


# Children's Services Integrated Services for Learning

## Children Missing from Education (CME) Guidance (CS 4706) and Referral Form (CS 4707)

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## Introduction

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, child sexual exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Local authorities 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 pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. This duty only relates to children of compulsory school age\*.

Arrangements made under section 436A also play an important role in fulfilling the local authority's wider safeguarding duties. This guidance does not replace any Child Protection Procedures. Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns are to be observed at all times.

Department for Education guidance makes it clear that in carrying out this duty, local authorities must have in place arrangements for joint working and information sharing with other local authorities and partner agencies. It also states that all agencies which come into contact with children must cooperate with the local authority's arrangements for identifying children thought to be missing from education.

This document sets out what Hertfordshire County Council staff and school staff should do when a child believed to be missing from education comes to their attention.

Separate guidance is available for schools on Herts Grid for Learning <https://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml> about the legitimate removal of pupils from a school roll. A child legitimately removed from roll is not in most cases missing from education and all schools, including academies and independent schools are legally required to notify the local authority when they remove/plan to remove a child from their roll.

\*A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 December. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen.

## **Who is a Child Missing from Education?**

A child is missing from education if they are of compulsory school age (age 5-16), do not have a school place and no alternative education arrangements have been made for them.

**A child is not defined as missing from education if they have a school place but are not attending regularly, if they are being home educated, if they attend alternative provision such as a college or Education Support Centre or they are receiving a suitable education otherwise than the above and/or at school**

These vulnerable groups include:

- looked after children
- children living in women's refuges
- young runaways
- children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation
- children with long term medical or emotional problems
- unaccompanied asylum seekers
- children of refugees or asylum-seeking families
- children in new immigrant families not yet established in the UK
- children from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background
- children who are privately fostered
- young carers
- children from transient families
- teenage mothers
- young offenders
- children permanently excluded from school

### **Children missing from education are at greater risk of:**

- physical harm
- sexual exploitation
- becoming involved in crime
- demonstrating anti-social behaviour
- abusing drugs and alcohol
- being illegally employed
- radicalisation

It is vital therefore that the authority, schools and other agencies work closely together to help safeguard children who may be missing from education.

### **Role of the Children Missing Education Officer (CMEO)**

The Children Missing Education Officer (CMEO) is part of Children's Services Integrated Services for Learning team and is responsible for receiving all CME referrals. The CME

Officer keeps a record of all children reported as missing from education. Children are tracked until they return to suitable education.

Examples of the work undertaken by the CME Officer include:

- making enquiries of parents as to the educational arrangements they are making for their child
- ensuring parents make applications for school places
- making follow up enquiries with schools, teams and agencies within the local authority
- making visits to the last known address
- liaising with other local authorities and schools
- asking for follow up from the police and Border Force as appropriate
- issuing School Attendance orders on behalf of the local authority
- adding information to the School2School secure data system

If the child is missing from education, the CME Officer will ensure the details are passed to the appropriate team to secure suitable education. All children missing from education will be monitored by the CME Officer until such time as suitable provision is made.

### **Referral process for children believed to be missing from education**

The referral procedure for children believed to be missing from education should be followed by all Hertfordshire County Council staff and all schools and partner agencies if a child they believe to be missing from education comes to their attention.

Anyone who believes a child may be missing from education can contact the CME Officer for advice on 01992 556997. To make a referral to the CME Officer please complete and return the attached referral form via Herts/Schools FX to – [csf.cme@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:csf.cme@hertfordshire.gov.uk)

Please **DO NOT** email information containing children's details via Outlook as this is not secure.

It is likely that schools receiving direct applications for admission to the school outside of the normal admissions cycle will be the first to know of children missing from education. In the event that the school is unable to offer a place, and it appears from the application that the child is not in education, a referral should be made as described above.

Following this procedure will enable the local authority to meet its statutory duties relating to the identification of children missing education, safeguarding their welfare and protecting their entitlement to education.



**Children Missing Education (CME) Referral Form**

Use this form to notify the CME Officer of any child you believe is missing from education  
Do not use this form for children who have a school place but are not attending regularly

*Please use one form per child, unless they are siblings*

Name of referrer  Date

Team/school  Contact number

Child's Name:  DOB  M/F

Child's Name:  DOB  M/F

Child's Name:  DOB  M/F

Address

Name(s) of parents/carers      Phone number      Email address

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Other relevant information –

Date child(ren) became known to referrer:

This form should be emailed to the CME Officer, Statutory Attendance & Participation Team via Herts/Schools FX to [csf.cme@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:csf.cme@hertfordshire.gov.uk)