



Comberton Primary School

Children Missing in Education Policy

(Based on WCC model policy and adapted for our setting)

Date Policy Last reviewed: Sep 2026

Signed by: Deena Frost Headteacher

Date: Sep 2026

Signed by: Jude Bylett Chair of Governors

Date: Sep 2026

Introduction

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a good education that will help them shape their own futures. Children missing education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) later on in life.

These children are defined by the Department for Education 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. This includes children who are awaiting a school place and children in receipt of unsuitable education, including those children local authorities are supporting to place into suitable education.

The purpose of the section 436A duty is to ensure that local authorities can identify and return to full-time education those children who are missing education (or those at risk of becoming CME). The duty relates to children of compulsory school age who are not on a school admission register and not receiving a suitable education otherwise than at school, for example, at home.

This policy is intended to inform the headteacher, the DSL, office staff and the governing body about how we minimise and prevent “Children Missing Education (CME)”. It relates primarily to children who are of Statutory School Age who do not currently have a school place or their provision is unknown. It should be read in conjunction with:

- ‘Working together to safeguard children’ (2026)
- ‘Keeping children safe in education’ (Sept 2026)
- DfE ‘Children missing in education’ Guidance for Local Authorities (Aug 2024)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended in 2016)
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2008 (as amended in 2018)
- Permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England Aug 2024
- The local authority’s Fair Access Protocol.

The school will work in partnership with the local authority who will actively work in partnership with parents and other services to identify those children who are not in receipt of a suitable education.

Safeguarding

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and to share information appropriately. This principle underpins Worcestershire’s policy on Children Missing Education, and there is an expectation that all agencies and professionals will work together to ensure that children are participating in education.

If we are concerned about a child’s safety, we will contact the Family Front Door on: **01905 822666**

Children at Particular Risk of Missing Education

Certain groups of children are more likely to be affected by the factors listed above and include:

- Children in Public Care (Looked After Children)
- Children who have been the subject of a Child Protection Plan.
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Gypsy, Roma and Travelling families
- Children who have experienced domestic violence or other adverse family circumstances
- Children with special educational needs
- Children who cease to attend school
- Children of Service Personnel
- Missing children and runaways
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System
- Migrant families
- Children who have had attendance difficulties

There are also certain points at which children are most at risk of becoming missing from education, and the most common reasons for this include:

- Children not registered by parents/carers at school when they achieve statutory school age
- Children not registered at school for the start of high school (Year 7)
- Frequent house moves, periods of homelessness or time spent in refuges
- Family breakdown
- Parents “withdrawing” children from school
- Schools off-rolling pupils without the correct checks and procedures being followed
- Exclusion (official and unofficial)

School Roles and responsibilities:

- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): leads safeguarding response where absence raises safety concerns; makes referrals to Family Front Door/Social Care as required.
- Office Attendance Lead: monitors registers daily, initiates contact within 1 school day of first unexplained absence, logs all contact attempts, and escalates to DSL if concerns persist.
- Headteacher: authorises de-rolling and ensures statutory LA notifications are made.
- Governing Body (named governor): receives termly summary of CME cases, patterns of absence and actions taken.

Escalation pathway:

1. Day 1 unexplained absence – school contacts parent/carer by telephone and records outcome.
2. Days 2–5 – continued attempted contact via phone, email, emergency contacts; home visit considered if safe and appropriate.
3. Day 6–9 – DSL review, consider welfare/ safeguarding referral, contact LA CME team for advice.
4. Day 10 – formal notification to LA CME team if reason unknown and no evidence of learning provision; immediate referral to Family Front Door if safeguarding concerns exist at any time.

Parents' Responsibilities

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child is receiving a suitable education either by regular school attendance: - at a school (publicly funded or independent) - educated otherwise (elective home education or any other form of alternative provision).

Schools' Procedures

In the event that a pupil fails to attend the school on the agreed or notified start date, the school will undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the reason for this absence, and will consider notifying the LA at the earliest opportunity.

- We will monitor all pupils' attendance through the daily register and contact families who do not inform us of the reason for any period of absence. (see attendance policy)
- Regular monitoring of pupil attendance will be conducted by the school administrator, family support worker and Head teacher.
- We will provide staff training and regular updates so that staff are vigilant to those at risk of becoming a CME.
- We will make every effort to make contact with a family (using all known information) if we believe a child is at risk of becoming a CME (a log will be kept of contact attempts).
- If a pupil is absent and the reason is unknown for 10 consecutive school days, the school will notify the Local Authority CME team immediately and provide all available details. The school will make and record attempts to make contact each school day prior to that notification and provide the LA with these records. Where there are safeguarding concerns at any point, the Family Front Door will be contacted without delay (see Safeguarding section).
- We will notify the authority, using the correct de-rolling form, if a pupil is deleted from the admission register in certain circumstances under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. *(There is statutory guidance governing when schools can delete children from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 9 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.)*

Admissions register

The school will ensure that an admissions register (SIMS) is kept up-to-date at all times, and will encourage parents/carers to notify the school of any changes as they occur. Pupils will be recorded on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the school that the pupil will attend the school. Where a parent/carer notifies the school that a pupil will live at another address, the school will record the following information on the admissions register:

- The full name of the parent/carer with whom the pupil will live
- The new address
- The date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address

Where a parent/carer notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school, or will be attending a different school in future, the school will record the following information on the admissions register:

- The name of the new school
- The date when the pupil first attended, or is due to attend, that school (we will always check with the new school that the pupil has attended on the day they stated they would start.)

Removing a pupil from the admissions register

Before removing a pupil from the admissions register, the school will ensure all statutory checks are completed and recorded, including:

- Contacting the parent/carer in writing and requesting confirmation of new arrangements;
- Checking with the named receiving school that the pupil has started on the expected date (by phone/email);
- Checking with the LA CME team and, where appropriate, internal checks (other family members at school) and external agencies (social care) to ensure removal is appropriate.

The school will retain evidence of these checks on the pupil file and will submit the de-rolling form to the LA within 5 working days of removal

We will inform the LA of any pupil, using the de-rolling form, who will be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents/carers and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home-schooled. This must be confirmed by the parent in writing.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent/carer has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order, and the school does not reasonably believe they will be returning at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.
- Have died.
- Have been registered at another school where it is not indicated this should be the case.

The school will notify the LA that a pupil is to be removed from the admissions register as soon as any of the above criteria are met, and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is actually removed.

If a pupil's name is to be removed from the admissions register, the school will provide the LA with the following information within 5 working days:

- The full name of the pupil
- The full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the pupil lives
- At least one telephone number of the parent/carer with whom the pupil lives
- The full name and address of the parent/carer who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable
- The name of the pupil's new school and their expected start date, if applicable

- The grounds for removal from the admissions register under Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), as outlined in [section 8](#) of this policy

When a pupil joins our school outside the normal transfer time, we will notify the LA within 5 working days of adding a pupils name to the admissions register.

Staff must not remove a pupil from the admissions register to avoid safeguarding, attendance, behaviour or attainment issues (off-rolling). Any decision to remove a pupil permanently will be referred to the headteacher and the nominated governor for safeguarding and attendance, with documentation of reasons. Where removal appears linked to avoidance of statutory duties, the school will notify the LA and keep records for possible scrutiny by the Department for Education or inspectors.

Elective Home Education

When parents notify intention to electively home educate, the school will:

- Request written confirmation from the parent and record the date of receipt;
- Invite parents to a meeting to discuss the decision and the implications for safeguarding and support (this is best practice);
- Notify the LA immediately and provide copies of correspondence and the de-rolling form;
- Where the pupil has an EHCP, the school will contact the LA SEN team to discuss potential options and ensure the parent understands that consent from the LA is required before removal.

Responsibility of the Local Authority

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/childrens-social-care/early-help-guidance-professionals/children-missing-education>

The Local Authority has a named Children Missing Education Officer who has responsibility for carrying out the Local Authorities duties in accordance with S436A. The CME Officer maintains a list of Children Missing Education, and case manages in the absence of lead professional e.g. Social Worker or SEN Statement Caseworker. In such circumstances the role of the CME Officer will be to support the lead professional where appropriate. Comberton will liaise with the CME team at the earliest opportunity if a child is deemed to be or is at risk of becoming 'missing in education'.

Evaluation and Review

This policy will be reviewed as part of our monitoring cycle (currently every two years), or where necessary in light of changes to the law or statutory guidance. The policy can be found in the school policies folder, on the staff shared area network and is referred to on the school website.

Written by: Deena Frost

Reviewed : September 2026

Review Date – September 2028

Agreed at the Full Governing Body Meeting on: Sep 2026