Charter Academy

Children Missing Education (CME)

Local Level Policy

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Committee approved by	Charter Local Governing Body
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Date	Notes

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1. Aims

Charter Academy is committed to ensuring that every child of compulsory school age receives an excellent full-time education which will give them the opportunity to build their own future. Parents/guardians have a legal duty to ensure children are receiving suitable full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. All children are entitled to a full-time education, regardless of their circumstances.

For the purpose of this policy, a 'Child Missing Education' (CME) is defined as a child or young person of compulsory school age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by the LA, and not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition also encompasses children who are receiving an education, but not one that is suitable, including children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, SEND.

CME also includes children who:

- are in the process of applying for a school place
- have been offered a school place for a future date but have not yet started
- are receiving elective home education (EHE) that has been assessed as unsuitable
- have been recorded as CME for an extended period, for example where their whereabouts are unclear or unknown.

Children Missing Education are at significant risk of underachieving, having poorer health outcomes, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) later in life.

The Local Authority (LA) has a legal duty to identify when there are CME and help them back into education. The purpose of this policy is to set out clear and robust procedures, and to ensure clarification of the roles and responsibilities of both the school and the LA, and how we will work together to identify and support CME.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the following legislation:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Children Act 2004

It is also based on the following statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE):

- Children missing education (Aug 2024)
- Working together to improve school attendance (Aug 2024)
- Elective home education (Apr 2019)
- Keeping children safe in education (Sept 2025)
- School suspensions and permanent exclusions (Aug 2024)

It is also based on guidance provided by our local authority:
Children Missing from Education (CME) – Coventry City Council

All Schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their local authority when they are to remove a pupil's name from the school's admission. This can be under any of the grounds set out in Annex A of Children missing education (Aug 2024).

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 a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. Regulations 8(f) and 8(h) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, as amended, place a duty on schools and local authorities to jointly carry out reasonable enquiries [4.1] to try and locate pupils absent from school whose whereabouts are unknown.

Every child has a right to an education and regulations 8(f) and 8(h) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, place a duty on schools and local authorities to jointly carry out reasonable enquiries [4.1] to try and locate pupils absent from school's whole whereabouts are unknown.

3. The responsibilities of the parent/guardian

Parents/guardians have a legal duty to ensure that their child/ren of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education.

Some parents may elect to educate their child/ren at home and may withdraw them from school at any time to do so, unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order. Parents/guardians must notify the school in writing where they will be home-schooling their child, in order for the child to be removed from the admissions register.

Parents/guardians are responsible for informing the school at which their child is registered whenever their child is unable to attend school. Where this absence is due to distance, parents/carers have a duty to inform the school at which their child is registered of their new home address and confirm their plans for their child's education. Parents/guardians must immediately notify the school regarding any changes to the pupil's education arrangements.

3.1 Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that, in relation to a child or young person, a 'parent' also includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility for or care of the child. The DfE defines a 'parent' as a person who typically has care of a child or young person if the child lives with them either full or part time and they look after them, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

4. The responsibilities of the school

Schools must enter pupils' names on the admission register on the first day that the school and a person with control of the pupil's attendance have agreed that the pupil will attend the school. If no date has been agreed or notified, the pupil's name must be entered on the first day they attend the school. Names must be entered from the beginning of the first session. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries [4.1] to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

Charter Academy has safeguarding duties under section 175(4) of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils and therefore school will investigate all unexplained absences. The attendance team will attempt to contact parents/carers who have not contacted the school by 9:30am. Further phone calls and home visits will also be carried out, particularly for vulnerable students.

Charter Academy will monitor all pupil absence from school closely and will address pupils' poor attendance using a range of supportive interventions. Any child whose whereabouts are known and where this is considered a reasonable distance [4.2] from the school, but continues to have unauthorised absences, will be invited in for a meeting to discuss support. Where it is not possible to

support an improvement in attendance, the school and the LA will jointly consider the use of the statutory (legal) process.

For any child whose whereabouts are known, but where this is an unreasonable distance [4.2] from Charter Academy (i.e the child has moved out of the city, or has left the UK) school will complete a CME referral form [Appendix 2], submit this to the LA, and de-register the child with immediate effect. Prior to completing a CME referral, school will carry out a home visit as well as contacting relevant people from the contact list on the school database to confirm the child's whereabouts. The CME referral form is then sent to the Coventry Children Absent from Education Team by email.

Where school have concerns about pupils relating to CME, they will their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated to the DSL or deputy DSL.

If a child is absent from school and their whereabouts is unknown, Charter Academy will carry out reasonable enquiries [4.1] jointly with the local authority to ascertain their whereabouts, including but not limited to:

- Contact parents/carers daily via SMS, telephone and email to establish the reason for the child's absence and/or to confirm the child's whereabouts. If there is no response from primary carers, emergency contacts will also be contacted.
- Check with all members of staff with whom the child may have had contact.
- Check with the child's friends, siblings and known relatives at Charter Academy or other schools.
- Make enquiries with all other professionals who have been involved with the child.
- Conduct a visit to the last known address of the child within the first five days of the child's absence.
- If possible, enquire with neighbours about the whereabouts of the family.
- Leave a note at the last known address and record the outcome.

Please note: This list is not exhaustive – the school and LA will use their judgement towards what reasonable enquiries [4.1] are appropriate, once all the facts of the case have been considered.

4.1 For the purpose of this policy, 'reasonable enquiries' are defined as limited, investigative powers that the school may action to determine a child's whereabouts and whether they may be in danger. In line with the Children Act 2004, the school will follow appropriate procedures when carrying out reasonable enquiries, such as conducting discussions with neighbours, relatives or landlords, to determine whether a child may be at risk of harm. School will record that they have completed these procedures and, if necessary, make a referral to Coventry Children's Services or the police.

After five days of unexplained absence, where the child's whereabouts cannot be ascertained, school will complete a CME referral form [Appendix 2] and submit this to the Coventry Children Absent from Education Team by email.

4.2 The DfE does not define reasonable distance; each case depends on the family situation and the geography of the area for example, the parents' ability to get the child to school, a safe walking route or the accessibility of local transportation.

5. De-registration from the admissions register

Charter Academy have the right to remove pupils from the admission register where they have not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or are absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, and the school and LA have failed to establish the pupil's

whereabouts after making reasonable enquiries [4.1]. Charter Academy will notify the LA if any pupil is to be deleted from the admission register in the circumstance outlined in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

De-registration will occur when:

A pupil has been granted authorised leave of absence but has failed to attend school within 10 school days after the period of authorised absence ended, and:

- There is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school.
- The LA and school are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries [4.1].

Or

A pupil has been continuously absent from school for a period of at least 20 school days, and:

- The absence was not authorised.
- There is reason to believe the pupil is not unable to attend school.
- The LA and school are unable to determine the pupil's whereabouts after making joint reasonable enquiries [4.1].

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.

6. Pupils who have been excluded

Charter Academy will arrange appropriate education for excluded students up until the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion in order to prevent the child from becoming CME, according to the DfE School suspensions and permanent exclusions statutory guidance. The LA will be responsible for providing full-time education for permanently excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed-period exclusion.

7. Elective home education

Parents/guardians have the right to educate their children at home; when a child is registered at a school, but the parent/guardian wishes to home educate, the parent/guardian has a duty to notify the school that they are planning to educate their child "other than at school" by writing to the Headteacher. The child will then be removed from the school roll. It is the responsibility of Charter Academy to notify the local authority.

An Elective Home Education Checklist [**Appendix 1**] will be completed online by Charter Academy and submitted with a copy of the letter from the parent/guardian requesting that their child is removed from roll.

More information on Elective Home Education (EHE) can be found by visiting Elective home education (Coventry City Council) or by calling the Coventry EHE Team on 02476 831614.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the school senior leadership team. At every review, it will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Links to other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Attendance policy
- Admissions policy
- Suspensions and exclusions policy
- Children with health needs who cannot attend school policy

Appendix (1)

Coventry City Council - Elective Home Education Referral

Appendix (2)

Coventry City Council Child Missing Education (CME) Referral Form