<p>Pupil has been found guilty of a crime and detained</p>	<p>School have been notified that a pupil has been found guilty of a crime and detained under a sentence of detention</p> <p>Before the pupil's name can be deleted from the admission register the school must have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will not return to the school once they are released.</p> <p><i>Pupils who are remanded to custody awaiting trial or sentencing cannot be removed under this ground</i></p>
<p>(k) the pupil has died</p>	<p>Pupil has died</p>	<p>School have received confirmation of the death of a pupil</p>
<p>(l) the pupil will be over compulsory school age and will not continue into the sixth form</p>	<p>Pupil is over compulsory school age</p>	<p>A pupil will be over compulsory school age by the school next meets, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again, or • the pupil does not meet the academic entry requirements to be transferred to the school's sixth form.
<p>(m) the pupil is a boarder at a school maintained by a local authority or academy and their boarding fees have not been paid</p>	<p>Fees and charges have not been paid</p>	<p>A pupil is a boarder at the school and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school is maintained by a local authority or is an academy, • charges for the pupil's board and lodgings are payable by the pupil's parent, and • those charges remain unpaid by the pupil's parent at the end of the school term to which they relate.
<p>(n) the pupil has ceased to be a pupil at an</p>	<p>Pupil has stopped attending an independent or</p>	<p>Where a pupil has ceased to be a pupil at the school and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the school is not maintained by a local authority or an academy (including a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts).

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independent school or non-maintained special school	non-maintained special school.	
(o) the pupil has been permanently excluded from the school	Pupil has been permanently excluded	A pupil's name cannot be deleted from the admission register until the outcome of any consideration of reinstatement and independent review (in the case of a disciplinary exclusion from a maintained school, pupil referral unit, or academy) or appeal (in the case of a city technology college or city college for the technology of the arts) is known. However, schools must have authorisation from LA that child can be removed from roll.

Schools should note that a Head Teacher can be prosecuted for removing a child from roll without complying with the pupil registrations regulations (see Section 434(6) Education Act, 1996).

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/434>.

Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council believes that this policy complies with the requirements of those regulations and is lawful. If a Head Teacher has any concerns or requires any guidance in complying with this policy, they should contact the Inclusion Team (details in section 6)

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