

Children Missing Education

Roles & Responsibilities

July 2020

This document should be read in conjunction with the Devon Children and Families Partnership information on 'Missing children' <https://www.dcfp.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/missing-children/>

1. Introduction

Part 1 (Clause 4) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 introduced a statutory duty on Local Authorities to make arrangements to establish the identities of Children Missing Education (CME).

Section 436A of the Education Act, 2002 requires all local authorities to make arrangements to enable them to establish (as far as possible) the identities of children residing in their area who are not receiving a suitable education. In relation to children, by 'suitable education' we mean efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have [Section 7 Education Act 1996].

This applies to children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school, for example, at home, privately, or in alternative provision. In this document children in these groups are referred to as Children Missing Education (CME). Children who are on roll at a school but not attending are within this document referred to as Pupils Missing Education (PME).

The main focus of this document is on CME in Devon and the work should be seen within the context of the wider remit of the Local Authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children living within Devon.

All professionals working with children have a legal duty to safeguard children but the wider community can help by remaining vigilant to children's safety. The law states every child of compulsory school age should be receiving a suitable education. The Local Authority has a better chance of ensuring this, and a child's safety if we know where and how they are receiving this. The Education Act 2002 requires the Local Authority to undertake all functions with a view to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in its area.

Children identified as not receiving an education, or their whereabouts is unknown should be reported to:

Children Missing Education Team
Second Floor
Milford House
Pynes Hill
Exeter
Devon EX2 5GF
Tel. 01392 287230

3. Identifying children who are at most risk of becoming a CME

There are complex reasons why children become missing from education. These may include:

- Victims of Child Exploitation
- Young offenders
- Children of families who can be highly mobile e.g. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families
- Children from Armed Forces families
- Children of refugees and asylum seeking families
- Children of new immigrant families
- Children of migrant worker families (who may not be familiar with the education system)
- Children at risk of “honour”-based violence including forced marriage or female genital mutilation
- Children at risk of modern slavery
- Children from families fleeing domestic violence
- Children living in Women’s Refuges
- Young runaways
- Children of families living in temporary accommodation
- Children whose parents take them abroad for a prolonged period
- Children who do not receive a suitable education whilst being “home educated”
- Children of parents with mental health problems or learning difficulties
- Children with long term mental health, medical or emotional problems
- Children affected by substance and/or alcohol misuse
- Children with a history of poor school attendance
- Children that have difficulties at home
- Children that have a history of abuse or neglect
- Children that have learning difficulties or a disability
- Children that are young carers
- Children on the point of permanent exclusion from school who leave or are persuaded to seek a fresh start in another school
- Children on alternative curriculum arrangements which are not monitored effectively
- Children with SEN placements that are not completed due to one or more parties not complying with arrangements or able to meet needs
- Children from families with poor literacy skills or with EAL needs that find accessing information difficult

If a pupil 'disappears' without any warning the school must immediately notify the CME team at 2nd Floor, Milford House, Pynes Hill, Exeter, EX2 5GF. Tel: 01392 287230 and if there are safeguarding concerns the Police on 101 and MASH as per page 4.

When a pupil moves abroad, where possible, the school should seek confirmation of the family's new address and school details. The school should then endeavour to establish that the pupil is on roll of the new school.

In cases where there are safeguarding concerns, school should consult MASH and / or the Police.

Flexi schooling – please see EHE section below

"Guest" Pupils

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 requires every school to keep an admissions and attendance register for all of their pupils. The law does not allow for "guest pupils" and all pupils must be entered on the attendance and the admissions register. If pupils are educated at more than one school, they must be on the admissions and attendance register of each school. The only exception is children who are visiting the school on a "one-off" basis such as one-day seminars and visits before transferring to the school.

b) Children Missing Education team

The role of the CME team is to co-ordinate the identification, tracking and monitoring of children who appear to be missing from education. When a child is referred to the CME team (by a school, other agency or an individual) as being at risk of missing education, the case will be investigated until either the child is back in school or it is confirmed that the child is without a school place. Please see flow chart on page 16. Regular reporting is also made to Missing Monday.

c) Education Welfare

Education Welfare Officers will report any young person to the CME team if they are unsure as to whether the child has access to a suitable educational provision.

d) Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS)

EMTAS supports the inclusion and achievement of children and young people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and Traveller heritages, as well as those learning English as an additional language (EAL). Children in these groups are particularly at risk of becoming CME and officers working within these services will have regard to established protocols relating to CME.

Safeguarding Children Board, and applies to all representative agencies, whether of a statutory or non-statutory nature.

The key principles are:

- PREVENTION– reducing the number of children who go missing
- PROTECTION – reducing the risk of harm to those who go missing
- PROVISION – providing missing children and their families with support and guidance
- PRACTICE – ensuring cross-agency consistency of practice; being child-centred, assessing and reviewing risk, to work towards the safe return of children and young people

Agencies will work with parents and carers to locate the missing child or young person. The following steps will be undertaken:

1. If the child is deemed to be vulnerable and has a social worker or social work family practitioner involved, they should inform the child's school, educational setting, or Elective Home Education Officer.
2. Where appropriate, the professional involved with a missing child should agree with the parents regarding informing the child's school or educational setting of his/her absence at the earliest opportunity.
3. When a child/young person returns (including voluntarily or independently of the police), the named worker/carer should inform staff at the child's school or education setting if they have been informed of the child being missing.
4. Any child/young person missing from home which causes particular concern to the police and/or the parents/carers should be referred to the MASH for consideration of an initial assessment. Children's Social Work will inform the parents/carers and the police of the outcome of any referral and assessment.

h) Admissions

Parents need to formally apply if admission into school is required. If the child is or was formerly in care they will be supported by a lead officer working with social workers and the virtual school. They should contact educate.childrenincareadmissions-mailbox@devon.gov.uk for advice and support.

A form can be sent by the Admissions Team or the Customer Care Centre though in most cases, applications are submitted online at www.devon.gov.uk/admissionsonline. Once they are received, applications will be processed by Admissions who will liaise with schools. An offer will always be made for a child who does not have a place in a state-funded school, though this will not necessarily be at the school preferred by the parent.

end of the third week of September for phase transfers. For mid-year transfers, schools are emailed to check child is attending from the date of the agreed transfer. If no placement is confirmed within 2 weeks, the CME Team is alerted.

- All appropriately aged and located children* with an EHCP who are transitioning between placements for whatever reason are registered on ONE as 'CME in transition' as they are awaiting placement. The CME EWO is notified by e-mail.
- If the SEN 0-25 Team are unable to identify and place the child on roll within four weeks, they remain registered as 'CME in transition' and home tutoring is put in place. The CME EWO will be advised.
- If the Child is In Care and out of placement, the Learning Advocate from the Virtual School will be advised immediately and the child will be recorded as 'CME in transition'
- All CME cases after 30 days should be referred to 0-25 SEN Team Manager and if still unresolved, the SEND Senior Manager
- All casework activity will be noted in the Summary Memo on ONE
- All children with an EHCP who are awaiting a change of placement will be monitored by Casework Teams, children missing education from a school named on their EHCP will be monitored by CME Team

k) ONE Data Team

The ONE Support and Data Teams are responsible for

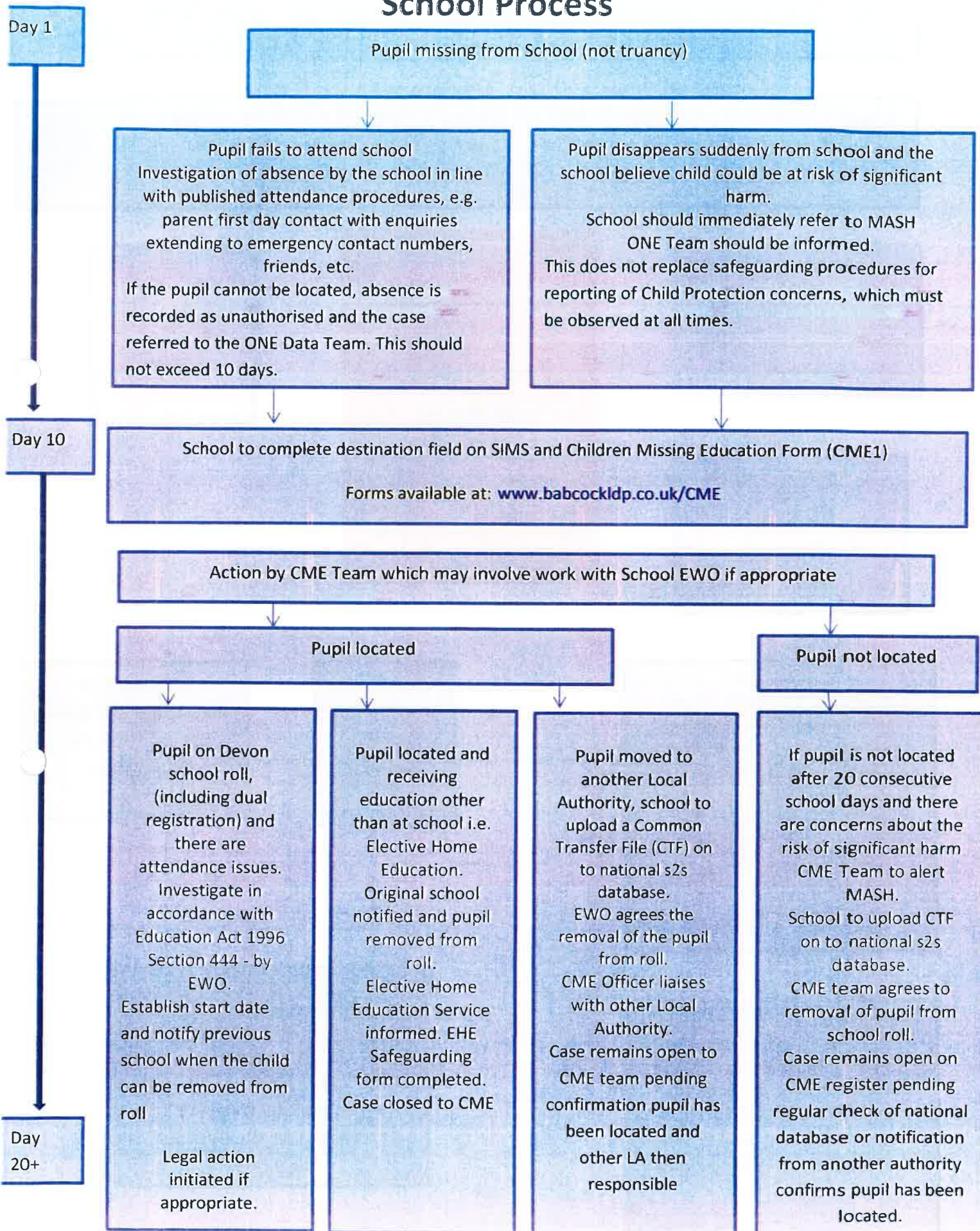
- Maintaining the ONE system with System administration
- Creating reports for CME process
- Running regular reports to identify potential missing students (paper forms where electronic version is not possible)
- Processing incoming data from schools where data conflicts occur
- Making checks of national and local systems; contacting schools and other LAs to locate children
- Sending out letters to parents of new starters where a school place is not taken up to ascertain whether EHE, attending an independent school or moved out of county
- Updating the ONE system with new educational provision details
- Creating referrals to CME EWOs where children are CME
- Updating system where EWOs locate whereabouts of child
- Reports of sensitive data will be alerted to all system users

Other Agencies:

l) Devon Information Advice and Support (DIAS)

DIAS provides impartial information advice and support for children, young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their parents. We provide advice about how to get a suitable education placement and support for communications with professionals. For some of these families the systems do not always work effectively.

Children Missing Education Flowchart School Process



As you know good attendance is essential if your child is to get the best from their education. I have been asked to now only authorise any future absence which is supported by medical information such as appointment card from your Doctor, Walk-In Centre, Hospital or Dentist to confirm a visit to a medical professional was made.

If the school can support you in anyway in raising XXXXXXXX attendance please do contact the school office to arrange a meeting with myself so we can work together to ensure XXXXX attendance improves.

Template for Improvement in Attendance Letter

Dear XXXXX

RE: Improvement in attendance - XXXXXXXXX

The school regularly monitors the attendance of all pupils and I am pleased to note a significant improvement in XXXX's attendance since XXXX.

Please find attached for your information a copy of XXXX's registration certificate and congratulate him/her on the improvement.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely

Mrs Emma Pipe
Headteacher