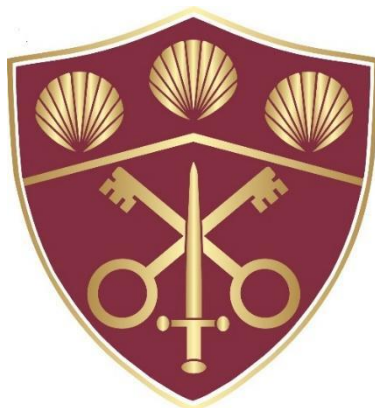


Ad Gloriam Dei et Servitium Omnium

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 2025

Signature of Chair of Governors:

Signature of Headteacher:

Review Date: February 2026

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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 2023
- The London Child Protection Procedures
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- 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).

Children who are missing in education are those who are of compulsory school age who are not registered with a school or receiving suitable education outside of the school environment. Children who go missing in education are at risk of:

- Underachieving
- 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:

- A child of statutory school age (5-16) living in Redbridge not on roll at a registered school, or alternative provision;
- A child who has stopped attending school in Redbridge and moved away from their last known address with their destination unconfirmed or unknown, including those young people believed to have left the UK.

This **does not** include young people with poor attendance. Redbridge Education Welfare Service works with young people under these circumstances.

4. Children Missing from Home or Public Care

The CME procedure described here does not cover young people who abscond from home or local authority care. This is covered by The Department for Education Statutory guidance on children who runaway or go missing from home or public care (January 2014). Redbridge also refers to the London Child Protection Procedures for dealing with young people in this situation. Stability of schooling is essential for children who are looked after by Local Authorities. Where children go missing from their care placement, they are rarely absent for long. It is important that their school place is kept open until there is an agreement between the academy and the authority with responsibility for their care, that this place is no longer necessary.

Daily checks are made for all children in care and any reported absence is pursued.

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. 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:

- Is confirmed on a school roll, or receiving alternative education whether by elective home education or at an alternative provision; or
- Has reached a destination after leaving Redbridge (including outside the UK) and has been confirmed as receiving education or referred to the Local Authority or equivalent; or
- All reasonable steps have been satisfactorily conducted to locate the child including all appropriate safeguarding measures

6. Referral Path for Children Missing Education

When a young person confirmed to be CME, the academy is expected to refer using the Movement of Children Referral Form (Appendix A) sent electronically to CME@redbridge.gov.uk or by post to the address on the form.

Our EWO will support this process. **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 C 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 A). **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 D Children Leaving a Redbridge School without a Destination.

8. Child Protection/ Safeguarding

When a young person leaves the academy and it is known they or, a member of their family, have an allocated social 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 are safeguarding concerns and no allocated key worker or lead professional, Redbridge CME Officers in liaison with appropriate local agencies will make every effort to contact social care colleagues and or the police in the known or suspected destination.

9. Forced Marriage

Forcing someone to marry someone against their will is completely different to arranged marriage where both bride and groom consent to marrying each other. If it is suspected a young person is being forced into marriage, a referral should be made immediately to social services. See also the Foreign and Commonwealth office website www.fco.gov.uk/forcedmarriage

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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 2023 (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 XXXXXXXX (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.

CME REFERRAL FORM

Notification of Statutory School Aged Young Person Believed Missing from Education

All sections must be appropriately completed for this referral to be accepted
Please return completed form electronically to cme@redbridge.gov.uk

First Name				
Last Name				
Date of birth		Gender	Ethnicity as shown on School records	
Redbridge School		Statemented/SEN	Yes	No
Sibling(s) First Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	Gender	Ethnicity as shown on school records
Current Address (Where known)				
Previous Address				
Sibling(s) Address If different				
Responsible adult				
Contact Details	Phone Numbers			
	Email			
Actions Taken To Locate Pupil				
Please detail actions taken to locate this child or children				
	Date	By Whom	Outcome	
Phone Calls/Texts				
Letters				
Home Visits				
Emails				

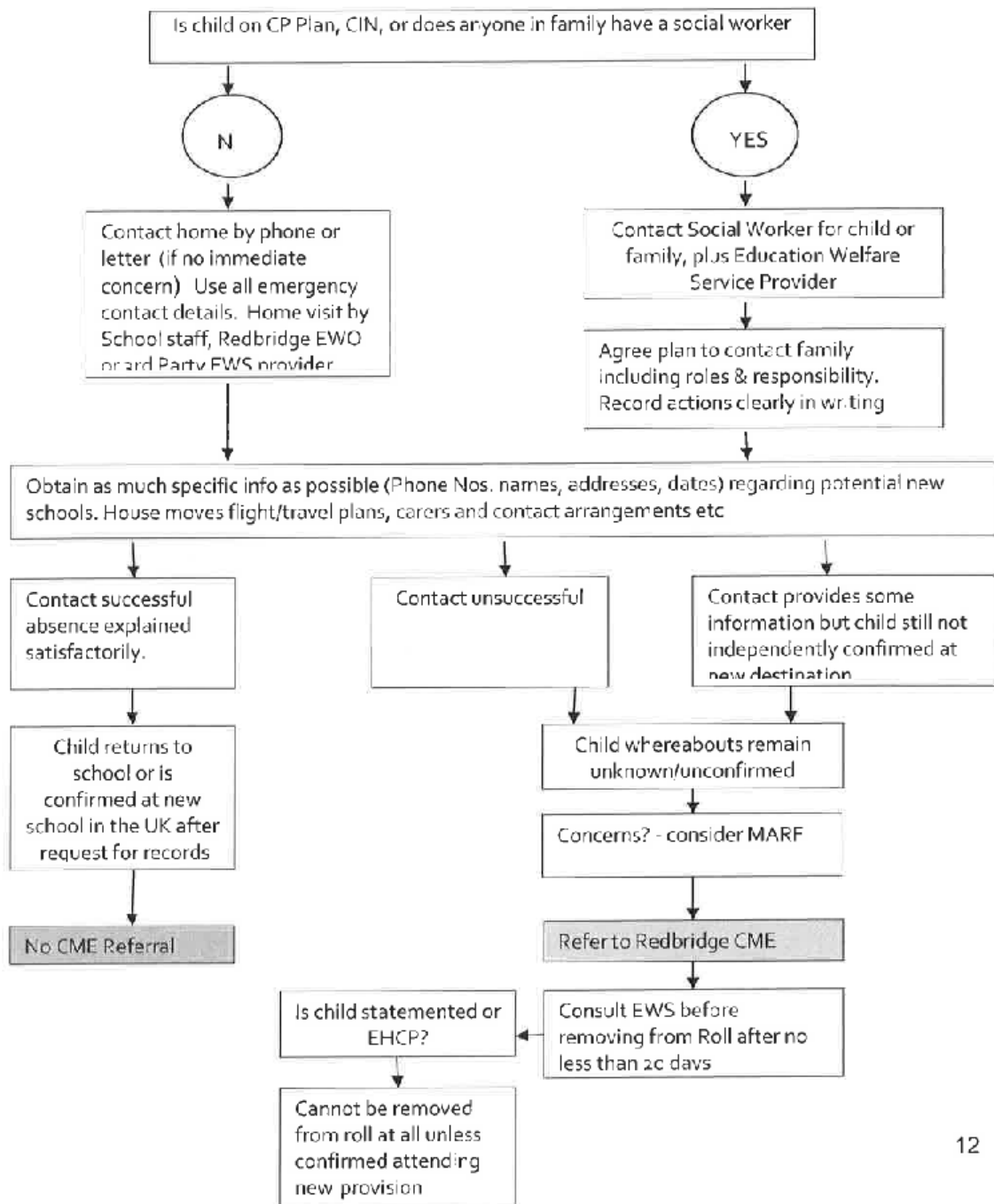
Risk Assessment	
Please provide any relevant detail/information for us to consider when making a home Visit	
Additional Information	
Please give details of any other relevant information that might help us locate this child or children	
Name of Referrer	
Agency/Service	
Address	
Email Address	
Phone No	

Standards, Achievement and Inclusion Chris Hilliard – Chief Officer
 Education Welfare Service, Station Road Centre, Station Road, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex IG6 1NE
 In case of query please call: 0208 708 6047/0208 708 3838

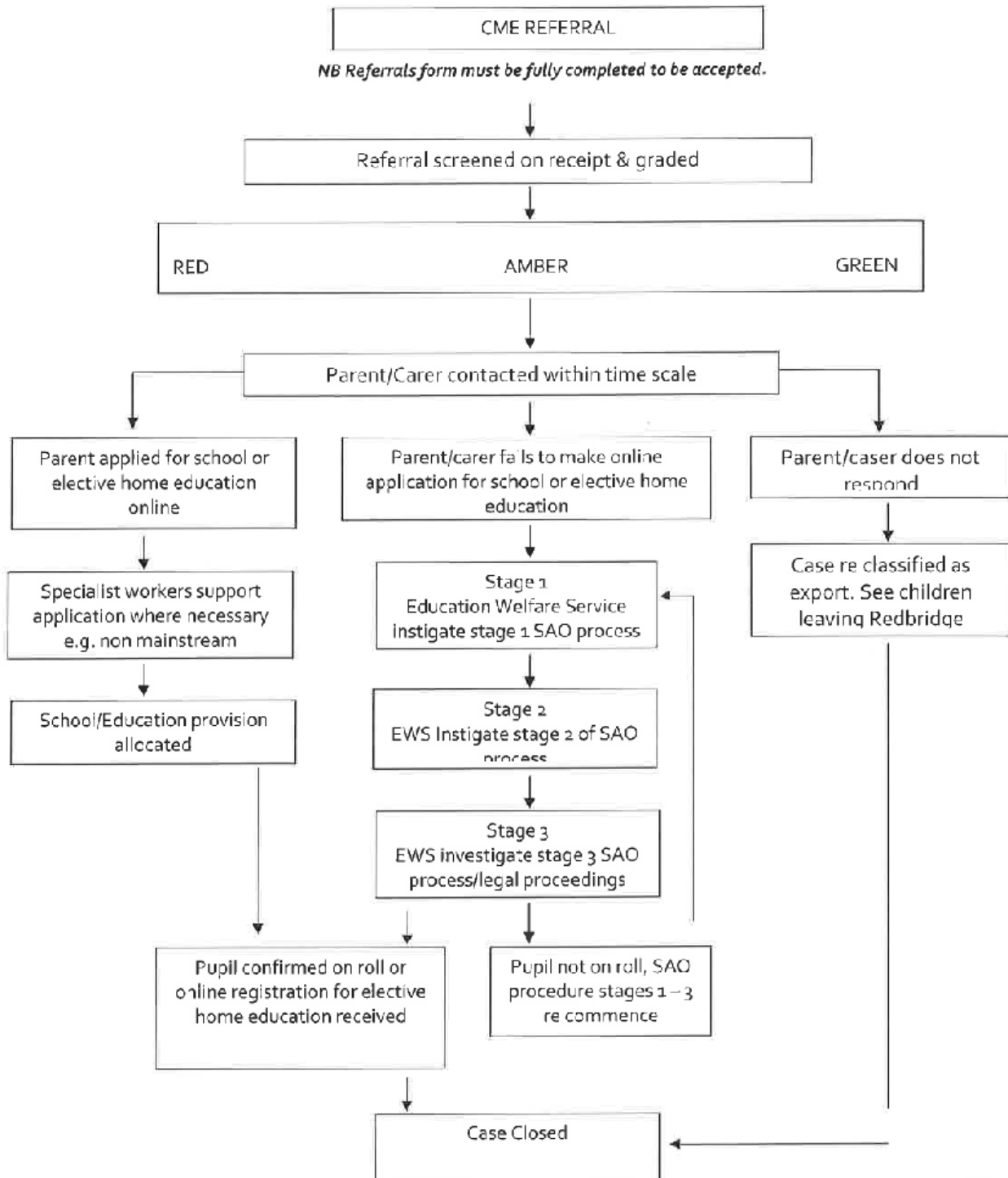
Flow Chart For School's Regarding Non Attendance

Pupil Stops Attending

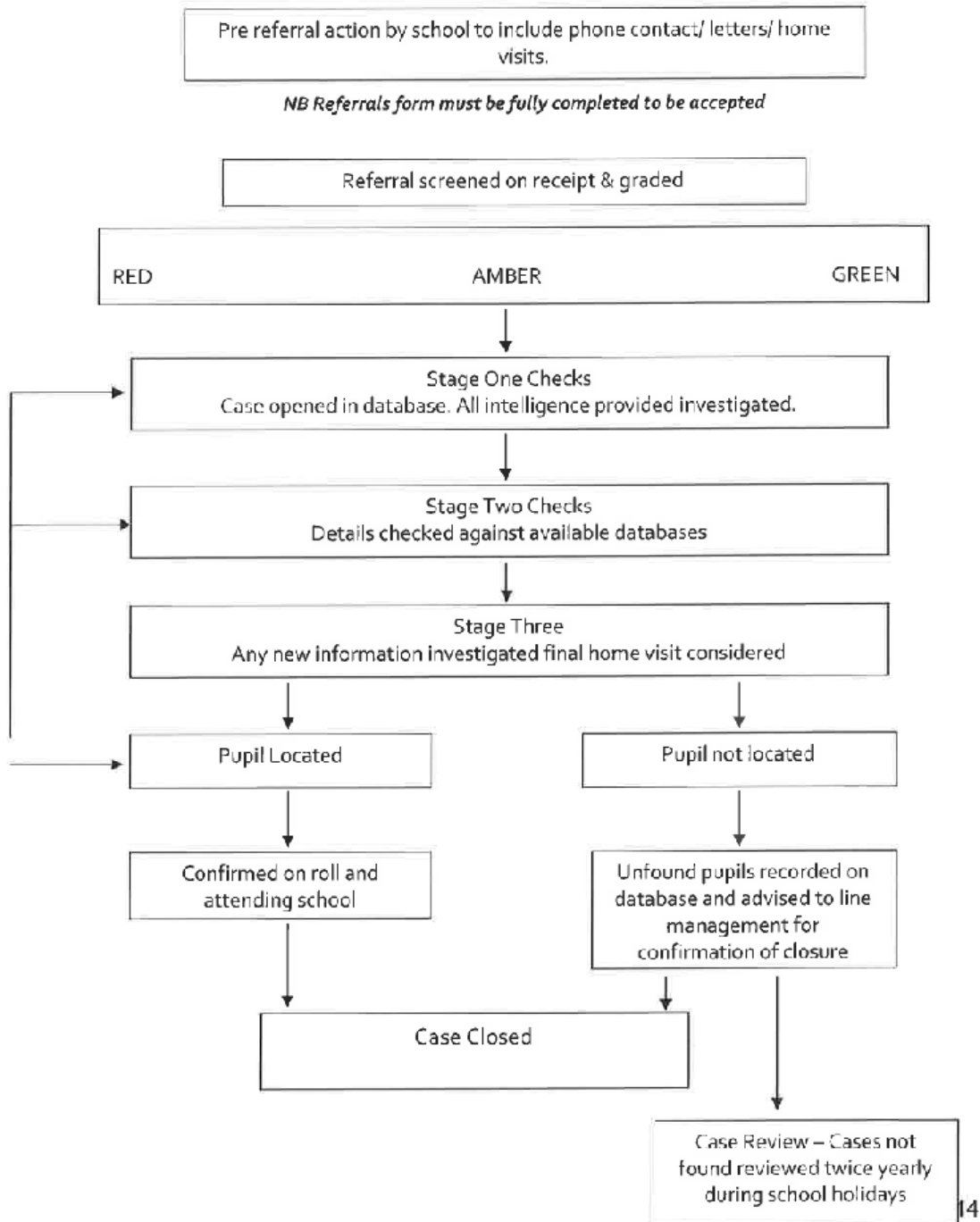
A child who stops attending is a vulnerable child they may be in need of help and/or be at risk of harm



Child In Area Believed To Be Missing Education



Children Leaving a Redbridge School Without a Destination



Child(ren) Leaving School Notification

All sections to be completed by **parent/carer** when giving notice of child(ren) leaving
Redbridge school
School to return form electronically with CME Referral to cme@redbridge.gov.uk

First Name				
Last Name				
Date of birth		Gender	Ethnicity as shown on School records	
Redbridge School				
Sibling(s) First Name	Last Name	Date of birth	Gender	Ethnicity as shown on school records
Current Address				
Sibling(s) Address If different				
Date leaving this address				
Responsible adult				
Contact Details	Phone Numbers			
	Email			
Where is the pupil going				
New Address				
Phone				
Email				
New School (Where Known)				
Phone				
Email				
Web Address				
If leaving the UK				
Date of departure				
Accompanying adult				
Place of departure e.g airport/dock				
Flight No./Ship Name & Final Destination				

Thank you for your co-operation. Please be aware it is Redbridge Policy to confirm your child attending school at their intended destination. This is a safeguarding measure applicable to all students to ensure they have arrived safely and are receiving education in their new home.