



Children's Services

Guidance on

Children Missing from Education (CME)

2nd Edition

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Section 1 - Introduction and Purpose of this document

- 1.1** Children missing from education (CME) may not have normal access to services, safeguarding procedures and health care. They are more likely than others to suffer harm, or neglect because they may lack the routines and disciplines of school and home life and because they do not receive supervision and monitoring from professionals. They are likely to have diminished life opportunities because of missing positive educational and social experiences.

Most children receive their education by attending a school. Some parents, however, elect to educate their child otherwise than at school, which is allowed under education law.

The purpose of this document is to:

- 1) limit the possibilities of children becoming missing from education and,
- 2) ensure agencies work together, sharing information to identify, locate, safeguard children missing from education.
- 3) Ensure procedures are in place for children not in education to access an education provision as soon as possible.

These guidelines:

- define 'children missing from education' and the terminology that is used;
- in one document, bring together for Barking and Dagenham practitioners, the law; government guidance and procedures on children missing from education;
- explain the role and responsibilities of the Children Missing Education Officer, and of other agencies involved with children who are missing from education;
- explain the governance of this area of work, including how information on children missing from education is collected and disseminated.

1.2 The legal requirement for children to be in education:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 sets out the duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—*

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

*the term "parent" includes carers and legal guardians.

Children are of compulsory school from the term after their fifth birthday until the last Friday before the last Monday in June of the academic year in which they achieve the age of 16.

Section 2 – Clarifying who is CME

2.1 Children Missing from Education are:

- known to have resided in Barking and Dagenham, or attended a school here, who have moved away from their last known address, and their whereabouts are unconfirmed, or unknown (including those children reported to have moved abroad either to live, or study) or,
- known to be residing in Barking and Dagenham's boundary and are believed not to be in receipt of education or,
- whose parents claim to be providing elective home education but, as a result of the local authority's informal enquiries, are believed not to be in receipt of suitable and efficient education.

2.2 The following groups are **not included in the definition of Children Missing from Education:**

2.2.1 Irregular, or non-attendance at school

Schools and education provisions are primarily responsible for managing the attendance of children at their establishments. They must have a published attendance policy that sets out how they will manage the attendance of children who are registered at the school, especially procedures for those whose attendance is irregular, or have stopped attending completely.

When school-based interventions are unsuccessful in bringing about an improvement, schools are required to escalate the matter, either for social care support for the family or legal proceedings.

2.2.2 Non-school attendance caused by long term illness or injury (and the involvement of the Home Tuition Service)

If a child is missing from school due to a long-term illness, or injury, then the school must ask the parent to provide documentary medical information that states that the child is unfit to attend school. The school may consider asking their School Nurse to provide advice.

If the absence is going to be authorised, then the school must consider how the child will be educated. This can be achieved by referring the child to the borough's Home Tuition Service.

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 requires Local Authorities to provide education to children who are prevented from attending school due to illness or **unavoidable cause**

The Home Tuition Service is not to be confused with Elective Home Education (also known as Education Otherwise than at School)

2.2.3 Elective Home Education (EHE)

Parents may, by law, choose to home educate, either through privately provided services, or (more usually) by themselves. The local authority may undertake informal enquiries to satisfy itself that suitable and efficient education is being provided. If it is, then the child is not considered to be missing from education.

Also see the borough's policy on Elective Home Education

<https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-learning/home-education/home-education-and-the-local-authority/>

2.2.4 Pupils not in full time education

These are children who are on roll at a school but are not receiving full time education on site.

Since the spring term 2014, Ofsted placed a responsibility on local authorities to maintain a central database of children not in full time education. This database is held

within the borough's Education Inclusion Team and contains information on children who are:

- on a reduced timetable. This may be part of a short-term integration plan, or respite for the child;
- attending supervised off-site education for part of the school week;
- attending supervised off-site education full time (but remain on the school roll).

All off-site education must be properly organised and supervised by qualified staff.

2.2.5 Raise in Participation Age (RPA)

From 1 September 2014, all children must now (after they have finished compulsory education) continue in full time education, training, or employment (with a training element attached to that employment) until the end of the academic year in which they attain the age of 18. RPA is not a form of compulsory school age and legal measures for irregular school attendance do not apply.

2.2.6 Excluded Pupils

Fixed term

Children who are given a fixed term exclusion, remain on the school roll and, if the exclusion lasts for more than five days, will receive education off site until their exclusion period is over and they return to their school.

Permanent Exclusion

Children who are permanently excluded are provided with education by Mayesbrook Park School.

2.3 Alternative Education Provisions (AEPs)

For some children, school is not the best setting for their education. Instead, they are referred to an AEP.

AEPs include:

Mayesbrook Park Campus	For children who are excluded from school permanently or for a fixed term of more than 5 days (Day 6 Provision).
Erkenwald Campus	For children of a timid nature who may have experienced bullying or have a fear of attending school.
Seabrook Campus (Positive Returns) Barking and Dagenham College	For children identified as requiring respite from the school they attend. This is a 6-week placement. Accessed by referral from a school or the Flexi-Learning Programme
Flexi-Learning Programme	Accessed by referral from the Education Placement Panel or from a school

The Education Placement Panel (EPP) will decide if a child who is not already on roll at an LBBB school should be referred to an AEP.

2.4 Children leaving a school with no known education destination

Generally, children leaving school have a known educational destination. Schools use the School to School (S2S) system to notify each other and track transfers.

However, this is not always the case and these children are at very high risk of becoming CME.

Some children have an increased risk of becoming missing from education in certain circumstances:

- attending school in another Local Authority;
- returning from secure accommodation;
- living in temporary accommodation;
- with long term medical needs;
- who are also parents;
- who are Young Carers;

At transition points in their lives:

- who fail to access a school place when moving to a new area;
- who leave school without a confirmed education destination;
- who fail to transfer at the cohort stage i.e. Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to Year 1; Year 2 to Year 3; Year 6 to Year 7.
- who have been withdrawn from school by the parent/carer from the education system and are not providing suitable home education.

Or when they belong to certain social groups:

- from gypsy, Roma, or traveller backgrounds;
- from asylum seeking, or refugee families

The CME Officer must be diligent when tracking children, to ensure that no child is lost to the system. It is necessary for the CME Officer to establish and maintain good contacts with key staff in many agencies and across many authorities in the country.

Appendix 1: Child leaving school with no Education Destination flowchart

It is imperative that all agencies ask the key question of the families they are working with: "Where do the children receive education"? Any queries or concerns should be discussed with:

Vanessa Radke, the CME Officer
 Email: accessattendance@lbbd.gov.uk
 Phone: 020 8227 2151

Section 3 - Role of the CME Officer

3.1 Tracking and locating

Section 436A of the 1996 Education Act places a duty on local authorities to have in place arrangements to enable them to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

All CME enquiries are recorded on a database held within the Education Statutory Services Team.

3.2 Partner agencies and systems used to locate children missing from education

The table below shows the main agencies and LBBD services used by the CME Officer to track and locate children:

Databases	Maintained by
Impulse	Admissions
Key to Success	Department for Education
National Lost Pupils' Database (LPD)	Department for Education
Rio	Health
ICS	Social Care
LBBD agencies	
School Attendance Service	
Tenancy Audit	
Admissions	
Early Years and Foundation Service (for transfer to Reception).	
National Agencies	
United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA): Child protection cases only.	
Child Benefit Agency	

3.3 Children residing in this borough who appear to be missing from education

When a child, resident in Barking and Dagenham, is believed to be missing from education any agency or individual in contact with the child is expected to inform the CME Officer. The CME Officer will then seek to establish the child's educational status:

- If the child is on roll at a school, but not attending, the CME Officer will inform the school, or the school's attendance officer of the enquiry.
- If the child requires a school place, then the CME Officer will assist the family in making an application.
- If the child is being home educated, then the CME Officer will inform the EHE Officer.
- If the CME Officer is unable to establish if the child is being educated, then a notice will be served on the parent requesting information that will satisfy the local authority that the child is receiving suitable education. If the parent does not provide a sufficient response, the nearest school with a vacancy in the child's year group will be allocated and the child will be required to enrol. If the child does not enrol, a School Attendance Order will be instituted against the parent(s).

3.4 See Appendix 2: Child in borough and missing from education flowchart CME and the Admissions Team

It is essential that there is close work between the CME Officer and the Admissions Team to ensure children are not lost to the education system at two key points:

- 1) Allocation of a school. The CME Officer will often provide advice and assistance to parents needing to enrol their child at a school and will liaise with Admissions on all cases.

- 2) Enrolling at a school. It is imperative that Admissions, schools and the borough's School Attendance Service work together to ensure that children allocated to a school are correctly enrolled.

The process is captured in **Appendix 3: Ensuring attendance of children allocated to a school flowchart**

Removing a child's name from the roll of a school is a key moment when children can become missing from education. It is essential that the correct procedures are followed when removing a child from the roll of a school. Not only can there be legal ramifications for incorrectly removing a child's name from the school roll, there are also significant safeguarding issues.

Important: Children on roll at Barking and Dagenham schools can only be removed from the roll by following the "Legal and borough procedures for adding or removing a child's name from the roll of a school. A technical guidance document for schools in Barking and Dagenham".

4.0 **Section 4 - Children missing from Education who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)**

The CME Officer will work closely with the Education Health Care Team (EHCT) regarding any children with a statement of SEN, or an EHCP who is not in education.

It is important for the EHCT to inform the Admissions Team of any child moving into the borough that has a statement, or EHCP.

Below is the link to the Local Offer:

<https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/residents/children-young-people-and-families/local-offer/>

5.0 **Section 5 – Safeguarding and Children Missing from Education**

Children missing from education are at risk of all forms of child abuse. They are also at risk of underachieving, educationally, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities in relation to their education functions; the governing bodies of maintained schools and the governing bodies of further education institutions (which include sixth-form colleges) to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are

either pupils at a school or who are students under 18 years of age attending further education institutions. The same duty applies to independent schools (which include Academies/free schools) by virtue of regulations made under section 157 of this Act.

If any person is concerned that a child is at risk of significant harm, they must inform Social Care by contacting either contacting the allocated social worker for the child, or the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to discuss submitting a Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).

The MASH can be contacted by telephone: 020 8227 3811; or email: childrenss@lbbd.gov.uk

5.1 Children in local authority care

The education of children in the care of this Local Authority, is managed by the Virtual School and Social Care. All children of compulsory school age will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP).

The Virtual School can be contacted:

By email: Kathleen.Adams@lbbd.gov.uk

By telephone: 020 8227 2691

5.2 Police and Children Missing from Education

If a police officer investigates any incident involving a child, this will generate a 'Merlin' report that is sent to the MASH. The MASH will then contact the Children Missing Education Officer if it becomes apparent that the child is missing from education

The police will be informed if a parent refuses to, or avoids, providing information regarding the child's whereabouts.

5.3 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

If anyone is concerned that a child may be at risk of CSE then they must contact Social Care to find out if that child has an allocated social worker. If yes, then the allocated social worker must be informed.

If the child is not known to Social Care then the MASH should be contacted to discuss the concern and, if necessary, a MARF should be submitted via the above email address, detailing the concerns, including the names of any children who the child associates with who may also be at risk.

If the information is to be sent by email, then it must also go to childrenss@lbbd.gov.uk

Barking and Dagenham's CSE risk assessment tool can be located under Policy, Documents and Pathways via the following link:

<http://newsite.bardag-lscb.co.uk/child-sexual-exploitation-cse-2/>

5.4 Radicalisation

Parents, schools and professionals must be vigilant about children being radicalised, which could lead to them planning to leave this country. Any such concerns should be reported to the Police, by telephoning 101 (999 in an emergency) and a Multi-Agency Referral Form should be submitted immediately to the MASH

5.5 Forced marriage

Forced marriage may be associated with Children Missing Education. It is where someone is forced to marry another against his/her will. This is different from an

arranged marriage where both bride and groom (who are of the legal age to marry) are part of the decision-making process and consent freely to marriage.

Forced marriage is a violation of a person's Human Rights and is regarded in the UK as a form of domestic violence and in the case of a child, child abuse. It can affect children from any kind of home in any community.

If a young person in Barking and Dagenham discloses that they are, or fear, being forced into marriage their concerns should be taken seriously and the police should be alerted. A Multi-Agency Referral Form should be submitted immediately to Social Care.

Here is a link to government advice on Forced Marriages:

<https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage>

5.6 Children who may have been trafficked

Trafficking of children is a form of human trafficking. It is defined as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receiving of children for the purpose of all types of exploitation. Such children are unlikely to be in receipt of education and may well be moved from place to place, so presenting as 'missing' at a number of levels.

Below is the link to government advice on Child Trafficking:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-who-may-have-been-trafficked-practice-guidance>

The NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC) can be contacted for advice between 9.30am and 4.30pm - Monday to Friday on 0808 800 5000.

5.7 Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is any procedure that's designed to alter or injure a girl's (or woman's) genital organs for non-medical reasons. It's sometimes known as 'female circumcision' or 'female genital cutting'. It's mostly carried out on young girls. FGM is illegal in the UK. It's also illegal to take a British national or permanent resident abroad for FGM or to help someone trying to do this.

If you know or think someone may be in immediate danger contact the Police on 999. You should also contact the Foreign and Commonwealth Office if she's already been taken abroad:

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Telephone: 020 7008 1500 From overseas: +44 (0)20 7008 1500

Below is the link that will take you advice provided by Barking & Dagenham's Local Safeguarding Children Board:

<http://newsite.bardag-lscb.co.uk/member-area/faith-and-culture-committee-fcc/faith-and-culture-committee-2/>

Below is the link to government advice on FGM:

<https://www.gov.uk/search?q=FGM>

5.8 Missing Children

When children go missing from home or local authority care, they must be reported to the police.

Missing children are unlikely to attend their education provision. Children who are at risk of CSE and radicalisation are more at risk of going missing. Therefore, schools and attendance officers must be vigilant when children are absent from school without notification by the parent or carer, as the child may also have gone missing.

Children at risk of forced marriage or FGM are not going to be reported missing to the police but may stop attending school for a while. Schools should be especially vigilant about absences linked to children leaving the country (including children being returned to the country of their parents' origin to be treated for medical or mental health reasons).

Sometimes, parents do not report to the police that their child is missing, so it is imperative that schools undertake robust enquiries to try and confirm the reason for the absence.

Any safeguarding concerns, linked to children being absent from school, should be discussed with the MASH team.

6.0 Section 6 – Governance of CME

Performance indicators - Are held within the Education Statutory Team and relate to the number of open and closed CME cases per month of children residing in, and for those that have left, this authority.

6.1 *Archiving of long-term CME cases

Cases that are open for 6 months or more are classed as long term. When the CME Officer has exhausted all avenues of investigation, the case will be presented to the Commissioning Director, Education using the '**Long-term CME case - 'archiving' form (Appendix 4)**

A letter will be sent to the police informing them that the child has not been located.

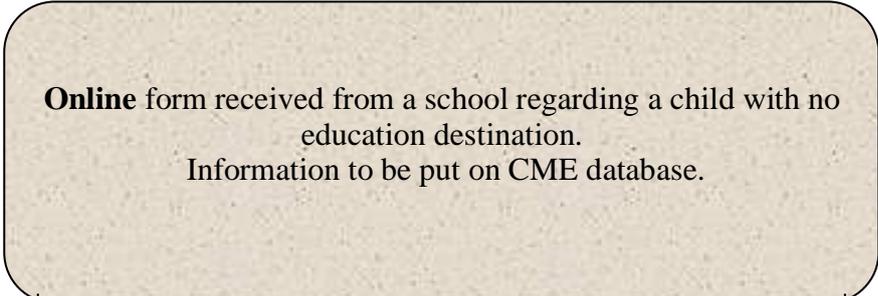
*Cases remain open but dormant, as new information about the child may come to our attention in the future.

6.2 Annual report

The Missing Children, Children Missing from Education and Elective Home Education Annual report gives an overview of work being done in these areas and can be provided, upon request, by contacting the Education Statutory Services Team on 020 8227 2151.

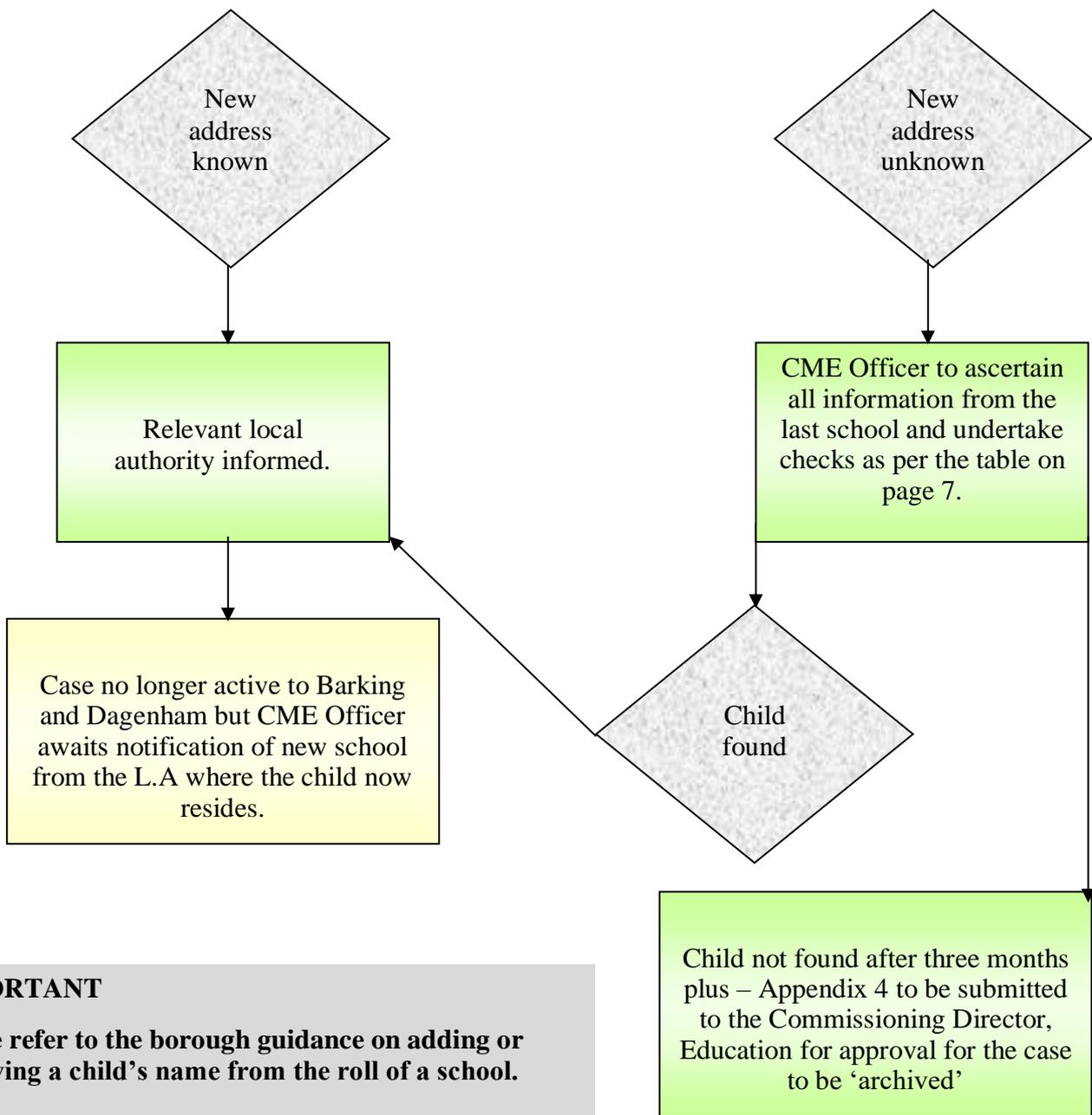
Appendix 1

Child leaving school with no education destination



Online form received from a school regarding a child with no education destination.
Information to be put on CME database.



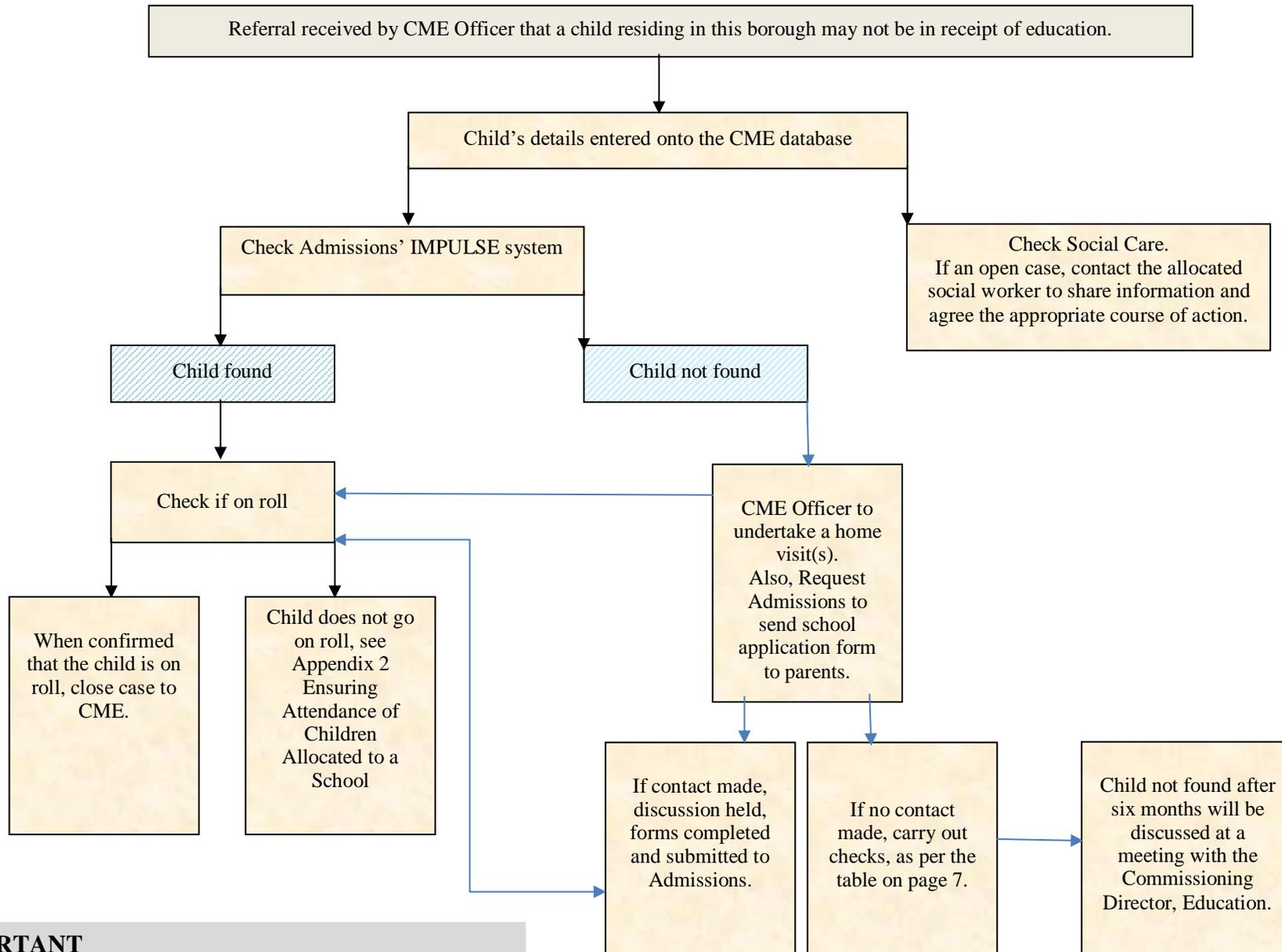


IMPORTANT

Please refer to the borough guidance on adding or removing a child’s name from the roll of a school.

Appendix 2

Child in borough and missing from education flowchart

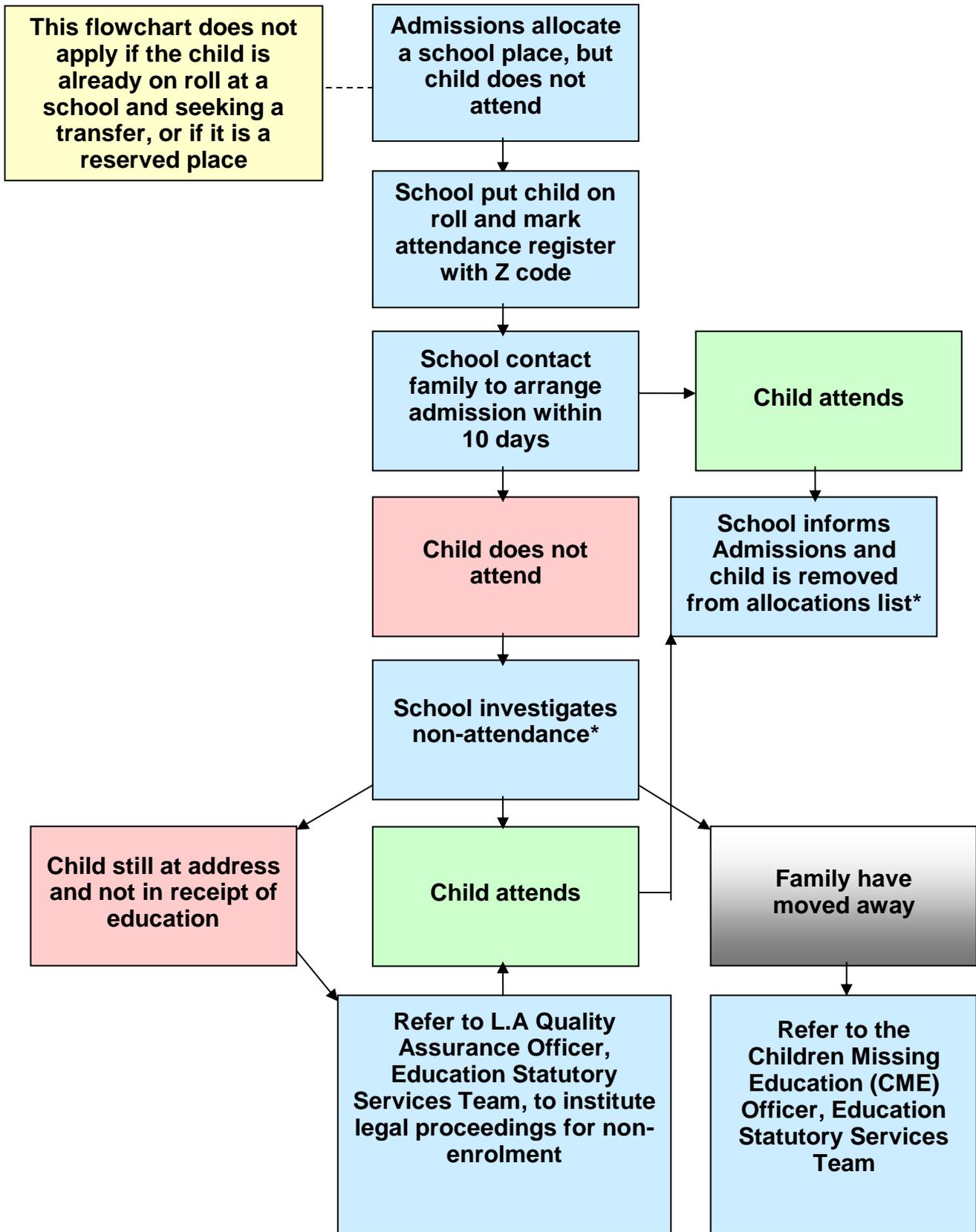


IMPORTANT

Please refer to the borough guidance on adding or removing a child's name from the roll of a school.

Appendix 3

Ensuring Attendance of Children Allocated to a School



This flowchart does not apply if the child is already on roll at a school and seeking a transfer, or if it is a reserved place

Admissions allocate a school place, but child does not attend

School put child on roll and mark attendance register with Z code

School contact family to arrange admission within 10 days

Child attends

Child does not attend

School informs Admissions and child is removed from allocations list*

School investigates non-attendance*

Child still at address and not in receipt of education

Child attends

Family have moved away

Refer to L.A Quality Assurance Officer, Education Statutory Services Team, to institute legal proceedings for non-enrolment

Refer to the Children Missing Education (CME) Officer, Education Statutory Services Team

*Child stays on Admissions' allocation list until on roll at a school, or confirmed CME / moved out of borough.
 If child is on list for 20 days – Admissions Officer to escalate to Admissions Manager.

Appendix 4 – Long-term CME case - ‘archiving’ form

Name of child:.....

DOB:.....Year group.....

Last known address:.....

.....

School last attended.....Date last attended:.....

Date case opened to CME:.....Referred from:.....

Databases	Date last checked
Synergy (Admissions)	
Key to Success (DfE)	
Liquid Logic (Social Care)	
LBBB agencies	
Tenancy Audit Team	
Early Years and Foundation Service (transfer to Reception).	
National Agencies	
United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA): Child protection cases only	
Child Benefit Agency	
National Health Service (NHS) Rio system	
MET Police	
Check with last school attended	
Date of CME Officer’s last visit	

Summary of CME Officer intervention:

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.....

CME officer: Vanessa Radke. Signature.....Date:.....

Line manager: Greg Vaughan. Signature.....Date:.....

Commissioning Director Education: Jane Hargreaves.

SignatureDate:.....

Date letter sent to the police informing them that this child could not be found: