



---

# Safeguarding Response to Child Missing in Education (CME)

Date of document: September 2026  
Date for review: September 2027  
Lead reviewer: Kim Brewer/Greg McGill  
Approval by: Governing Body

---

## 1. Statement of intent

All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances. Children missing from education (CME) risk underachieving, becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in later life, and are at significant risk of safeguarding concerns, including neglect, sexual exploitation, or county lines exploitation.

Central Bedfordshire Council has a legal statutory duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education and to support them back into suitable provision. Swallowfield Primary School works collaboratively with the Local Authority (LA) to fulfil this statutory obligation effectively.

### Definition of CME

For the purpose of this policy, a **child missing from education (CME)** is defined as a child of compulsory school age who is:

- Not registered at a school
- Not placed in alternative provision by an LA
- Not receiving a suitable education elsewhere (e.g., elective home education)

This definition encompasses children who are receiving an education that is not suitable for their age, ability, aptitude, or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

**Note on Absence vs. CME:** This policy does not address registered pupils who are absent from education (i.e., persistent or severe absence). Procedures for managing non-attendance are detailed in the school's **Attendance Policy**.

## 2. Induction and training

**Staff Induction:** The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education is fully explained to all new staff during induction.

**Annual Safeguarding Training:** All staff receive annual child protection and safeguarding updates aligned with *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE)*. This includes training on identifying CME risks, early help processes, and wider contextual safeguarding indicators.

### 3. Attendance and Children Absent from Education

Swallowfield Primary School promotes high levels of attendance and recognizes that persistent or unexplainable absence can be a key indicator of welfare and safeguarding concerns.

**DSL & Attendance Link:** Information is systematically shared between the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the staff member responsible for attendance (Lisa Tucker, Office Manager).

**Contextual Safeguarding Awareness:** Staff are trained to recognize absence patterns that may indicate child exploitation, female genital mutilation (FGM), radicalization, forced marriage, or honour-based abuse.

**Emergency Contact Details:** The school maintains at least **two emergency contact numbers** for every pupil to enable fast communication during unexcused absences.

Swallowfield Primary has a duty to investigate unauthorised absences to establish if safeguarding concerns are evident and we also recognise that Central Bedfordshire Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that all children and young people of compulsory school age receive suitable and appropriate education. We will, therefore, support the Local Authority in ensuring that this duty is carried out effectively.

### 4. Legal Framework and Statutory Guidance

This policy complies with national guidance and regulatory frameworks, including:

- DfE Statutory Guidance: *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*
- DfE Statutory Guidance: *Children Missing Education (CME)*
- DfE Statutory Guidance: *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)*
- *The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*

### 5. Deletion of a Pupil from the School Roll

Where a pupil leaves Swallowfield Primary School, Central Bedfordshire Council is notified **as soon as grounds for deletion are met**, and no later than the date the pupil's name is removed from the register.

In accordance with *The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024*, grounds for deleting a pupil from the roll include:

- **Elective Home Education (EHE):** The pupil has been taken out of school by parents to be educated outside the school system.
- **Change of Residence:** The pupil has ceased to attend school and no longer resides within reasonable distance of the school.
- **Medical Condition:** The school medical officer certifies that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and no intention to continue has been indicated.
- **Custody:** The pupil is in custody under a court order for a period exceeding four months, and the school does not reasonably expect them to return.
- **Permanent Exclusion:** The pupil has been permanently excluded.

## **6. Joint Duty to Investigate (School & Local Authority)**

Before deleting a pupil from roll under grounds of unexplainable absence or address change, Swallowfield Primary and Central Bedfordshire Council will jointly make reasonable enquiries to establish the child's location.