

Children Missing in Education (CME) Policy



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Approved/ Ratified:	Pat Hunt
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Document Version Control Log

Version	Modification Date	Synopsis of Changes
1.0	October 2025	
2.0	September 2026	No Changes

Introduction

The Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust is committed to ensuring that every child of compulsory school age receives an excellent full-time education which will allow them to build their own future. Parents/carers have a duty to ensure children receive suitable full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

If a child is not in school, they are at significant risk of underachieving, becoming victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training) later in life. They may also be at risk of abuse and exploitation.

Children may not be attending for a number of reasons, but if they are still of compulsory school age, then parents, school, and local authorities have a responsibility to ensure the continuity of their education.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- Our academies support the Local Authority with its statutory duties for children missing education (CME)
- Our academies follow the local framework to support the local authority, schools, key agencies and parents to work together to ensure that children do not end up as CME
- Processes are in place to swiftly re-engage children who are missing education
- Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined

The Legal Framework

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 requires all local authorities to make arrangements to establish the identities of children of compulsory school age in their area who are not registered pupils at school, and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

Regulation 8 (f) and 8 (h) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, place a duty on schools and local authorities to jointly carry out reasonable enquiries to try and locate pupils absent from school whose whereabouts are unknown.

- DFE Children Missing in Education Guidance (2016)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Lighthouse MAT Attendance Policy

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation

- The Education Act 1996 – Section 7, 8, 14, 19 AND 436a
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Education Act 2002
- Children Act 2004

Definition – Children Missing Education (CME)

This policy refers to any child of compulsory school age who has been registered at a formally approved education setting, e.g. school, academy, alternative provision, independent school or elective home education and has been out of education provision for a period of time.

Walsall Missing in Education Teams will work closely with our academies jointly, in respect of pupils on roll and who are absent from school and their whereabouts is unknown.

This might be:

- A child who is not at their last known address and;
- Has five or more days of continuous absence without explanation, or;
- Has left the academy suddenly and their destination is unknown.

This policy does not refer to children who are missing from view or absent from Home or Care. When a child goes missing from home, or from care, or where the school has significant safeguarding concerns for the child, the school must refer these children to Walsall MASH or their local MASH.

Parent/Carers Roles and Responsibilities

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving an efficient full-time education. Some parents may elect to home educate their children and may withdraw them from school at any time to do so. When a parent notifies the school in writing of their intention to home educate, our academies will notify the local authority and a meeting will be arranged between the local authority, school and parents.

Parent/Carers MUST notify the academy if their child/ren is moving and/or out of the area. Parents/carers must complete an internal transfer document to gather the appropriate information to avoid being classed as Missing in Education.

Academy and Lighthouse Multi Academy Trust Roles and Responsibilities

Schools have safeguarding duties under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils and in respect of this they should investigate any unexplained absences.

All academies must enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the academy has agreed or been notified that the pupil will attend school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

Reasonable enquiries include, but not limited to:

- Attempting to make contact with all named individuals on Arbor
- Text message to contacts
- Email to contacts
- Home visit
- Letter through the door

Our academies will monitor attendance through their daily register and should address poor attendance whenever this occurs. Any child whose whereabouts are known but continues to have unauthorised absences, should be assessed to determine if they have additional needs and require support through Families First and/or the School Nursing Team.

All academies must 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 Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Annex A) This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at standard transitional points.

If a child is absent from our academies and their whereabouts is unknown, we have a duty to carry out a reasonable enquiry jointly with the local authority to ascertain the whereabouts, which might be a result of:-

- The family moves within Walsall but parents fail to inform the academy of the house move or transfer to a new school
- The family move out of Walsall and relocate to a new area within the UK but parents fail to inform the school
- The family relocate abroad and fail to inform the school of their destination
- The family is 'relocated' as a result of circumstances such as, domestic abuse or homelessness
- Parent/academy disagreement and parents withdraw their child
- Family separation

In these instances, our academies should ensure the following actions are taken and recorded:

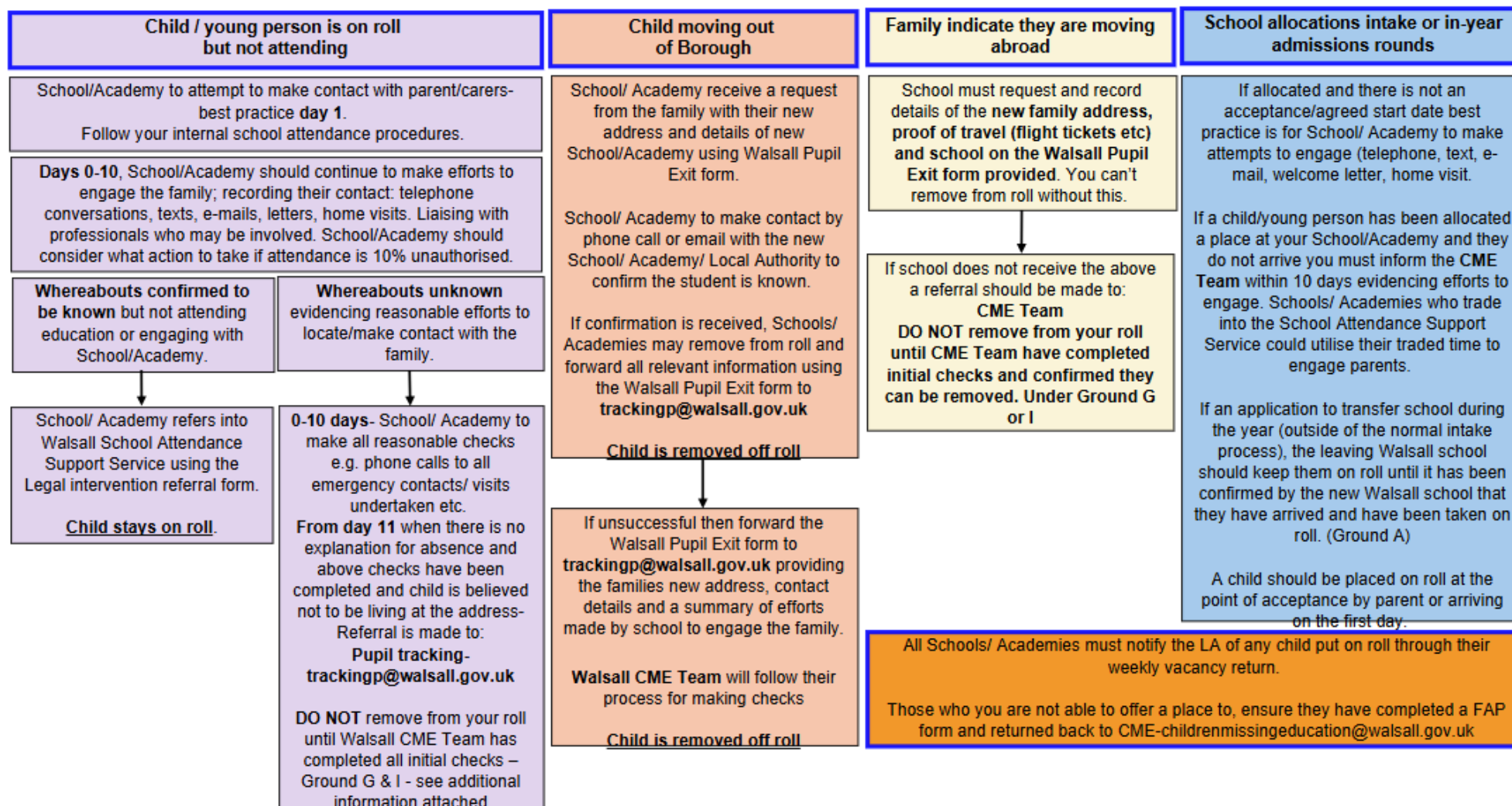
- Consider the likely reason for this absence – has the family been granted leave of absence, or is the school aware of an extended trip abroad, has the child been absent due to sickness or unavoidable cause if not:
- Make a first day of absence call to the parents to establish the reason for the absence and to confirm the child's whereabouts
- Child with all members of staff who the child may have had contact with
- Make telephone calls to any numbers held or identified
- Conduct a home visit to the last known address of the child within the first three days of the child's absence
- If possible, enquire of neighbours about the location of the family
- Send a letter to the last known address and record the outcome
- Inform the Trust Attendance officer at the Lighthouse MAT
- Refer to the CME team within the first 10 days of the child's absence, detailing the reasonable enquires carried out by the academy
- Keep all updated 'reasonable enquiries' referrals and additional information logged on the CPOMS system

Children Most at Risk of Becoming CME

There are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education and the list below presents some of the circumstances that may lead to children becoming CME (it is not exhaustive) :-

1. Pupils at risk of harm/neglect
2. Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Families
3. Families of Armed Forces
4. Missing Children
5. Children and Young People Supervised by the Youth Justice System
6. Children who cease to attend school

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS/ ACADEMIES WHERE CHILDREN ARE AT RISK OF MISSING EDUCATION



Appendix 2: Lighthouse MAT Internal Transfer Information



Thank you for informing us that your child will be leaving our academy. To ensure that your child is not at risk as being placed as Missing in Education. Please complete this form and return it to the academy office prior to your child's/children's last day.

Child's Name:	
Child's Date of Birth:	
Current Address:	
Last School Day at the Academy:	
New Address:	
Date of Arrival:	
New School:	
Please provide additional information if leaving the country	Flight Details Flight Tickets Evidence of New Address
Signed by Parents/Carers:	
Signed by School:	
Date Received:	