

## CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION (CME) Protocol and Procedures

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 **Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 sets out the statutory duty to co-operate to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people.** *Section 11 requires a range of organisations to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions, and services provided on their behalf, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.* (Statutory guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving education DfES February 2007).
- 1.2 This protocol is in place to set out how the local authority, external agencies, voluntary organisations and individuals should work together to ensure children and young people do not miss out on their educational entitlement and opportunities. The local authority has a legal responsibility to provide education for all children and young people living in the area and it is vital that we safeguard children and support families under the 'Every Child Matters' agenda. Everyone must take responsibility for improving the outcomes for children and young people including parents and carers - the Education Act 1996 states that 'Parents of pupils of statutory school age must ensure that their children receive an efficient, full time education.....'

**1.3** Children and young people may miss education for many reasons, some of which can be identified and procedures put in place to resolve. Whilst others maybe more complex and can not be predicted, informing the LA promptly ensures Pupils do not become “lost”. For example:

- Families moving into or out of an authority and not securing a new school place
- Pupils failing to return after a family holiday
- Changes in family circumstances
- Families fleeing domestic violence
- Families from abroad who are unsure of the education system
- Pupils who are not enrolled at school age 5 or fail to transfer successfully to secondary school

**1.4** Some children and young people may not be educated in a school setting for acceptable reasons. They may be:

- Educated at home by parents or tutors – this is known as Elective Home Education
- Excluded from school for a fixed period (parents have responsibility to supervise their children for the first 5 days of an exclusion and pupils permanently excluded from school will be offered education at another school or Pupil Referral Unit)
- Unable to attend school for a reason authorised by the school e.g. a medical appointment or be too unwell to attend
- From a travelling family and currently away from their base school
- Attending early college or a Pupil Referral Unit

**1.5** The aim of this guidance is to:

- Improve integrated working to ensure positive outcomes for all children, young people and their families in South Gloucestershire.
- Ensure that all children of compulsory school age living or attending school in South Gloucestershire receive their entitlement to education
- Ensure that action is taken to support children who are on a school roll but have been out of education for three weeks or more
- Ensure rigorous systems are in place and embedded in working practice to locate, assess, register, monitor and track children who may be missing from education
- Fulfil the aims of the Charter for children and young people

## **1. Information sharing**

Effective multi-agency information sharing will be required to assist with enquiries into pupils missing from education. Each department, organisation and agency will have their own clear information sharing protocols but where the safety and/or wellbeing of a child or young person is at risk, safeguarding procedures will apply. Children and young people missing education may be at higher risk of:

- Offending
- Misusing drugs and alcohol
- Anti-social behaviour
- Prostitution
- Teen pregnancy
- Disaffection with education

The principle of information sharing is proportionality so information should be shared so that the child is safe whilst maintaining the rights of the parent and child <sup>(6)</sup>.

### 3. Procedures

#### 3.1 Maintained Schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs)

When a pupil is absent from school the following procedures must be applied: [See flowchart, Appendix 1]

- School attempts to make contact by telephone, letter, other family contacts, siblings schools, other agencies
- If traced to another school and attendance confirmed:
  - remove name from roll
  - send common transfer file (CTF) via S2S (school to school)
  - complete SIMS record
- If traced but no school identified, complete fully the CME Checklist and Access and Response Early Help referral form and send to CME Senior officer. Pupil remains on roll
- If not traced as above, CME checklist and Access and Response Early Help referral form to CME Officer, pupil remains on roll
- CME investigates all leads, and if whereabouts are unknown the pupil is posted via S2S onto the 'Missing Pupil Database' CME officer feeds back to referrer. Schools may remove from roll when advised to do so by LA\*, schools update SIMS record
- If not traced after 6 months the CME officer will inform the police and if not already added, the pupil's name is placed on the Children Missing Education (CME) list and National Missing Pupil Database
- If a parent elects to Home Educate and informs the school in writing the pupil's name must be deleted from the register from the date the letter is received; inform the LA immediately and fax a copy of the letter to the Senior Education Officer EHE

\*All schools and PRUs must ensure that pupils are only removed from roll in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

**NB: If there are child protection concerns, the South Gloucestershire Child Protection Procedures must be followed**

#### 3.2 Independent Schools

All independent schools must give due consideration to statutory and non-statutory guidance in relation to the safeguarding and education of pupils. In all cases regarding a pupil's non-attendance at school or removal from roll, the Principal or Headteacher must advise the local authority in which the child lives of the issue at the earliest opportunity, giving as much information as possible.

#### 3.3 Agencies other South Gloucestershire departments and organisations

Children missing Education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse and becoming NEET (not in Education, employment or training). Local Authorities have multi-agency systems in place which are well publicised and need to be followed by all agencies to prevent children missing education. Movers-in who are not able to access a school place must be referred to the CME officer from schools, Admission's Team, or parents. Contact details are: Access and Response Team (ART) on 01454 866000, [AccessandResponse@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:AccessandResponse@southglos.gov.uk)

**NB: If there are child protection concerns the South Gloucestershire Child Protection procedures must be followed.**

#### 3.4 Individuals/Members of the public

If an individual or member of the public is concerned that a child they know may be missing his or her education, they should make contact with the Access and Response Team: [AccessandResponse@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:AccessandResponse@southglos.gov.uk) or 01454 866000.

#### 4. Statutory and Non-statutory Framework

- Parent/Carer for the purposes of attendance at school includes an adult who has day to day care of the child or young person
- Statutory school age is from the school term after the child's 5th birthday until the last Friday of June in the school year in which they had their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday
- Pupil registration at school: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 contains details of when a pupil can be admitted to a school (on the attendance and admissions register) and when the pupil's name can be removed
- The Education Act 1996 Sections 444 (1) and (1a) (non-attendance at school), 437 – 434 (School Attendance Order)
- The Children Act 1989 Section 36 (Education Supervision Order)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Every Child Matters

#### 5. Frequently Asked Questions

Q *Who should I contact if I think a child seems to be missing education?*

A Children Missing Education Team, who can be contacted on **01454 863380** or **Access and Response Team on 01454 860000** or email [AccessandResponse@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:AccessandResponse@southglos.gov.uk)

Q *Do I have to leave my name and details or can I call anonymously?*

A You do not need to leave your name or contact details, although employees from the local authority and other statutory agencies would normally be expected to do so.

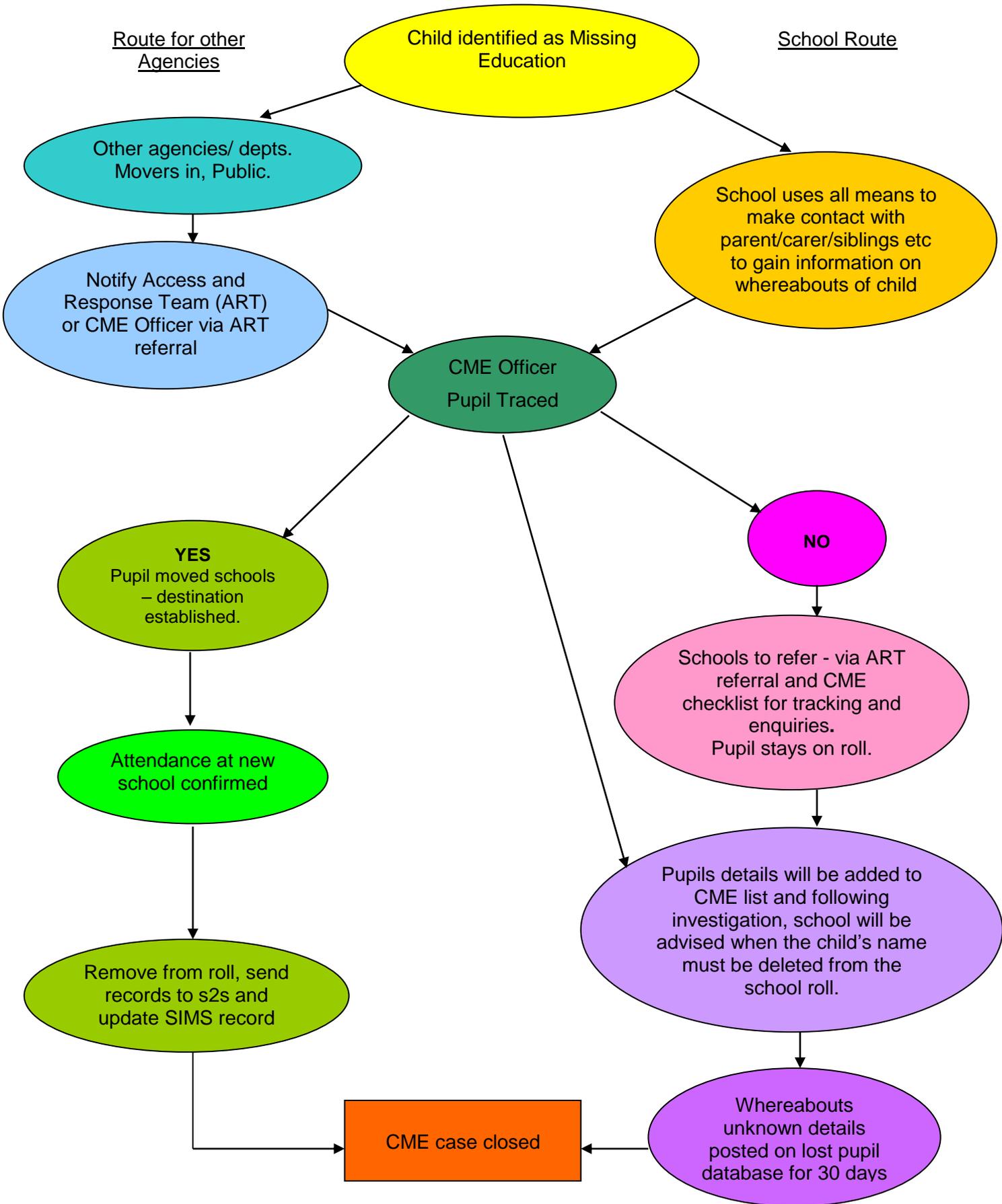
Q *What if I'm not sure that they are missing education? Should I still call?*

A Yes, it is better to be certain and it is usually a simple task to check.

Q *Will I be told what the result of the enquiry has been?*

A It may not be possible to share this information with you for reasons of confidentiality.

Children Missing Education Flowchart



## Appendix 2

### Additional Information

1. <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-colleges/> for information about a number of topics including – schools in South Gloucestershire, attendance and school admissions.
2. <http://sites.southglos.gov.uk/safeguarding/children/i-am-a-professional/single-assessment-for-early-help-safeh-toolkit/> for information about the Single Assessment for Early Help (SAFeh).
3. <http://sites.southglos.gov.uk/safeguarding/children/i-am-a-professional/child-protection-procedures/> for information about child protection and safeguarding.
4. <http://sites.southglos.gov.uk/safeguarding/children> for additional information about Child Protection procedures and Safer South Gloucestershire.
5. [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/pdfs/uksi\\_20061751\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/pdfs/uksi_20061751_en.pdf) is a direct link to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
6. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents> for the Human Rights Act 1998
7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/how-to-access-school-to-school-support> for information about s2s (School to School)
8. <https://www.gov.uk/browse/education> for information for parents on various aspects of education and learning, including attendance.

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