



“I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness.”
John 10:10

Children Missing in Education Policy

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Signed (Chair of Governors):	<i>[Signature]</i>
Statutory policy: <i>Yes/No</i>	On school website: <i>Yes/No</i>

CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION POLICY

(This policy is based on the Somerset LA model policy dated 1 May 2015.)

1. Introduction

Ofsted's "Out of School Survey" in 2004 estimates there are approximately 10,000 Children Missing Education (CME) in the UK. These children either fail to start an appropriate education provision or become lost from school rolls and fail to re-register at a new school when they move area.

"Missing" children are a very vulnerable group. Somerset County Council (SCC) believe it is vital that practitioners in all services work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible.

Children who disengage from education provision, even for short periods, are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk in terms of safeguarding and may be vulnerable to engagement in, or become victims of, antisocial or criminal behaviour, social disengagement and/or sexual exploitation. There is also a higher risk of road traffic accidents for children out of school.

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (inserted by the Education and Inspections Act 2006) requires all local education authorities to "*make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area . . . who are not receiving a suitable education*".

This requires SCC to monitor the numbers of children/young people in the authority who are not receiving an education, including those new to the area or the country.

This guidance describes the process employed by SCC to identify, monitor and track children who are missing from education. This process has been written to assist all professionals who work with children and families and will ensure that the children's services in Somerset:

- meet statutory duties relating to the provision of education and safeguarding the welfare of children missing education;
- have robust multi-agency systems in place to identify and track children missing from education or at risk of doing so;
- establish monitoring and reporting systems to identify a lead agency and a key worker for all children missing from education.

2. Rationale

Most children who are missing from education are identified and supported back into education quickly. Others who have experienced complex problems can be more difficult to get back into suitable education.

Children can become CME for many reasons. For example they may:

- fail to start appropriate provision and so never enter the system (e.g. transition stages – pre-school/infant/junior/secondary stages, new to the county or country and no application made for a school place);
- cease to attend due to illegal exclusion;
- cease to attend due to withdrawal and removal from roll with no named destination;
- fail to complete a transition between providers (e.g. being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new LA or within Somerset or after leaving a custodial establishment);
- schools and academies “blocking” or refusing to admit a child.

Who is a Child Missing from Education?

For the purpose of this document a Child Missing from suitable Education is defined as: *"Any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity (e.g. school, alternative curriculum, electively home educated), and has been out of any education provision continuously for a period of not less than twenty school days."*

Some children may become CME following certain life or family events. For example (though not exhaustive):

- children of families who can be highly mobile: parents in the forces, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families;
- children within the youth justice system;
- children in families fleeing domestic violence;
- children, or those in families, involved in antisocial behaviour;
- children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan;
- children affected by substance and/or alcohol misuse;
- children who are unaccompanied asylum seekers or children of refugees and asylum seeking families;
- children in immigrant families, who are not yet established in the UK and do not have a fixed address;
- children of migrant worker families (who may not be familiar with the education system);
- children who do not receive a suitable education whilst being electively home educated;
- children who have been bullied;
- children who have suffered discrimination on the grounds of race, faith, gender, disability or sexuality;
- children at risk of sexual exploitation, including children who have been trafficked to, or within the UK;

- children at risk of “honour”-based violence including forced marriage (FM) or female genital mutilation (FGM);
- children in care or children who go missing from care;
- children who are privately fostered;
- young carers;
- children who are permanently or illegally excluded from school;
- children who were registered at a private school and have not made the transition to another school;
- children with parents with mental health problems or learning difficulties;
- children with long-term diagnosed medical or emotional problems or children whose parent(s) may claim undiagnosed issues.

This process does not replace any existing safeguarding procedures, and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns are to be observed at all times.

3. Purpose of CME process

This process is designed so SCC meets its statutory duties relating to the provision of education and the safeguarding and welfare of children.

These procedures apply to all state and private schools, academies, free schools or PRU and are followed by all partner agencies to help to ensure that all our children achieve the five key outcomes of Every Child Matters:

1. Being Healthy
2. Staying Safe
3. Enjoying and Achieving
4. Making a Positive Contribution
5. Achieving Economic Well-Being

4. Identification processes within Somerset County Council

Notification and referral routes

The CME Officer will coordinate the identification, referral and tracking of children missing education. The CME Officer will work in partnership with key stakeholders in Somerset including all schools, academies, Children’s Social Care, local district councils, housing departments and associations, health services, Child in Care Teams, Targeted Youth Support (TYS), admissions, police and voluntary organisations to develop the already existing inter-agency network. All members will be aware of systems of referral for pupils who are missing or at risk of going missing from education by using this document.

As part of the Education Attendance Service (EAS), the CME Officer will liaise closely with Education Attendance Officers (EAO) to determine whether the CME issue may also be a school attendance concern. The EAO will in many instances be the investigator and maker of home visits to determine whether the child is missing and or missing education. The latter may involve the EAO having to use statutory duties as appropriate.

The CME Officer will manage the coordination of the referral process to ensure that all stakeholders understand the procedures outlined below.

Referral process from within Somerset

After 20 sessions (10 school days) continuous absence, schools should complete either the Children Missing Education Referral Form (see Appendix C) or the CME Enrolled at Another School Form (see Appendix D).

The circumstances of each case will determine which form to complete. If the school believes the child has moved out of the county/country and no formal confirmation has been received from the parents or new school, a full CME Referral Form needs to be filled out and submitted.

However, if the school believes the student is intending to or may have enrolled at another school then the CME Enrolled at Another School Form needs to be submitted.

If the school has received a request for the child's Common Transfer File from the new school then no CME action is required.

All forms can only be accepted in an electronic format and should be emailed to the Missing Children Mailbox: missingchildren@somerset.gov.uk

Referral process for statutory and voluntary agencies, other local authorities and members of the public

If there is an awareness of a child who is not receiving a suitable education within Somerset, details of the child should be emailed to the CME Team Mailbox: missingchildren@somerset.gov.uk

Other possible referral routes

- Section 16 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998: attendance and exclusion sweeps (police and ABS)
- School register audits
- General public via Somerset Direct, letter or email

5. Identification, tracking and monitoring

The CME Officer has access to many centrally held databases against which the child's details can be checked to establish whether he/she is registered with a school or an educational provider. Enquiries directly to other LAs will be made if destinations are known.

Unproductive searches may involve a request for an EAO involvement and their further investigations.

6. Database and monitoring

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 requires all local authorities to make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. This is done by tracking and maintaining their details via EMS Capita One.

Monitoring is an essential component of effective systems. The numbers and status of children on the register and the speed with which they return to educational provision will be reported on a regular basis.

Children Educated at Home are recorded and monitored separately. Reports may be circulated to partner agencies as requested or to comply with any Freedom of Information requests.

7. Common Transfer File (CTF)

The statutory requirement to send the Common Transfer File (CTF) from the old school to the new school ensures specific information about a pupil is transferred with them electronically.

The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 states that information must be sent within 15 school days of the pupil ceasing to be registered at the old school and, where possible, should be sent to the next school before the pupil leaves their existing school unless the new school is unknown.

When a child arrives in school and the previous school is unknown, the Core Data Team should be contacted to enable them to search the School to School (s2s) DfE secure website. This is used for the transfer of CTFs and other data files between schools and local authorities.

When to create a "full" CTF:

- At the point of normal transfer between school phases a separate file should be generated for each school that at least one pupil is transferring to. This file should group together all pupils known to be leaving and then joining the same school.

- A CTF may be generated for a single pupil who transfers schools between school phases.
- Where a pupil is leaving the school and no destination is known, a file should be generated for each pupil and the destination shown as LA number XXX and school number as XXXX.
- Where a pupil is leaving the school and the destination is known to be a school outside the maintained sector in England and Wales, a file should be generated for each pupil and the destination shown as LA number MMM and school number as MMMM.
- There will be occasions when a CTF has to be created for a pupil after they have left the school. This could be on receipt of a request from a subsequent school because a pupil has arrived at that school.

Common Transfer Files for XXX XXXX and MMM MMMM produced by schools are loaded onto s2s in the same way as files for schools – the only difference is that these files can only have the details of one pupil to enable individual pupil information to be retrieved.

8. **Admissions and CME reporting**

New Intake and Casual in Year Admissions Guidance for those who fail to arrive on their due date of Admission

Important Note: Before working through this guidance, it is essential that the MIS system is updated with all new admissions, including and children offered a place at school but no longer expected to attend. This information is sent to your school via e-mail from your Admissions Officer. A final allocation list is sent to the school mailbox at the end of August.

This notes all changes made since the initial allocations. You can use this to cross reference with the information on your MIS system to ensure all changes have been made. If you are unsure or require clarification, please contact your Admissions Officer directly.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state:

- *If a pupil has accepted a place at the school and fails to attend on the agreed date the pupil must be admitted to the school roll (on the expected first day of attendance) and must be listed in both the admissions register and the attendance register.*
- *The school must follow up the absence, establish the reason and mark the register as an Unauthorised Absence in the normal way using Code “N” for statutory school age students, and “X” for first admissions that are non-statutory school age.*

This Statutory Instrument ensures the pupil does not lose their place and any safeguarding and missing from education concerns are addressed.

Once a child has been allocated a place, it is the school's responsibility to find out where the pupil is should they fail to attend on the agreed start date. The Local Authority EAO linked to the school and the Children Missing Education Liaison Officer must be informed when a pupil has failed to attend the school for 20 continuous sessions (10 school days) without a reason for the absence.

Having made their enquiries, a school can report sooner if they believe there are safeguarding concerns.

A missing pupil cannot be removed from the school roll unless the school has been informed, either by the **LA School Admissions Officer**, having used the most recent pupil allocation list or by the **Children Missing Education Liaison Officer** after completion of the missing children's paperwork.

The procedures must be followed to provide an accurate School Census and its funding. **It is very important that the school deals with these pupils before a School Census is performed.**

Please see below for individual scenarios:

- a) **If the pupil has been delayed in joining the school:** Contact the LA School Admissions Officer to agree a new first date of expected attendance. The date of admission on the pupil's record can then be amended.
- b) **If the school believes the student is intending to or may have enrolled at another school, or the student is found to have been enrolled elsewhere:** The school must follow up the absence, establish the reason and mark the register as an Unauthorised Absence in the normal way using Code "N" for statutory school age students, and "X" for first admissions that are non-statutory school age.

If the school knows that the pupil has enrolled elsewhere, e.g. has had a CTF request from the new school or, in the case of a reception child, has received confirmation that the child is on roll at another school, then **no CME action is required**. The pupil can then be permanently deleted from your MIS system. **Please advise your LA School Admissions Officer in all cases.**

If the school believes that the pupil is intending to or may have enrolled at another school but no formal confirmation has been received, the school must complete the **CME Enrolled at Another School (see Appendix D)** form advising the Children Missing Education Liaison Officer that it is believed that the student is intending to or has enrolled at another school.

Links to forms are available in SIMS. Any and all queries relating to accessing the forms should go to the Education MIS Helpline on 01823 355090 or be emailed to SWOICTHelpdesk@somerset.gov.uk

Once the child has been tracked, the Enrolled at Another School proforma will be returned to the school by the Children Missing Education Liaison Officer indicating the appropriate action on the MIS system.

If the instruction is to permanently delete the child, the school should action this immediately and email Coredateam@somerset.gov.uk to inform them of the deletion. This enables the SCC student database is updated to reflect the deletion.

NEW INTAKE ONLY

Guidance for those who fail to arrive on their due date of Admission

If the school fails to find out where the pupil is (for all students other than First Admissions)

During the period of trying to discover where the pupil is, the school should mark the absence in their MIS system as an Unauthorised Absence using Code “N”.

The school will have already followed the guidance on Children Missing Education and reported the absence to the Children Missing Education Liaison Officer and the EAO.

Finally, when the school has failed to find out where the pupil is and **authorisation from the LA has been received**, the school can remove them from the roll; the pupil should be given a Date of Leaving as advised by the Children Missing Education Liaison Officer.

A CTF should then be created (see Section 7, above).

FOR FIRST ADMISSIONS STUDENTS

During the period of trying to discover where the pupil is, the school should mark the absence in their MIS system as an Absence using Code “X”.

The school will have already followed the guidance on Children Missing Education and reported the absence to the Children Missing Education Liaison Officer and the EAO.

Finally, when the school has failed to find out where the pupil is and **authorisation from the LA has been received**, the school can permanently delete or remove them from the roll as appropriate. If advised to remove them from the roll, the Date of Leaving will be advised by the Children Missing Education Liaison Officer.

Once notification has been received via a completed CME Found Form (see Appendix E) or a CME Unable to Locate Pupil Form (see Appendix F) sent by the Children Missing Education Liaison Officer, please complete the appropriate action on the MIS system.

If the instruction is to permanently delete the child, the school should action this immediately and email Coredatateam@somerset.gov.uk to inform them of the student deletion. This ensures the SCC student database is updated to reflect the deletion.

9. Registers: circumstances for removal from school roll

The contents and maintenance of the school registers is governed by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Deletions from Registers

Regulation 8 enables schools to delete compulsory school-age children from registers only in the following circumstances:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order.
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority.
- Completion of compulsory school age.
- Permanent exclusion.
- Death of the pupil.
- Transfer between schools.
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
- Failure to return from an extended family holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age.
- In custody for more than four months.
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil.
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.

Regulation 12 requires schools to inform the local authority of the following deletions of compulsory school age pupils as soon as they become aware of the circumstances and before the deletion is made:

- The pupils' parents have advised in writing their intention to withdraw their children to Electively Home Educate.
- A pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer lives or boards within travelling distance of the school.
- The school medical officer has certified that the pupil's health means they will not return to the school before reaching the end of their compulsory school age.
- Permanent exclusion.

Any and all queries regarding the IT process should go to the Education MIS Helpline on 01823 355090 or be emailed to SWOICTHelpdesk@somerset.gov.uk

10. **Long-term absence**

Unless one of the circumstances in the regulations applies, schools cannot delete pupils if their absence is authorised. They can delete pupils who have at least 20 continuous school-days of unauthorised absence; it is not mandatory but both the school and the local authority must try to trace the pupil before the deletion is made. It is good practice for schools to commence initial investigation into pupil absence in accordance with their individual attendance policy and procedures.

Regulation 12 requires schools to provide the local authority with details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have 10 days continuous unauthorised absence, and schools should refer to their EAO to commence further enquiries.

The pupil must remain on the school roll until all reasonable enquiries are completed, even if this means that pupil will amass more than 20 days absence.

The outcome of both the school and the local authority's attempts to trace the pupil will dictate their next steps. Where they are unable to find the pupil, cases must be referred to the appropriate agencies. In agreement with the CME Officer, on behalf of the local authority, the school should delete the pupil from the school register and update their MIS system (see Section 7).

When enquiries locate a pupil, action should be taken according to the pupil's circumstances at the time. This could mean, for example, accessing specialist services, dealing with a transfer between schools, keeping the pupil on the roll and treating the case as one of persistent absence or completion of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF).

If the process does not follow the statutory process, schools and academies will be required to reinstate pupils back on to their school roll. All schools must adhere to the following guidelines as set out in:

- *Keeping Pupil Registers: Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations* (2006, Department for Education)
- *Absence and Attendance Codes: Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities* (2013, Department for Education)

To limit the opportunity for children to go missing when they fall out of the education system, a range of systematic processes and procedures have been identified, these include:

- Referral to the LA Children Missing Education (CME) Officer, who keeps an updated central register of all children missing education.
- Identification and location of children missing education through liaison with other services and agencies most likely to find such children.
- Re-engage those missing, with appropriate educational provision through the CAF process and a lead professional, and action planning process.
- Identify children missing education through liaison with other local authorities and access to national databases (s2s).
- Developing existing systems to identify those at risk of becoming CME.
- Raising awareness of CME to everybody that every child has a right to an education.

The CME process does NOT replace safeguarding procedures for the reporting of child protection concerns, which must be observed at all times.

11. Safeguarding children who run away and go missing

A child or young person who goes missing just once faces the same immediate risks as faced by a child or young person who regularly goes missing. However, the children who go missing when they are young (and/or more frequently) are more likely to face longer-term problems.

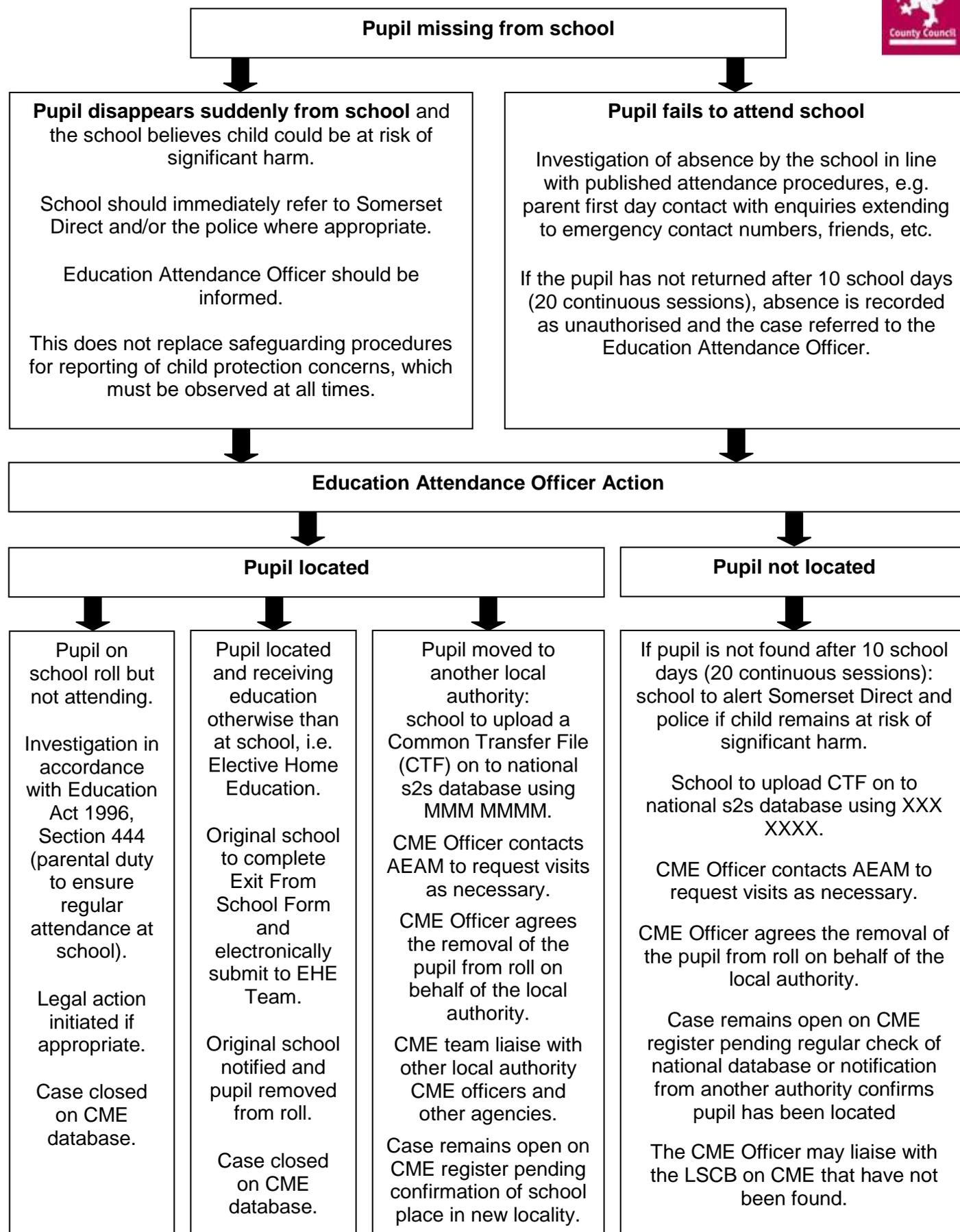
Where children unexpectedly go missing from their registered school or education provider, i.e. they abscond on route or during the school day, parents/carers must be informed immediately and the police involved where appropriate. Schools must have robust procedures in place for such eventualities in line with individual attendance policies, and police officers attending under these circumstances should enquire what procedures have been implemented to minimise duplication of effort.

Schools should discuss such cases with their EAO to determine whether the matter is CME and/or a school attendance issue.

Children who go missing from home should be considered as a school attendance matter as well as a potential CME. The EAO needs to determine whether there is need to use any of the statutory duties, including the use of an Education Supervision Order (Section 36 of the Children Act 1989). Consideration must include parents and the need to inform the police and/or Somerset Direct.

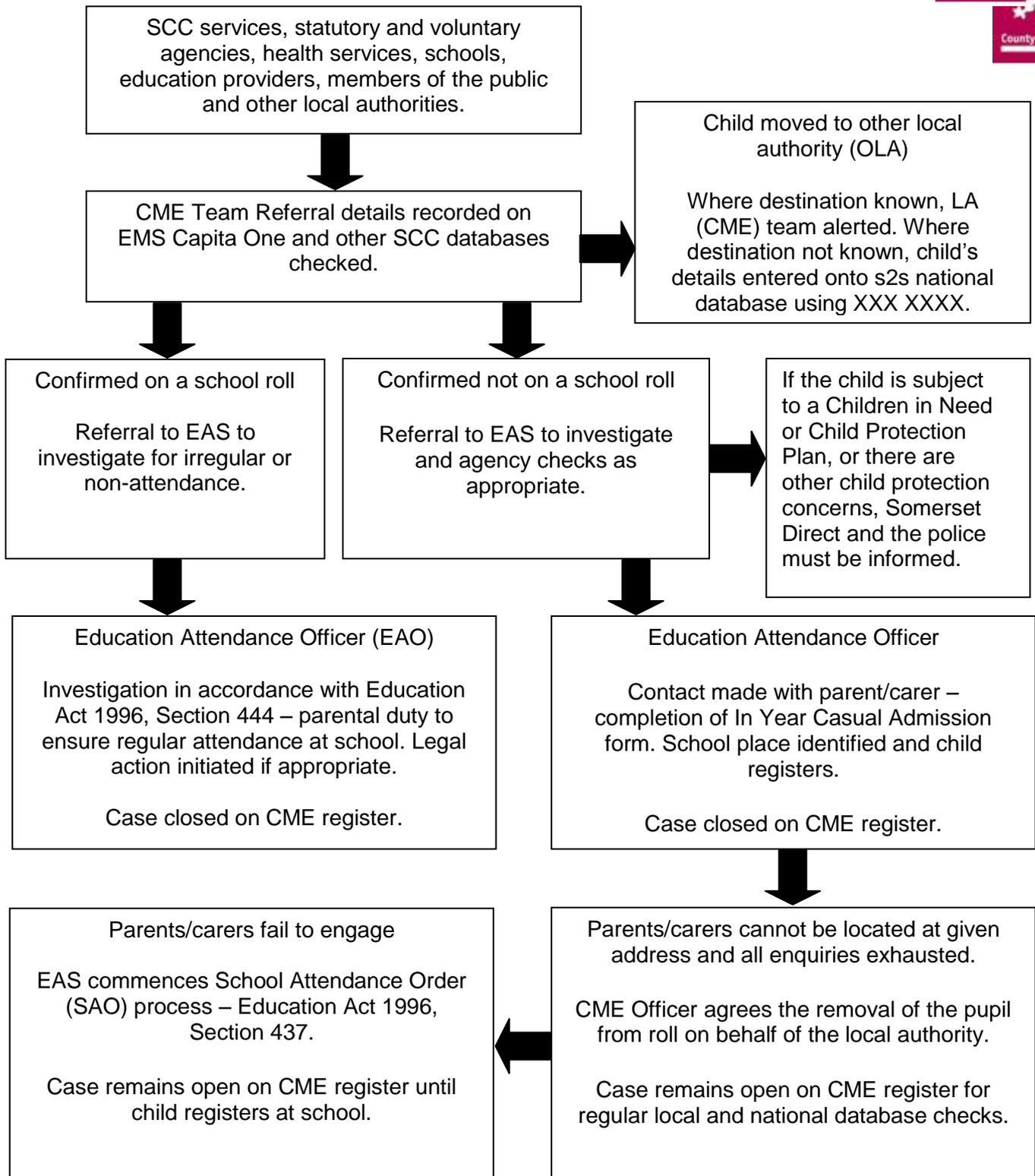
12. Partner agencies and services involved in the CME referral and monitoring process

Any partner agency or service involved with children has a duty to notify the local authority of any child or family who are missing from education. The officer who tracks missing children and carries out this duty on behalf of the local authority is Samantha Baker, and she should be notified at the earliest opportunity of any child who potentially meets the criteria for reporting (missingchildren@somerset.gov.uk).





SOURCES OF REFERRAL AND CME PROCESS



Contact(s) last known address(es):

Contacts last known phone numbers:

	Home phone:	
	Mobile:	
	Home phone:	
	Mobile:	

Child has moved to (area, if known):	
Date child last attended school:	

Details of contacts made by school:

- Telephone calls to any numbers held on record †
- Siblings and known relatives within the same school †
- Other members of staff with whom the child may have had contact
- Friends of the child within the same school †
- Siblings or relatives at any other school †
- Neighbours living in the same vicinity

Any relevant information (explanations offered as a result of enquiries above. Please specify source of information and as much detail as possible)

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Discussion with Education Attendance Officer? Yes No

Details (including name of Education Attendance Officer)

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Completed by:		Designation: Office	
Date:		Agreed by Headteacher:	

Forms should be emailed to MissingChildren@somerset.gov.uk for the attention of the Children Missing Education Liaison Officer.

**Appendix D CHILDREN MISSING FROM SUITABLE EDUCATION (CME)
CME ENROLLED AT ANOTHER SCHOOL FORM**

Somerset County Council – Learning and Achievement

**Confirmation that Pupil is enrolled at another school
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**

From the Headteacher of:	
Date:	

The following pupil is believed to have enrolled at another school:

Name:	
Date of birth:	
UPN:	
Date last attended:	
Name of School that child is believed to be attending:	

To be completed by Children Missing Education Liaison Officer

Pupil located can be removed from roll

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CHILDREN MISSING FROM SUITABLE EDUCATION (CME)

CME FOUND FORM

Somerset County Council – Learning and Achievement

Child Missing from Education Notice to Local Authority

Date:	
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To the Headteacher of:			
Pupil's FORENAME:			
Pupil's SURNAME:			
UPN:		DOB:	
		Gender:	
Ethnicity:			

Enquiries made following receipt of the Children Missing from Education referral form have been completed and the above named child has been located. For further details please see below:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Is on school roll at _____ and is attending regularly
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is being educated at home by parents/carer
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is on a flexible learning package
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is a case known to the Education Attendance Service, who are addressing the issues of education and attendance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is supported by the medical needs team
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is awaiting appropriate educational provision
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

I am therefore authorising the school to remove from roll from

Yours sincerely,

SAMANTHA BAKER
Children Missing Education Liaison Officer

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CHILDREN MISSING FROM SUITABLE EDUCATION (CME)

CME UNABLE TO LOCATE PUPIL FORM

Somerset County Council – Learning and Achievement

Child Missing from Education Notice to Local Authority

Date:	
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To the Headteacher of:					
Pupil's FORENAME:					
Pupil's SURNAME:					
UPN:		DOB:		Gender:	
Ethnicity:					

Despite making reasonable enquiries over the past four weeks following receipt of the Children Missing from Education referral form, it has not been possible to locate the above named child.

Therefore, the local authority authorises the school to remove the above named child from your school roll as of the

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The school should now create a "lost pupil" common transfer file (CTF) with XXX XXXX as the destination. You should immediately upload this on to the DfE s2s secure website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-to-school-service-how-to-transfer-information>

Yours sincerely,

SAMANTHA BAKER
Children Missing Education Liaison Officer