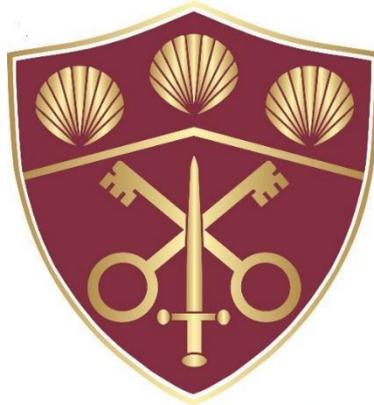


Ad Gloriam Dei et Servitium Omnium

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME) PROTOCOL

The Palmer Catholic Academy

MISSION STATEMENT



Ad Gloriam Dei et Servitium Omnium

The Academy's Mission promotes the academic and personal development of each member of its community, both students and staff alike.

We serve Christ in each other to the Glory of God and Service of all.



Adoption by Governing Body of The Palmer Catholic Academy:

Date of Implementation: February 2026

Signature of Chair of Governors:

Signature of Headteacher:

Review Date: February 2027

Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Legal Framework.....	4
3. Definitions – CME	6
4. Children Missing from Home or Public Care.....	6
5. Specialist Workers	6
6. Referral Path for Children Missing Education.....	6
7. Young People Leaving the Academy.....	7
8. Child Protection/Safeguarding.....	8
9. Safeguarding Young people who may have been Trafficked	8
10. Forced Marriage	8
11. When a child missing from education cannot be found.....	9
12. When initial enquiries confirm the student on roll at a new school	9
13. Elective Home Education (EHE)	9
14. When a Child’s whereabouts remain un-confirmed	10
15. Services that Support Children and Young People	10
Appendix A: Redbridge Education Welfare Service Procedures for Children Missing from School	13
Appendix B: Movement of Children Referral Form	14
Appendix C: Children Leaving a Redbridge School Without a Destination.....	14
Appendix D: Child in Area Believed to be Missing Education	14

1. Introduction

The Palmer Catholic Academy recognises that children missing from education (CME) comprise a group of vulnerable young people often with very distinct and complex needs. This protocol explains the process by which young people who are CME are identified, and re-engaged with education. It details the academy's commitment to address the local and wider concern regarding CME and has been developed as guidance for all professionals working with children and families, including statutory and voluntary groups, partner agencies, and the general public. It will:

1. Define Children Missing Education (CME)
2. Explain what to do if you suspect a child is missing education
3. Explain how children are monitored until re-engaged in education

The academy is committed to promoting learning opportunities for all school age young people of this culturally rich and diverse community. We aim to ensure equity and equality for all children and young people attending the academy, and to ensure they are able to fulfil their educational aspirations.

2. Legal Framework

The academy aims to work in partnership with all agencies, to support the education and wellbeing of young people who become CME. These procedures are linked to the National Pupil Database (NPD) and are underpinned by the relevant statutory requirements relating to missing/lost students:

- The Education Act 1996 S436A (as introduced by the Education and Skills Act 2008 Section 4) states the duty of the local authority to identify children of compulsory school age in their area not receiving an education
- Department of Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in England to Identify Children Not Receiving an Education (2024)
- The Children Act 2004 S11. The Education Act 2002 S175 Local Authority duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- The Children Act 1989, S27.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- The London Child Protection Procedures
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- Education Act 2005 S116

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 (Children Missing in Education, Sept 2016).

CME are children of compulsory school age who are not registered students at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school

CME 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 is unclear or unknown

CME **are not** children who:

- are receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school (for example, students who are electively home educated or attending alternative provision) which is suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have
- are EHE but the local authority has not had an opportunity to assess whether the education being provided is suitable
- are registered at a school, even if they are persistently or severely absent from that school

Children who go missing in education are at risk of:

- Underachieving
- Having poorer health outcomes
- Being victims of harm
- Exploitation or radicalisation
- Becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Young people have a higher risk of becoming CME when they move across Local Authority boundaries, and certain life events make some children more vulnerable to missing education such as, but not limited to:

- Risk of harm or neglect
- Children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation, multiple occupancy or Bed and Breakfast accommodation
- Families fleeing domestic violence
- Children subject to a Child Protection Plan
- Children of Gypsy / Roma / Traveller background
- Come from new migrant families
- Are at risk of forced marriage or FGM
- Children from highly mobile families e.g. asylum seekers, or economic migrants
- Are supervised by the youth justice system
- Children with long-term medical or emotional health problems
- Children in private fostering arrangements
- School aged parents
- Children of parents with learning difficulties or a mental health diagnosis
- Missing or run away from home or care

“Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later on in life” (Department of Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in England to identify Children Not Receiving an Education) (2016)

This protocol should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Until superseded or revised The London Safeguarding Children's Partnership Procedures, Pan London Procedures for Young People Missing from Care and Working Together to Safeguard Children revised statutory guidance are the relevant policies that should be referred to. If, at any time in the procedures detailed in this document, a child is considered to be at risk of harm, the person with the concerns **must** make an **immediate** referral in accordance with the above procedures

3. Definitions – CME

The London Borough of Redbridge define Children Missing from Education (CME) as:

“All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of education for a substantial period of time.”

This includes:

- a. Young people who, previously known to Redbridge Children’s Services, have moved away from their last known address, with their destination unconfirmed or unknown, including those young people alleged to have moved abroad either to live or study;
- b. Young people known to be in the area and not on a school roll or believed to be missing education.

This **does not** include young people registered at a Redbridge education provision with poor attendance. The Education Welfare Service works with young people under these circumstances.

4. Children Missing from Home or Public Care

Young People who have absconded from home or local authority care are not covered by CME procedure, this includes Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children. Redbridge has adopted pan London procedures for dealing with young people in this situation.

5. Specialist Workers

The aim of this document is to safeguard the welfare of children who become missing from education. Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance (2024) requires all local authorities to have a named person responsible for receiving details of children found to be missing education.

Redbridge has a Vulnerable Children’s Officer and an Information Officer for Children Missing Education (CME Officers). If you wish to discuss any aspect of CME please contact them by phoning 0208 708 6047; 0208 708 3838 or emailing cme@redbridge.gov.uk OR chris.truelove@redbridge.gov.uk . These specialist workers are responsible for ensuring children missing from education are identified, monitored and tracked into an education placement.

All young people identified as CME are supported until the specialist workers are satisfied the child:

- Confirmation is received they are on a school roll, or receiving alternative education; or
- Confirmation is received they have reached a destination outside Redbridge Local Authority (including outside the UK) and are receiving a suitable education.

6. Referral Path for Children Missing Education

When a young person is confirmed to be CME, the academy is expected to refer using the Movement of Children Referral Form (Appendix B) sent electronically to CME@redbridge.gov.uk. The Information Officer for CME is Chris Truelove (chris.truelove@redbridge.gov.uk).

Our EWO will support this process (see Appendix A: Redbridge Education Welfare Service Procedures for Children Missing from School). **No child is to be removed from roll until all relevant checks and referrals are made. ONLY the Headteacher has the authority to remove a child from the academy register.**

Once a referral is sent to Redbridge, a specialist worker's role is to contact families and provide support and guidance where necessary to access the most appropriate education placement. If the parent/carer expresses a wish for elective home education (EHE), they will be advised to register online and to liaise with Redbridge's Behaviour and Inclusion Team.

In circumstances where it appears a mainstream school place may not be appropriate; the specialist worker will signpost the parent/carer to the relevant agencies.

All information is recorded centrally on CME databases, allowing the specialist workers to confirm the take up of education. All young people are monitored until they are confirmed on roll at a school/education provision, or in receipt of suitable education.

In cases where parent/carers have refused to accept a school place for their child, failed to send their child to the school they have accepted, or fail to engage regarding their child's education, Redbridge Standards Achievement and Inclusion Service will consider instigating legal proceedings via School Attendance Order action where appropriate. See also Appendix D Child in area believed to be missing education

7. Young People Leaving the Academy

It is the duty of the Headteacher, academy staff and governing body to refer directly to the CME team, any child leaving the academy with no confirmed forwarding address or education, or children who fail to attend the academy after a leave of absence.

The academy **must** make initial enquiries by telephoning the family or any emergency contacts. If this provides no answer, and provided there are no child protection concerns the academy should write, or preferably conduct a home visit, to establish any further information. This should be carried out by the Education Welfare Officer.

If these checks fail to confirm a young person safe and in receipt of education the matter should be referred by the academy directly to Redbridge CME officers using the CME Referral form (Appendix B). **Where a child is subject of a Child Protection plan or has a named social worker, this person must be contacted by the Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately as well as considering a referral to the CME team.**

Redbridge CME officers will investigate further using all the information available. This next stage attempts to establish the young person(s) safe arrival in the named destination (where known) and confirm the take up of education thus limiting the opportunity for young people to go missing between education provisions.

Enquiries can include liaison with Local Authorities and partner agencies nationally, as well as social care, Police, benefit agencies, health, immigration and national border agencies and/or their counterparts abroad, if felt necessary. This process continues as far as possible until satisfactory confirmation is received that the young person is on roll at an education provision in the UK or referred to the appropriate agency abroad. CME officers may advise the academy to remove the student(s) from roll after no less than 20 days unauthorised absence following all reasonable enquiries to locate the student except in the case of children subject to an Education Health Care plan and Children Looked After who cannot be removed from roll until a new education provision has been established and confirmed.

If a Child Living Away from Home goes missing from their care placement, the relevant Social Worker will follow the guidance set out in the Children Missing from Care and Home Protocol. This requires them to liaise with the police in the area from where the child went missing to agree the strategy for finding the child, and provide any necessary support advising the academy and CME team as necessary. The Virtual School deals specifically with education for Children Living Away from Home, accommodated by the borough. When these young people move between provisions, a CME referral is not required. See also Appendix C Children Leaving a Redbridge School without a Destination.

8. Child Protection/Safeguarding

When a young person leaves Redbridge and it is known they or, a member of their family, have an allocated key worker (Redbridge or otherwise) this person will be considered the lead professional. They will be responsible for liaising with CME officers regarding any information about the young persons' whereabouts and education or for making further enquiries by contacting their colleagues and/or the police within the UK or abroad if necessary. When there is no allocated key worker or lead professional, and there are safeguarding concerns, the vulnerable children's specialist workers will make every effort to contact social care colleagues in the alleged destination

If a young person cannot be confirmed resident in Redbridge and the referral suggests serious safeguarding concerns, after consultation with a member of Children and Families Service Senior Management, the Police may be contacted for assistance. If appropriate, the family may be reported as missing.

9. Safeguarding Young people who may have been Trafficked

If there are serious concerns following the initial investigation, cases of potential trafficking will be discussed with Children's Services senior management who may then refer the matter to social care colleagues and/or the police as appropriate.

This document does not replace child protection procedures. Until superseded or revised the [London Safeguarding Children's Board Procedures 5th Edition](#) and Pan London Procedures for Young People Missing from Care and Home are the relevant policies that should be referred to. Safeguarding measures are to be observed at all times.

10. Forced Marriage

Forced marriage is where someone is forced to marry someone against their will and is completely different to arranged marriage where both bride and groom consent to marrying each other.

CME procedures do not cover cases of forced marriage. However, if a young person in Redbridge discloses that they are being forced into marriage, their concerns should be taken seriously and referrals made immediately as appropriate.

Redbridge Child Protection and Assessment Team
Tel: 0208 708 3885

Foreign & Commonwealth Office Forced Marriage Unit (9-5 Mon-Fri)
Tel: 0207 008 0151

FCO Global Response Centre (Out of hours emergencies)
Tel: 0207 008 0151

Email: fmf@fco.gov.uk

Website: www.gov.uk/stop-forced-marriage

For more information see the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007.

11. When a child missing from education cannot be found

The majority of young people referred as CME are located and confirmed on roll at an education provision by the CME specialist workers. However, if the young persons' whereabouts remain unknown after all enquiries have been exhausted the case will be closed, and noted to the Education Welfare Service Operations Manager as part of these procedures. If there are safeguarding concerns, the case would close only following a satisfactory conclusion in liaison with social care colleagues, the police and/or other agencies as appropriate. Closed cases are reviewed periodically to ensure any new information can be acted on that would allow a satisfactory conclusion to be reached.

If a child leaves the academy without notice, or without notification which new school the child is to attend or, when the child is not confirmed on roll at a new provision (including where the child moves abroad), the academy **must** make all possible enquiries to establish the child or young person's whereabouts. See also Appendix B flowchart for schools regarding non-attendance.

If the child is Subject to a Child Protection Plan or if the academy has concerns the child may be at risk of harm, and/or an Early Intervention Panel Referral has been completed on the child, the academy should also immediately notify the allocated Social Worker or complete a MARF as appropriate.

In the first instance, the academy should attempt contact with the parents/carers using all phone numbers given on the child's personal files. If these are not available and provided there are no child protection concerns, the academy should also write to the family at any known addresses making a clear record on the child's education file. If there is no response and after consultation with the Education Welfare Officer the academy must refer the matter directly to Redbridge CME specialist workers within 10 days. Where a child does not take up the allocated place at a school i.e. in-year admission or Year 6 to Year 7 transition the academy must report this back to Redbridge Admission and awards team in the usual way.

12. When initial enquiries confirm the student on roll at a new school

When children leaving the academy have a known educational placement, the Admissions Officer will confirm this by liaising with the new school. An electronic Common Transfer File (CTF) of the student's records is then be sent to the new school via the School to School (S2S) secure transfer site. In such cases there is no need to make a CME referral.

Once the academy has confirmation that the student is on roll and in attendance at the new school, this student can then be taken from the academy roll upon the Headteacher's instruction.

13. Elective Home Education (EHE)

Parents/carers intending to educate their children at home must by law inform the academy their child is leaving. Parent/carers are advised to make an online notification to their borough of residence for elective home education. The borough of residence will then arrange to visit the family to ensure the education being provided is suitable to meet the child's individual requirements according to their age ability, aptitude and with regard to any special educational need. The authority does not provide funds or materials of any kind for parent/carers to home educate. The academy will not seek to persuade parents/carers to educate at home as a way of avoiding exclusion or addressing school-based issues. Information is also available at www.redbridge.gov.uk following the link to children and schools/schools/home schooling.

14. When a Child's whereabouts remain un-confirmed

A CME referral should be made because:

- Initial enquiries cannot find the child and their family at the last known address, or
- The child cannot be confirmed on roll at a school or alternative provision, or
- The child/family has left the UK

After 20 school days, if there are no identifiable concerns, the case has been discussed and agreed with the Education Welfare Officer, and a referral has been made to Redbridge CME team the student's name may be removed from the school roll **with the following exceptions**

- Children who have a statement of special educational needs or and Education Health care plan
- Children who are looked after who should be referred to the Redbridge Virtual School Headteacher or equivalent if placed in Redbridge by another authority

These children may only come off roll once a new education provision has been established and it is confirmed the child is attending there, irrespective of the above 20-day rule.

The academy must then complete the Common Transfer Form (CTF) within a further 15 days of the child's name being removed from roll. Regulation 8 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 (Appendix 1) prescribe the grounds on which the name of a student of compulsory school age can be deleted from the admission register. When a student is deleted from the admission register the academy must clearly indicate the date and the reason for removal from roll and update their management information system (MIS). Where the child's whereabouts remain unknown the CTF coded XXXXXXX (destination unknown) must then be uploaded onto the School to School (S2S) database using 'unknown' as the destination school, so that the CTF will be logged in the Missing Child area.

As an academy, we are expected to follow the same procedure for maintained schools described.

15. Services that Support Children and Young People

Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service works with children and families to support and maintain good attendance at school.

Each school or education provision has an allocated Education Welfare Officer who will be the first point of contact when a child goes missing from school. Redbridge Education Welfare Service is also responsible for making sure parent/carers carry out their legal obligation to ensure their child receives an education, according to the Education Act (1996). Failing this the matter could be referred to Redbridge Magistrates' court.

Children Living Away from Home (CLAFH)

Each young person living away from home by arrangement with the Local Authority has access to a range of support including a named key worker from the Children Living Away from Home Team. Redbridge Children Living Away Support Service includes specialist teachers and an Education Welfare Officer who deal specifically with education for Children Looked After. The Local Authority also has a duty to monitor young people living in private foster arrangements (for 28 days or more with someone who isn't a parent or relative) it is the carer's responsibility to notify the Local Authority of this arrangement - it is a criminal offence not to do so.

Youth Offending Service

Young people who have committed offences are referred to the Youth Offending Service, and assigned a key worker. Their role is to support the young person through the duration of a tailored programme to address offending behaviour including court directed orders. The Youth Offending Service also has a named education worker who specifically deals with monitoring the education of young people referred there.

Specialist Practitioner for Families in Temporary Accommodation (Health)

It is recognised that highly mobile children and families are subject to a range of disadvantage in relation to their health and development.

It is the role of the specialist practitioner for families in temporary accommodation to support families with children up to the age of 19 years. S/he receives referrals and liaises with other professionals working with these children and their families including Education Welfare Officers

Families placed in Redbridge by other London Boroughs, are alerted to the specialist worker through the "Notify" system. All of these families are offered a home visit and an assessment is carried out. If children are found not attending school, s/he liaises with the children's services' Vulnerable Children's Officer.

Traveller Education

The Advisory Teacher for Traveller Education, based within the School improvement team, supports the education of Traveller children and their families by advising schools on curriculum and inclusion matters, and by liaising between families and education.

Teenage Pregnancy Midwives

The teenage pregnancy midwives are specifically trained and skilled in working with young mothers in this age range. They support young women who conceive while in statutory education in Redbridge during and after delivery of their baby. Redbridge has an education reintegration policy for teenage parents including tailored support. More information is available on the Redbridge i website following the links to care and health/health/teenage pregnancy and on the Young People Friendly website.

Connexions

Working directly with young people and their parent /carers, personal advisors can offer information, advice and guidance for 13-19-year olds on a range of topics including further education, training, health, activities, and homelessness. They are also able to support young people with learning difficulties or disabilities with their ambitions.

Redbridge Tuition Service (RTS)

RTS work with young people who are not engaged with mainstream provision (for a variety of reasons) The tuition service also works with Children prevented from attending school through serious long-term illness, usually in their homes.

Redbridge Admissions and Awards Team

The Admission and Awards team, manage school applications for all Redbridge residents. To apply for school, visit the Local Authority's one stop shop at Lynton House, 255 High Road, Ilford, Essex, IG1 1NN. A customer service representative can assist with the application form. Information on admissions is available on the

Redbridge I website following the links to children and schools/schools support information/ application and admissions.

Elective Home Education

If a parent intends to educate their child at home, the law requires they must inform the school their child is leaving. The Local Authority will ask their elective home education support officer to visit and ensure the education being provided is suitable to meet the child's individual requirements according to his/her age ability and with regard to any special educational need. Information is also available at www.redbridge.gov.uk following the link to children and schools/schools/home schooling.

Appendix A: Redbridge Education Welfare Service Procedures for Children Missing from School

When a registered pupil:

- Leaves a Redbridge school with no confirmed destination, address, or Education Provision;
- Fails to attend school for more than 20 days without explanation;
- Fails to return from a notified leave of absence.

They could be missing, or considered missing education and the following actions should be taken in conjunction with the Local Authority Attendance strategy:

The School should: (within the first 20 days of absence):

- Contact the allocated key worker or lead professional if the family are known to have one. Where the young person (or siblings) is known to be the subject of a child protection plan, this must happen immediately if there is no response to first day contact. The School's allocated Education Welfare Officer must also be alerted;
- Make initial enquiries by telephoning the family or any other designated emergency contact number available to them;
- Send a letter to the family's last known address requesting contact and confirmation of the Young Person's whereabouts if phone numbers are unavailable;
- Refer to the Education Welfare Officer for further investigation if there is no response or the response is felt to be unsatisfactory/needs to be confirmed.

The Education Welfare Officer will:

Work closely with the education provision and establish enquiries to locate the Young Person(s) including:

- Confirming the school has made every effort to locate the child;
- Check databases for possible change of address;
- Contact siblings' school (if applicable) for further information;
- Visit the family home or last known address;
- Follow up any possible routes of investigation provided by local knowledge.

Each action and outcome must be recorded on Tribal pupil support system (PSS) for each child/family group.

When Enquiries Confirms the Pupil on Roll at a New School

The Local Authority requires all maintained schools to update their Management Information System (MIS) as soon as the child is removed from roll. The leaving date and the new school name should be indicated in the releasing schools MIS system. An electronic Common Transfer File (CTF) of the pupil's school records should be generated and sent to the new school within 15 days via the School to School (s2s) secure transfer web site. If the new school is in the independent sector or in Scotland the CTF should be coded MMMMMMM and uploaded on the s2s secure transfer site. Such cases where the place is confirmed as stable, do not need referring to the Vulnerable Children's Officer as the young person can be accounted for from the time s/he left the Redbridge School until confirmed on roll at the new school.

When it is Apparent the Family are not known at the Last Address Given

If enquiries provide no new information, or the pupil cannot be confirmed on roll at a school/ education provision or in receipt of suitable education according to their age ability and regard for any special educational need.

The Education Welfare Officer Must

- Advise the school to remove the child from roll after no more than 20 days absence without explanation following enquiries, except in the case of Children Looked After who should be referred to the relevant lead professional for advice;
- Advise the discharging school to create a CTF coded XXXXXXXX (destination unknown) and upload to s2s where it will be stored in the Lost Pupil Database;
- Clearly Record all actions taken, and efforts to trace on PSS;
- Enter a closed event on PSS;
- Email Movement of Children form for each young person/family group to the Information Officer for CME (chris.truelove@redbridge.gov.uk). Copies of any correspondence sent or received must be attached or sent to:

Chris Truelove CRC,
Ray Lodge,
91 Ray Lodge Road,
Woodford Green,
Essex IG8 7PG.

The Vulnerable Children's Officer and Information Officer for CME will:

- Record young person's details on Children Missing Education database;
- Refer onward to Local Authority, where this is known or suspected;
- Endeavour to make further enquiries either in the UK or abroad;
- Monitor and reconcile movements for recording and reporting purposes.

This allows the specialist workers to monitor the pupil until their safe arrival in the named destination and confirm the take up of education. See also **Appendix C: Children Leaving a Redbridge School Without a Destination**.

Cases when a forwarding address or education provision has been named must also be referred to the specialist workers. Unless the Education Welfare Officer or the School has had contact with a new education provision to establish the young person on roll and confirm this placement is stable.

Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 prescribes the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age can be deleted from the admission register. When a pupil is deleted from the admission register the school must clearly indicate the date and the reason for removal from roll.

Appendix B: Movement of Children Referral Form

[Click here to view Movement of Children Referral Form](#)

Appendix C: Children Leaving a Redbridge School Without a Destination

[Click here to view Children Leaving a Redbridge School Without a Destination](#)

Appendix D: Child in Area Believed to be Missing Education

[Click here to view Child in Area Believed to be Missing Education](#)