

Children Missing Education Policy and Procedure

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1 Introduction

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education, which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

This policy and procedure document sets out key principles that enable the London Borough of Camden to adhere to the Department for Education (DfE) Children Missing Education (CME) guidance in identifying children who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise.

At the London Borough of Camden, the CME work is undertaken by the School Inclusion Team (SIT). There is a named CME Officer as per the DfE guidance that is placed within this team.

This policy is in line with the CME DfE statutory guidance (September 2016) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

This duty only relates to children of compulsory school age (5-16).¹

Arrangements made under section 436A also play an important role in fulfilling the local authority's wider safeguarding duties. This guidance does not replace any Child Protection procedures. Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns are to be observed at all times.

2 Children Missing Education (CME) Definition

CME are children of compulsory school age who are not:

- registered pupils at a school
- receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school

Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation (including travel to conflict zones), and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

3 Children at particular risk of missing education

There are many circumstances where a child may become CME, therefore it is vital that each CME case is judged on its own merit. Although not exhaustive, the list below presents some of the circumstances where children are at particular risk of missing education:

- Pupils at risk of harm/neglect
- Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families
- Children of Service Personnel
- Missing children and runaways
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System

¹ A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday. If they turn 5 between 1 January and 31 March, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 March; if they turn 5 between 1 April and 31 August, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 August. If they turn 5 between 1 September and 31 December, then they are of compulsory school age on 31 December. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen.

- Children who cease to attend a school
- Children of new migrant families
- New arrivals in the borough, either from another Local Authority (LA) or from abroad
- Failure to start appropriate provision and never enter the system
- Stopped attending, due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal by parents/carers
- Failure to complete a transition between schools
- Children experiencing mental health problems/ Medical Needs
- Children at risk of a forced marriage
- Children at risk of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Children experiencing abuse and neglect
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Looked after Children (LAC)
- Young Carers

4 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Local Authorities

LAs have a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise.

The LA should consult the parents of the child when establishing whether the child is receiving suitable education. Those children identified as not receiving suitable education should be returned to full time education either at a school or in alternative provision (AP). Prompt action and early intervention are crucial to discharging this duty effectively and in ensuring that children are safe and receiving a suitable education.

LAs should have robust policies and procedures in place to enable them to meet their duty in relation to these children, including ensuring that there are effective tracking and enquiry systems in place, and appointing a named person to whom schools and other agencies can make referrals about children who are missing education. As stated in the Introduction, this role is fulfilled by the School Inclusion and Children Missing Education Officer within SIT.

Some children who are missing from education can be identified and supported back into education quickly; other children who have experienced more complex problems face tougher obstacles to getting back into suitable education. When developing policies and procedures for children not receiving a suitable education, LAs should consider the reasons why children go missing from education and the circumstances that can lead to this happening.

LAs should have in place arrangements for joint working and information sharing with other LAs and agencies. Individual LAs can determine the specific detailed arrangements that work best in their area that not only meet this statutory duty but also enable them to contribute to a range of work aimed at improving outcomes for children.

Where there is concern for a child's welfare, the LA's safeguarding procedures should be followed. If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed, the police should also be involved. **Where there is a concern that a child's safety or well-being is at risk, there is an obligation to take immediate action.**

4.2 Parents

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education. Some parents may [elect to educate their children at home](#) and may withdraw them from school, unless they are subject to a [School Attendance Order](#)

Further information regarding School Attendance Orders can be found on the link below <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

4.3 Schools

[DfE Statutory Guidance](#) states that *“**All schools** (including academies and independent schools) 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 regulations ([Appendix 1](#)). This duty does not apply when a pupil’s name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points”*

*“**All schools** must also notify the local authority **within five days** of adding a pupil’s name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point”*

“Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil’s name from the register”

Schools must notify the LA of children that have been added or removed from the school register, in line with the DfE timescale, by submitting the returns form “Statutory On/Off Roll Return at Non Transition Points” ([Appendix 2](#))

It is the responsibility of the home school to confirm with the destination school that the child is on their roll. The home school must only remove the child’s name from the admissions register once the child has been added onto the destinations school register. The off roll date must not be backdated.

For CME that have moved an unreasonable distance, it is the responsibility of the school to obtain the new address and notify SIT. Children must only be removed from roll once the destination LA has confirmed receipt of notification. The off roll date must not be backdated.

CME notifications do not apply for children who have left the country, unless the school has reason to believe this may not be the case. If there are safeguarding concerns, then a referral to MASH must be made.

If a child is absent from school and their whereabouts is unknown, their name must only be removed from the school admission register once the school and Camden Pupil Attendance Service (PAS) have failed, after **jointly** making reasonable checks, to establish the whereabouts of the child ([Appendix 3 and 4](#)). Schools must notify the CME team of any such cases immediately, by completing and returning the [CME notification form](#) together with [Evidence of Checks Undertaken form](#).

As stated in the [School Attendance Guidance](#) *“schools must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly”*

If a child fails to attend on the expected first day, the school must follow their non-attendance procedures to trace the child. The school can seek advice from PAS. Cases such as these are not deemed CME.

4.4 School Inclusion and Children Missing Education Officer

As recommended in the DfE CME Statutory Guidance, the London Borough of Camden has a named Local Authority CME Officer who is placed within SIT. The named CME Officers responsibilities include:

- Receiving all CME notifications
- Maintaining a register of all children reported as missing from education
- Tracking children until they are placed into suitable education ([Appendix 5](#))
- Receiving and monitoring statutory on/off roll returns

5 Notification Sources

Established CME notification routes in the borough include:

- CME notification form, which captures the core information about a child who is residing in the LA. ([Appendix 6](#))
- Direct notifications from parents/family members
- Weekly Out of School report from the in-house database – identifies children that key stakeholders in the authority have marked as CME
- Returns for “Statutory On/Off Roll Return at Non Transition Points” form
- DfE S2S Database/ Lost Pupil Database

6 Tracking Processes

CME tracking processes include:

- A CME register with core information of children who are not currently in suitable education, including the monitoring of children where an EHCP * application has been made
**Camden’s SEN service leads on monitoring and placing children with an EHCP*
- A live report of CME which includes a RAG rating system for known vulnerabilities and length of time out of education
- Returns from Camden schools giving details of children who have been added and deleted from the school register
- Regular contact with families until the CME is in receipt of suitable education
- Where there is evidence to suggest that the child has moved to a different LA, the named CME Officer in the destination LA will be notified. SIT will maintain a record of the child’s details until receipt of notification is confirmed.
- A process with agreed timeframes for untraceable CME ([Appendix 7](#))

Most CME will reintegrate back into mainstream education. For those unable to be placed through the usual In Year Admissions process, the following routes are available:

- Fair Access Panel
- Primary Inclusion Forum
- School Inclusion Panel (Medical Needs)
- Camden Centre for Learning Referral Panel
- Camden Pathways (Alternative Provision)

7 Key stakeholders and agencies (statutory and non-statutory)

In line with the DfE CME guidance, there is a requirement that the following stakeholders share information about CME:

Camden Services

- Housing Department
- Schools/School Admissions
- MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub)
- Early Help
- SEND
- Elective Home Education (EHE)
- Pupil Attendance Service (PAS)
- Youth Offending Service (YOS)

Other

- Parents/Carers/Family Members/Friends
- Out of Borough Schools
- Local Authorities
- General Practitioners/Medical professionals
- Specialist Agencies/Charities

8 Enquiry Systems

To assist with the tracing of a CME, SIT has access to the following:

- Impulse In-House Database
- Camden Resident Index
- MOSAIC Database/MASH
- Housing information (on written request)
- Council Tax information (on written request)
- Youth Offending Service (YOS) (on written request)
- Health/NHS Spine Database (on written request)
- DfE Get Information about Pupils (GIAP) database

9 DfE S2S Database/ Lost Pupil Database

[The DfE School to School](#) (S2S) database is a secure way to electronically transfer the common transfer file (CTF) to any other maintained school.

S2S contains a lost pupil's report of pupils who either move outside the English maintained system or leave a school without providing information about their new school. This database gives the functionality for local authorities to search for information on pupils arriving into their local authorities for whom no CTF has been received.

The School Inclusion and Children Missing Education Officer regularly accesses this database to check and follow up on CTF transfers that are pending.

10 Untraceable CME

Most CME are located and placed in educational provision. For those that remain untraceable, reasonable checks are carried out in a timely manner and recorded on the LA database (Impulse). Case closures are agreed with line managers.

11 CME Promotion

In line with the DfE CME Statutory Guidance, SIT regularly raises awareness to promote their CME policies, procedures and notification routes to key stakeholders and agencies. In addition, the named officer promotes CME practice and procedures at the Camden Annual Attendance Conference.

The School Inclusion and Children Missing Education Officer attends the London CME Network meetings to reflect on current issues and share best practice.

12 Children who remain out of education

SIT aims to reintegrate CME into suitable education within 8 weeks. However, on the rare occasion where there are no vacancies in Camden schools, CME may be referred to the Fair Access Panel (FAP) for secondary aged children or Primary Inclusion Forum (PIF) for primary aged children. The panel would make a collective decision on naming a suitable school for the child.

13 Safeguarding

It is important that all agencies and practitioners working with children recognise their responsibilities regarding CME and the implications for safeguarding children. It is the responsibility of every individual to ensure that children are re-engaged back into education provision as a matter of priority. Processes include:

- Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities
- Cross checking CME cases with MASH
- Uploading of a weekly report of CME onto a secure database for MASH to cross check
- An immediate referral to MASH (or [police](#) if necessary) if any known or new safeguarding concerns arise.

Removal from School Roll Explanation

Prescribed grounds under which pupils can be taken off-roll and notification to the Local Authority Education (Pupil Registration)

(England) Regulations 2006 – Regulation 8 sets out the criteria under which compulsory school-aged children can be removed from school roll, summarised as follows:

8 (1) (a) The local authority is approving a change of provision for a pupil subject to a School Attendance Order (SAO)

A pupil who is subject to an SAO must not be removed from roll unless the local authority has substituted the school named on the SAO with a new school or revoked the order on the grounds that suitable education has been arranged otherwise than at school.

8 (1) (b) The pupil has been registered at another school (no dual-roll agreement, 8 (1) (a) does not apply, Reg 9 does not apply - dual registration of a child with no fixed abode)

A pupil who becomes registered at a new school can be removed from the roll of the previous school, only once the destination school has confirmed the on roll date.

8 (1) (c) The pupil is on dual roll and ceases to attend one of the schools (sub-paragraph (i) or (m) or Reg 9 does not apply - dual registration of a child with no fixed abode)

A pupil registered at more than one school under a dual-roll arrangement can be removed from the roll of one of the schools providing the other school is in agreement.

8 (1) (d) The parent(s) have elected to home-educate (EHE) and 8 (1) (a) does not apply

Parents have a right to withdraw their child from a school in favour of home education. The child must not be removed from the school roll until the parent has given written notification of their decision to educate the child at home (parents sometimes use this option when there are problems for their child at school. It would not be appropriate for school staff to encourage EHE as a solution to difficult issues as this is unlikely to be in the best interests of the child). The school - not the parent - has a legal duty to notify the local authority when deleting a child from roll under this criterion. An EHE notification must be sent by the school to EHE@camden.gov.uk

[Educating your child at home - Camden Council](#)

8 (1) (e) Except in the case of a border the pupil has ceased to attend and is no longer residing within reasonable distance to the school

Pupils can be deleted from roll when the distance to school is deemed unreasonable by the local authority, and the parent is not maintaining the school place.

School must obtain details of the child's new address and refer to the CME Officer to enable a CME notification to the destination local authority and reduce the risk of the child falling of the education system. Children must only be removed once the destination LA has confirmed receipt of notification.

Where a parent has notified the school that the child is leaving the country and the school has reason for concern under safeguarding then a referral to MASH must be made. Children who leave the country are not deemed as CME.

8 (1) (f) The pupil has failed to return following authorised leave of absence exceeding 10 school days for the purpose of a holiday

A pupil who has failed to return following extended authorised leave, providing all three of the following three conditions are fulfilled:

1. The pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted.
2. There are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause.
3. Both the school and the Local Authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries and failed to ascertain the child's whereabouts.

A CME notification must be made. The child must remain on roll until confirmation of CME notification is received.

8 (1) (g) The pupil is certified too ill to pursue education

This will apply on the very rare occasion when a pupil has a terminal or serious medical condition and is deemed medically unfit to continue with education. An appropriate medical professional will need to certify that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to return to school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age.

8 (1) (h) The pupil has been missing from school for 20 school days or more continuously

Schools may remove missing children from roll providing all three of the following conditions are fulfilled:

1. At no time was the absence during that period authorised by the school.
2. There are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend due to sickness or any unavoidable cause.
3. Both the school and the Local Authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries and failed to ascertain the child's whereabouts.

Schools must make reasonable checks ([Appendix 3](#)), together with the LA (Pupil Attendance Service) to locate the child and facilitate his/her safe return to school. The checks must start as soon as child is absent from day 1. Enquiries should include writing to the parents, attempting to make telephone contact with parents, appropriate friends and relatives, speaking to other children/parents, home visits and local authority checks undertaken by PAS.

Schools should refer to the CME officer if the child remains untraceable on day 21. Schools must wait for confirmation of notification before removing the child from roll.

8 (1) (i) The pupil has been given a custodial sentence for four months or longer as a result of a final order

A child who is taken into custody for four months or more, as a result of a final order, can be taken off roll, unless the school has reason to believe that he/she will return to the school at the end of the period.

Schools must not de-register a pupil who is remanded in custody and awaiting a trial or hearing at a future date.

8 (1) (j) Death of a pupil

In the tragic circumstance that a pupil dies, the school should remove the child from roll upon notification of the death.

8 (1) (k) The pupil is above compulsory school age

This applies to Year 11 pupils who do not wish to return to the school in the following academic year. The official school leaving date for Year 11 pupils is the last Friday in the month of June, in the school year in which they turn 16.

School-leavers under this category who are at risk of not being in education, employment or training (NEET) should be referred to Connexions

8 (1) (l) The pupil is leaving a school that is not maintained by the government

This relates to pupils leaving the roll of a school in the independent sector.

8 (1) (m) The pupil has been permanently excluded

The permanent exclusion of a pupil does not take effect until:

- expiry of Independent Review Panel (IRP) deadline or decision
- parent written confirmation that won't be applying for IRP.

Schools must notify the Local Authorities School Inclusion office by the first day of the exclusion.

8 (1) (n) and 8(3) Nursery child leaving school

This applies to children who have been admitted to a school to receive nursery education and are not transferring to a higher class at the school.

Although it is not a legal requirement to upload a CTF to the new school for children who have not reached compulsory school age (the start of the school term following their fifth birthday), it is good practice to do so.

8 (1) (o) State-funded boarding schools where fees are unpaid

If fees remain unpaid then a CME notification must be made.

Not yet compulsory school age – The LA requests returns for all children at non transition points, including children below compulsory school age. Although this is not a statutory requirement, it ensures the LA has clear visibility of all children.

Evidence of Checks Undertaken

School Name:	Form Completed By:	Name of Child:	Date of Birth:	Year Group:
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Please use the below to demonstrate checks undertaken (in no particular order) for pupils that are on school roll but not attending, **before** a CME notification is made.

This is in relation to the below grounds of removal:

8 (1) (f) The pupil has failed to return following authorised leave of absence exceeding 10 school days for the purpose of a holiday (unauthorised absences)

8 (1) (h) The pupil has been missing from school for 20 school days or more continuously (unauthorised absences)

**If known to safeguarding please check with the Social Worker
Pupils with an EHCP/SEN please contact the SEN team**

Checks Completed	Tick box	Date	Outcome Summary	Completed by (Initial)
School Checks				
First day call/text (continue each day)	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Emails to all known email addresses	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Letter to parent/carer	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Call and email to all emergency contact details	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Notify Camden Pupil Attendance Service (PAS) who will undertake checks on if child is known to other services, contact information will be shared with the school	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Google search for pupil / parent				
School Checks (if applicable only) case by case basis				
School Nurse to check with GP	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Check with siblings schools	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Check with other schools parents may have indicated they are moving to – are they on roll?	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Home visits (only if pupil remains untraceable) - occupied? / ask neighbours.	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Below checks by school if PAS shares contact information for other services known to be working with the pupil				
Check with Housing Department for council tenants	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Check with other LA staff working with family (Early Help/MASH)	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Any other additional information the LA should be aware of				
Asylum Seeker – please provide LA with the Home Office reference number	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Additional Measures taken to trace child which is not listed above	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Pupil remains untraceable after 20 school days of unauthorised absences				
CME notification completed and sent to LA (Please wait for CME Officer to confirm receipt before off rolling)	<input type="checkbox"/>			

School office administration

OFF ROLL DATE (confirmed by CME Officer)	<input type="checkbox"/>			
LA statutory off roll return sent	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Schools 2 Schools (S2S) completed	<input type="checkbox"/>			
School record archived / sent to new school	<input type="checkbox"/>			
Head teacher/DSL sign off	<input type="checkbox"/>			

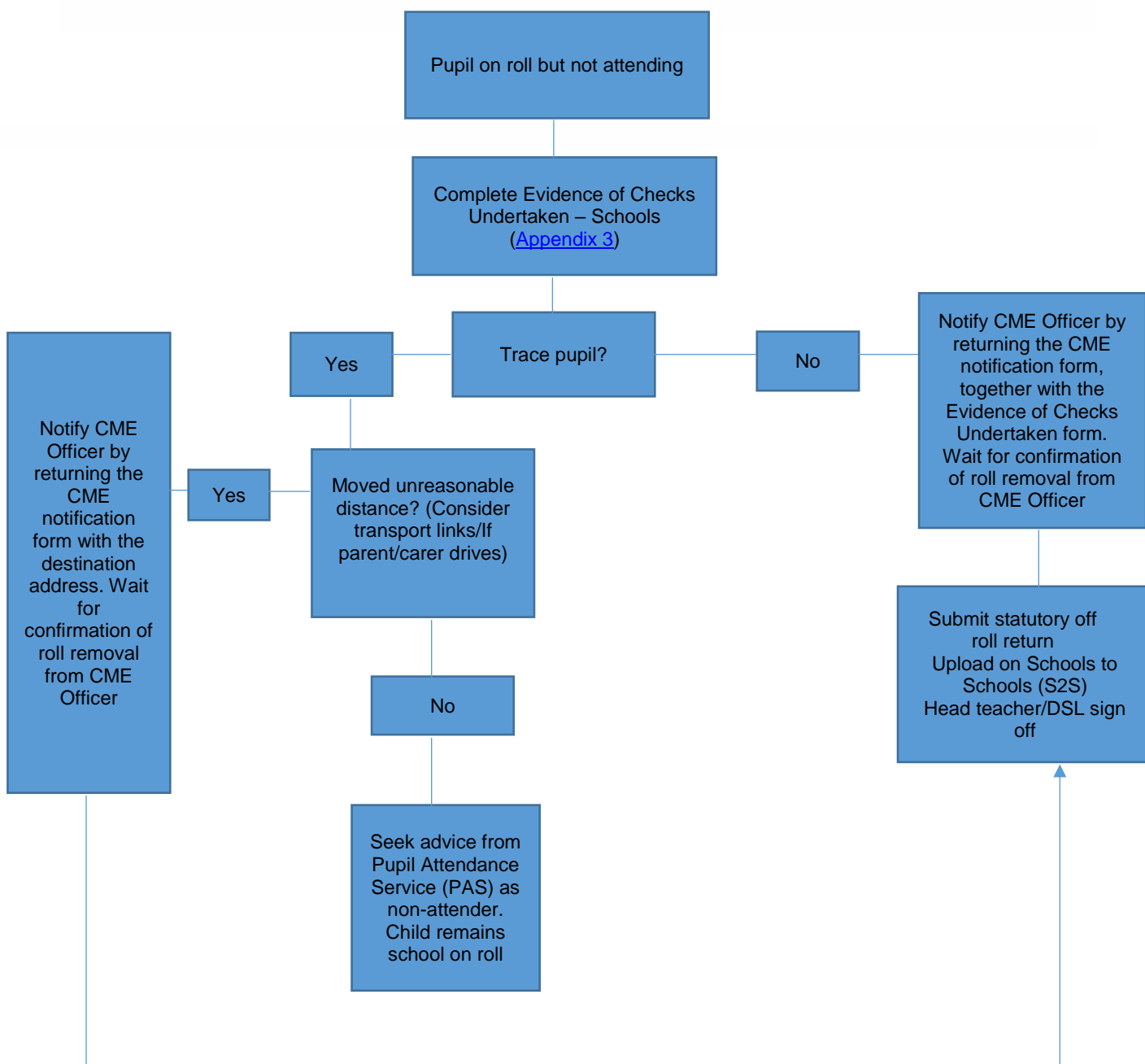
Please keep a copy of this completed form as evidence of checks undertaken to trace the pupil before notifying the CME Officer, leading to off rolling the pupil from the school admissions register based on the grounds mentioned above. Ofsted may request this information.

Flowchart for below Grounds of Removal

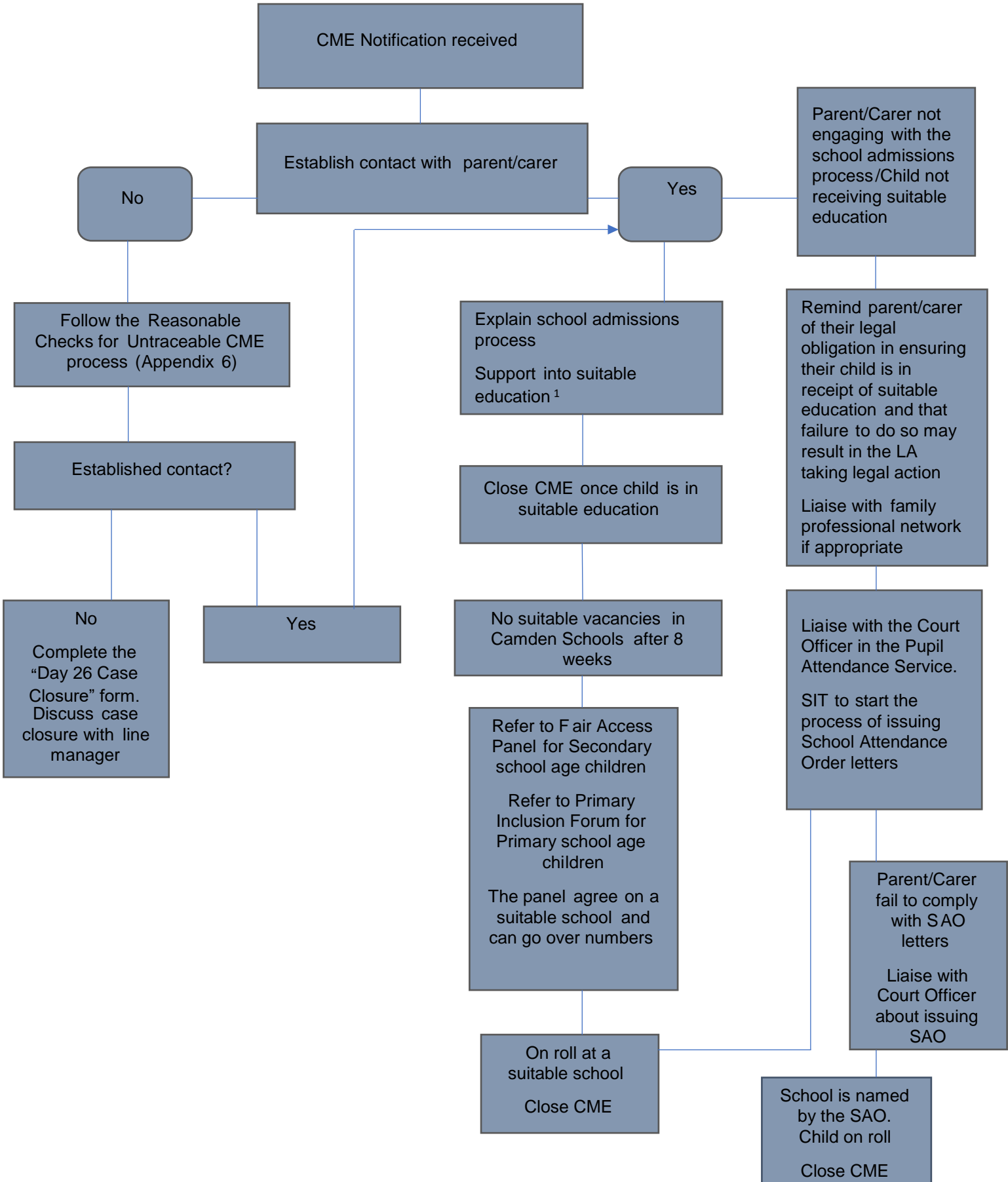
8 (1) (e) Except in the case of a border the pupil has ceased to attend and is no longer residing within reasonable distance to the school

8 (1) (f) The pupil has failed to return following authorised leave of absence exceeding 10 school days for the purpose of a holiday (unauthorised absences)

8 (1) (h) The pupil has been missing from school for 20 school days or more continuously (unauthorised absences)



Children Missing Education (CME) Flowchart



¹ Suitable education is defined in law as education which is suitable to the child’s age, ability and special needs.

Children Missing Education (CME) Notification Form

School Inclusion - Supporting People - London Borough of Camden



This form outlines information required in order to make a CME notification. Please note the information on this form is collected to ensure children can be identified and supported back into education.

Children Missing Education (CME) Definition

CME are children of compulsory school (5-16) age who are not:

- i. registered pupils at a school
- ii. receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school

DfE CME Guidance can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

For children with attendance concerns, please contact [Camden Pupil Attendance Service \(PAS\)](#) on 020 7974 1653

Please return the completed form to: [Sona Ruparell](#) School Inclusion and Children Missing Education Officer (020 7974 4596)

Notifier details

Date: Click or tap to enter a date.	Name:	Position:
School/Service:	Address:	
Contact number:	Email:	

Parent/Carer details with whom the child/ren live

Parent/Carer name(s):	Full address:	
Relationship:	Post Code:	
Contact numbers:		
Email:	Translator required <input type="checkbox"/>	Language:

Please complete the information below for CME children only

Full Name	DOB	Gender	Unique Pupil Number (if known)	Ethnicity (if known)	Name of school (if on school admissions register)	CME grounds for removing from the admissions register Regulation 8(1) ² <i>*Please provide detailed explanation below</i>	EHC Plan	LAC
				Choose from the drop down menu.		Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Choose from the drop down menu.		Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Choose from the drop down menu.		Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
				Choose from the drop down menu.		Choose an item.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If not on a school roll, please provide the name and address of the previous school for each child (if known):

Please click if applicable

Social Care/Early Help Involvement <input type="checkbox"/>	CAMHS <input type="checkbox"/>	YOS <input type="checkbox"/>	Asylum Seeker <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>
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Please provide further Information

**Please include information of EHCP/LAC if ticked above*

Service	Lead Professional Name	Email and contact number	Supporting: whole family/child (Please state child's name)

² Regulation 8 (1) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Please provide detailed explanation for the CME notification

If removing from the school admissions register using ground B or C (unable to trace) then please attach completed [Evidence of Checks Undertaken form](#) and provide the information below

Date of last attendance:

Date of last contact with parent/carer:

Additional information

Emergency contact details, sibling details, any other relevant information

Reasonable Checks for Untraceable CME

The below steps are based on school days.

Day 1

- CME notification received. Ensure core information has been provided, including contact details. Open case on CME register/Impulse.

Day 1-3

- Establish contact with parent/carer by contact numbers/email

If unable to establish contact, start reasonable checks below

Day 5-15

- Send 1st formal CME letter via first class post.
- Start checks – MASH, Camden Resident Index, Housing, Council Tax, Youth Offending Service and Health/NHS Spine Database
- 1st home visit (if necessary, at this point). Post calling card if no answer

Day 16-25

- Send 2nd formal CME letter via recorded delivery post.
- Carry out PAN London check by emailing all London Authorities.
- 2nd home visit. Post calling card if no answer
- Check DfE Get Information about Pupils (GIAP) database

Day 26

- Complete “Day 26 Untraceable CME Case Closure” form
- Decision on case closure should be made with the Line Manager

If case is closed, then inform the notifier of steps we have taken. Ask them to inform CME team if the child comes to their attention again.

Points to note at each step of the process
<i>If any safeguarding issues are raised during the tracing process, then refer to MASH with immediate effect.</i>
<i>During each step of the tracing processes, carry on trying to establish contact with parent via contact numbers/email.</i>
<i>If contact is established, then move onto CME process of supporting the parent/carer source a school place.</i>
<i>Impulse database must be updated to reflect each step above. Correspondence must be attached.</i>