

# Improving support for children missing education

A supplement to this Department for Education 'Call for Evidence'  
18 May to 20 July 2023

## Relevant Links:

Improving support for children missing education - GOV.UK

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/improving-support-for-children-missing-education>

Improving support for children missing education - Department for Education - Citizen Space

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/vulnerable-children-attendance-team/improving-support-for-children-missing-education>

PDF - Improving support for children missing education – call for evidence May to July 2023

[https://consult.education.gov.uk/vulnerable-children-attendance-team/improving-support-for-children-missing-education/supporting\\_documents/Improving%20support%20for%20children%20missing%20education%20%20call%20for%20evidence%20May%20to%20July%202023.pdf](https://consult.education.gov.uk/vulnerable-children-attendance-team/improving-support-for-children-missing-education/supporting_documents/Improving%20support%20for%20children%20missing%20education%20%20call%20for%20evidence%20May%20to%20July%202023.pdf)

## HE Byte post about this consultation:

"Improving support for children missing education" - published 6 July 2023

<https://he-byte.uk/england/improving-support-for-children-missing-education>

*Further copies of this document can be downloaded from the above article.*

## Sections in this supplement:

Pages 2 to 11 - A printout of the five pages offered to parents and children when responding to this call for evidence. (Please refer to the above post for an explanation of how the questions offered relate to those in the PDF provided on the Government's website.)

[Page 12](#) - a page of short statements to inspire those wondering how to respond to the above consultation.



# Improving support for children missing education

Closes 20 Jul 2023

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## About you

### 1. What is your name?

Name

### 2. Do you consent for the Department for Education (DfE) to contact you via email about your response?

Please select one item below:

(Required)

Yes

No

If yes, please provide your email address:

### 3. Would you like us to keep your response confidential?

Information provided in response to consultations, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want all, or any part, of a response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department for Education will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please select one item below:

(Required)

Yes

No

If yes, please explain your reason for confidentiality (30 words max):

### 4. In what capacity are you responding?

Please select all that apply:

(Required)



- As a parent/carer of a child registered at a school or college (e.g., mainstream school or college, alternative provision schools, or independent schools)
- As a parent/carer of a child not registered at a school or college (e.g., home educated, non-school AP settings, etc.)
- As a parent/carer of a child with experience of missing education
- A child/young person
- On behalf of a school or college
- On behalf of unregistered alternative provision
- On behalf of governors
- On behalf of a nursery or childminder
- On behalf of a local authority
- On behalf of a representative body
- On behalf of a charity
- Other education professional
- On behalf of a voluntary or community organisation
- Prefer not to say
- Other – please specify below

If 'other' selected, please explain what other capacity you are responding in (10 words max.)

**If responding on behalf of a school or college, please specify the type of school or college.**

Please select all that apply:

- Mainstream school maintained by a local authority
- Mainstream academy or free school
- Alternative provision school
- Independent school
- Special school
- Post 16 College
- Other – please specify below

If 'other' selected, please explain what other type of school or college you are responding on behalf of (10 words max.)

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End of first page of response portal

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## Defining children missing education

We want to understand how local authorities, schools and others in the sector define children missing education (CME).

The statutory duty relating to CME (as per section 436A of the Education Act 1996) applies to any children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school.

Children who are on school rolls and aren't attending regularly are not CME, but should instead be supported through the measures outlined in the [Working together to improve school attendance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>) guidance.

**5. Do you believe that the statutory duty relating to children missing education applies to the right children (any children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school)?**

Please select one item below:

(Required)

- Yes
- No

**6. Are there any children currently excluded from the statutory duty relating to children missing education that you think should be included?**

Please select all that apply:

(Required)

- No, the current scope is suitable
- Children of compulsory school age on part-time timetables
- Children of compulsory school age who are flexi-schooled (see s.10.7 of Elective Home Education guidance)
- Children of compulsory school age who have ever been permanently excluded
- Children of compulsory school age who have been permanently excluded, for a certain time period after the exclusion – please specify suggested time period (max. 30 words)
- Suspended children of compulsory school age
- Children not on school roll who are under age 16 and attending colleges

- Children of compulsory school age attending illegal settings
- Children of compulsory school age attending unregistered settings
- Children of compulsory school age with low attendance (i.e., severely absent – missing 50% or more of school)
- Non-compulsory school aged children
- Other – please specify below

If 'other' selected, please explain which other children should be included in the definition (max. 100 words)

**Please explain why you think additional children should/shouldn't be included in the statutory duty relating to CME:**

(max. 100 words)

(Required)

**[The following question is not in the PDF document]**

**7. The next section is for schools and local authorities only. Are you responding on behalf of a school or local authority?**

Please select one item below:

(Required)

- Yes
- No

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End of second page of response portal

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## Supporting children missing education into education (Schools and other respondents)

Children are defined as CME until they are registered as a pupil at a school, are receiving a suitable education in a setting other than school or until they are no longer of compulsory school age (i.e., the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen).

We are interested in the activity local authorities and others undertake to effectively support CME into education. This may include:

- Ongoing safeguarding activities.
- Securing a suitable school place for CME.
- Supporting former CME to regularly attend education.
- Use of School Attendance Orders for parents who fail to satisfy the local authority that their child is receiving suitable education, if the local authority deems it is appropriate that the child should attend school.

In addition, we are interested in any preventative measures local authorities, schools or others take to reduce the likelihood of children becoming CME.

**[The following is Q29 in the PDF document]**

### **36. Once a school place has been secured, what works well to integrate a former CME into full-time education?**

Please select all that apply:

(Required)

- Part-time timetables
- Flexi-schooling
- Use of alternative provision settings
- In-school integration plan
- In-school mentoring support
- Working closely with the child and family – please specify how below
- Other – please specify below

If 'working closely with the child and family' selected, please explain how you work closely with the child and family (max. 50 words)

If 'other' selected, please explain what else works well (max. 100 words)

**[The following is Q30 in the PDF document]**

**37. What, if anything, would make it easier to integrate CME into full-time education?**

Max. 100 words

(Required)

**[The following is Q31 in the PDF document]**

**38. How effective do you think the use of School Attendance Orders are in supporting CME into education?**

Please select one item below:

(Required)

- Very effective
- Effective
- Neither effective nor ineffective
- Ineffective
- Very ineffective
- Don't know

**Please explain your response:**

Max. 100 words



**[The following is Q32 in the PDF document]**

**39. What preventative measures do you take to stop children from becoming CME?**

Please select all that apply:

(Required)

- NA - we do not take preventative action
- Engagement with families of pre-school children (children below age five)
- Targeted support for children on school rolls with persistent absence (absent 10% or more of the time)
- Targeted support for children on school rolls with severe absence (absent 50% or more of the time)
- Targeted support for children in groups/cohorts at risk of being or becoming CME - please specify which groups below
- EHE outreach and/or stakeholder engagement
- Other - please specify below

If 'targeted support for children in groups/cohorts at risk of being or becoming CME' selected, please explain which groups you provide support to (max. 30 words)

If 'other' selected, please explain what other preventative measures you take (max. 50 words)

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## Conclusion

Identifying and supporting CME into education isn't always a straightforward process.

We are interested in your views on how DfE can help the sector to support CME most effectively.

**[The following is Q33 in the PDF document]**

### 40. What are the top five issues that you face in identifying and supporting CME?

Please select up to five:

(Required)

- Unknown unknowns – children unknown to local authorities, schools and other services
- Children who live in one local authority area and attend school in another local authority area
- Difficulty placing asylum seeking children and refugees in nearby schools
- Difficulty coordinating and collaborating with other local authorities to receive information
- Difficulty placing CME into education
- Difficulty placing children with SEN (either SEN Support or an Education Health Care Plan) into education
- Tracking children who have moved to another local authority area
- Tracking children who have moved to another country within the UK (Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales)
- Tracking children who have moved to another country outside of the UK
- Accessing information from other services and agencies within the local authority on CME
- Accessing information from other services and agencies outside the local authority on CME
- Resourcing and capacity
- Other – please specify below

If 'other' selected, please explain what other issues you face (max, 100 words)

**[The following is Q34 in the PDF document]**

### 41. How, if at all, do you believe the processes of identifying children missing education could be improved?

Please select all the apply:

(Required)

- NA - don't think they could be improved
- More expectations on schools and multi-academy trusts (MATs) - please specify below
- Clearer expectations for response times to CME referrals
- Information on children most at risk of becoming CME
- Best practice and case studies regarding identification of CME following standard transition points
- Best practice and case regarding identification of children moving between local authorities/countries
- Opportunities for training and to share good practice between local authorities
- Standardised process of referrals
- A system of registration for children not in school
- Other - please specify below

If 'more expectations on schools and MATs' selected please specify which explanations should be placed on schools and MATs (max. 50 words)

If 'other' selected, please explain how else the process could be improved (max. 50 words)

**[The following is Q35 in the PDF document]**

**42. Please include any further comments you have regarding identification or support for children missing education.**

Max. 100 words

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End of fourth page of response portal



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## Almost done...

You are about to submit your response. By clicking 'Submit Response' you give us permission to analyse and include your response in our results. After you click Submit, you will no longer be able to go back and change any of your answers.

If you provide an email address you will be sent a receipt and a link to a PDF copy of your response.

Email address

« First

Submit Response

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End of final page of response portal

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Citizen Space ([https://www.delib.net/citizen\\_space](https://www.delib.net/citizen_space)) from Delib (<https://www.delib.net>)



## **"Improving support for children missing education"**

*This page lists various statements to inspire those wondering how to respond to the above consultation.*

*They are loosely grouped around similar themes.*

*The hope is that they will inspire you to respond where appropriate to question 36 to 42 in the on-line response portal.*

***Please use your own words as much as possible.***

Including additional children in the statutory duty for Children Missing Education is impractical. It will strain resources, and potentially infringes on parental rights. Such expansion could result in overlooking those children in greatest need of support already within the system.

Seeking to classify children engaged in individualised learning as "missing education" is unjust.

Requiring local authorities to proactively investigate all children being educated outside school to see if they are 'missing education' is impractical. Besides being an invasion of the privacy of family life.

The current emphasis on high-risk cases allows for targeted support.

The continued expectation for local authorities to identify *all* children missing education is a concern, as it appears to be based on the false notion that the state, not the parent, is by default ultimately responsible for the education of that family's children.

It is important to respect alternative educational pathways and consider individual circumstances.

Value diverse learning paths, consider individual circumstances, and respect legal limitations.

Recognising the value of alternative education pathways and individual circumstances is essential for securing a suitable education for every child.

Diverse educational approaches exist beyond mainstream schooling. Mandatory identification infringes on privacy and personal freedom. Labelling children engaged in personalised learning as "missing education" is unjust.

Balancing the need for privacy whilst encouraging collaboration between parents and their own communities proves to be a more effective approach. Maintaining this delicate balance is crucial.

Parents' role in supporting the education of their children is commonly viewed with mistrust by children's professionals. But wherever parents are motivated, their involvement actually builds trust and maintains motivation.

Parents understand their child's unique needs and are therefore best placed to provide individualised support. Respecting family dynamics and parental responsibilities and rights is crucial.

Parental accountability ensures a committed approach to a child's education. Respecting parents empowers them to make choices in the best interest of their child.

A proper supportive approach acknowledges individual circumstances, upholds parental rights, explores alternative options, and appropriately allocates diverse resources. Such an approach ensures meaningful and inclusive education for all children.

Fines, which are a form of bullying, support no one, and the idea of using criminal law in this way should be abandoned.

School attendance orders are frequently ineffective in returning children missing education to the classroom. They overlook individual circumstances, impede parental engagement, and fail to address underlying issues.

Coercion and fear undermine alternative education approaches and personalised learning. Efforts at enforcement divert resources from identifying root causes, and stigmatise children.

There are many children for whom the mainstream classroom isn't a good place. For such children home education (or some alternative settings) provides the individualised learning, tailored attention, diversity of resources and the autonomy which can result in successful outcomes for many children.

Full-time education in an average classroom has many disadvantages for an increasing number of children. These include a lack of personal attention, a rigid curriculum, and standardised teaching methods and assessments which do not cater for diverse learning styles. Bullying in all its forms and various types of peer pressure thrive in the school environment and evidence suggests it is almost impossible to eradicate.

Unless safeguarded against in statute, the introduction of "Registers" disguised as 'databases' to protect children, will almost certainly turn into oppressive tools that will restrict human rights, dictate personal beliefs and interfere with parental responsibilities to raise their own children as they believe to be best for them.

Removing from parents the role of decision-maker for their children undermines the core principles of democracy and poses a threat to personal freedoms.

The replacement of parental choice with a state-driven ideology could very easily permit home education only under strict regulations, and such enforcement opens the door to unauthorised intrusion into the private lives of citizens and represents a profound infringement of their natural and historic responsibilities and freedoms.