

Children missing from education (CME)

A child missing from education is a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll and who is not receiving a suitable education otherwise. i.e. - educated at home, privately or in alternative provision.

Children missing from education fall into 2 broad categories.

- those whose whereabouts and circumstances are known to the local authority but who have, for whatever reason, been out of education for 4 school weeks or more
- those who are 'lost' - children who have apparently disappeared, usually with their families, and the local authority knows neither where they are, nor anything of their circumstances or possibly even of their existence

Both categories of young people are at risk of not achieving their educational potential and could be placing their safety and welfare at risk

Legislation

From February 2007, under section 436A (inserted before section 437 in Chapter 2, Part 6 of the Education Act 1996 (school attendance) by the Education and Inspection Act 2006), what had previously been guidance on monitoring and tracking children missing from education became a statutory duty on local authorities.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure all their children of compulsory school age are receiving a suitable education (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996).

All local authorities are required to identify children living in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. The definition of 'suitable' is 'efficient, full-time education suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs the child may have'. Children, who are not receiving a suitable education - either through school, alternative provision or home education, are referred to as 'children missing from education (CME)'.

Contact the schools designated safeguarding lead.