



Children Missing from Education

Guidelines and Practice
(Revised 2010)

September 2025 school continues to adopt this
document

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Forms

CME 1 -	School Checklist for Children Whose Whereabouts are Unknown
CME 2 -	Referral to CME Out of School Register
CME 3a -	Enquiry letter to schools
CME 3b -	Pupil Status Confirmation Form School Return (Liverpool)
CME 4 -	Enquiry Form Movement of Children (out of city)
CME 5a -	Keyworker and Pupil Details
CME 5b -	Pupil Action Plan

Children Missing from Education

Introduction

Every local authority has a statutory duty to make sure that children not receiving, or at risk of not receiving, a suitable education are identified quickly, and effective tracking systems and support arrangements are in place.

Children not receiving a suitable education are at increased risk of a range of negative outcomes that could have long term negative consequences for their life chances. For example they are at risk of not attaining the skills and qualifications they need to succeed in life, and are at significant risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) once they have reached the compulsory school leaving age. They could also be more vulnerable in one way or another. They may be from disadvantaged families (experiencing multiple risks such as poverty, substance misuse, mental ill-health and poor housing), travelling communities, immigrant families, be unaccompanied asylum seeking or trafficked children, or be at risk of neglect or abuse or disengaged from education.

The purpose of this document is to outline the procedures that are employed within Liverpool to identify, locate and engage children who are missing from education.

These procedures have been written for the guidance of all professionals who work with children and families to ensure that all children's services in the local authority;

- Meet statutory duties relating to the provision of education and safeguarding the welfare of children missing education.
- Have robust measures in place to identify quickly when a child is not receiving a suitable education and to follow through with effective tracking and enquiry systems.
- Have these measures embedded at the heart of local strategies for preventing negative outcomes for children and young people, and ensuring their safety and well being.

DCSF: Revised statutory guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education. (January 2009).

Policy Statement

This policy has been written in accordance with the DCSF 'Revised statutory guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education', (January 2009) and is designed to help Liverpool City Council's Children's Services meet its statutory duties relating to the provision of education and the safeguarding and welfare of children..

The policy is underpinned by Liverpool's Children and Young Peoples Plan.

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of the child and to share information. This principle underpins Liverpool's policy for Children Missing Education (CME), and there is an explanation that all agencies will work together to ensure that children are on school roll.

The policy identifies:

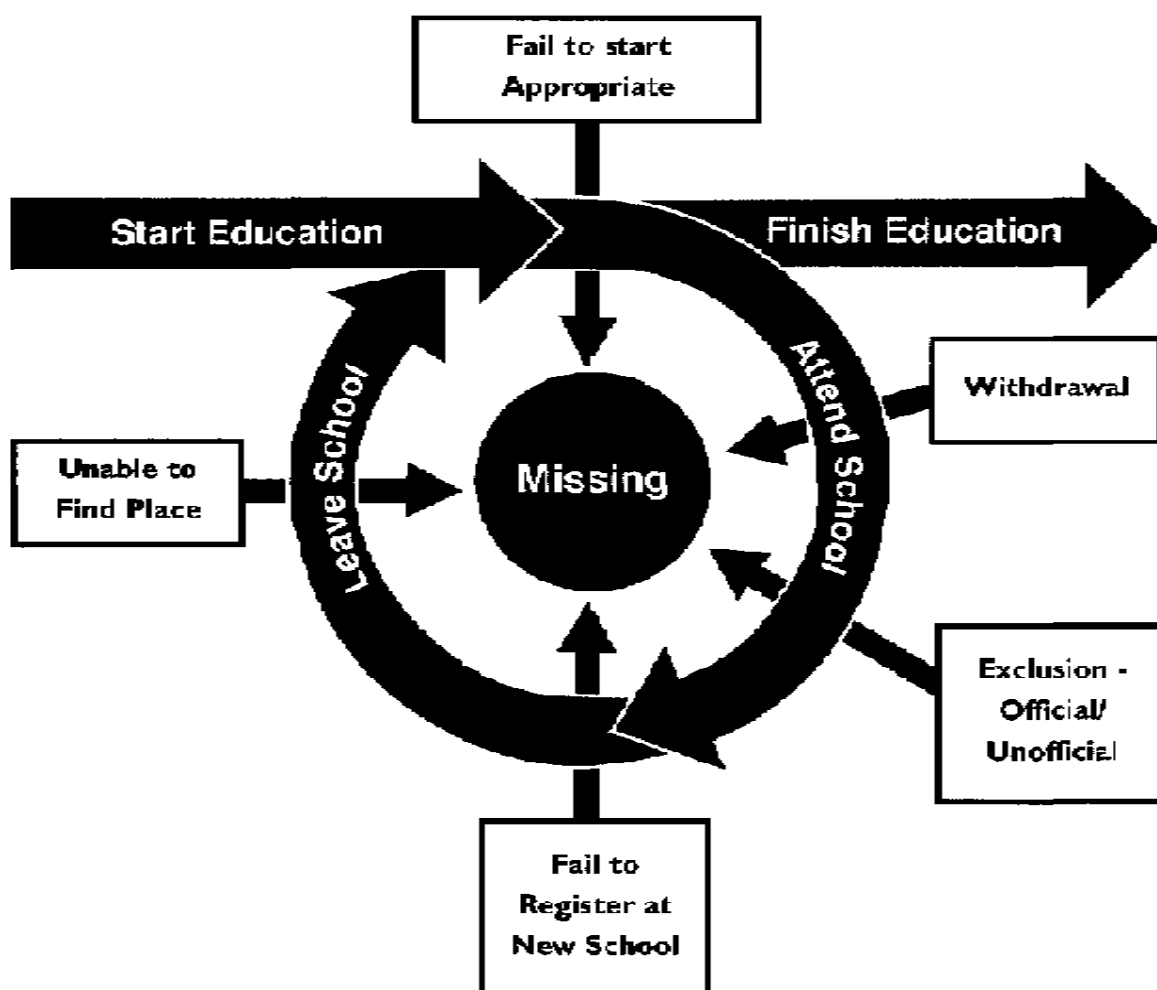
- that the local authority fulfils its statutory duty to locate assess, monitor and track children and young people missing from education in order that they may reach their full potential,
- that the duty should be carried out through a strategic, multi-agency framework, within which all agencies share information on the identification of children and young people missing education,
- the distinct needs of groups of children and young people who are vulnerable and at risk of missing education and therefore unlikely to fulfil their potential,
- that a range of preventative measures will ensure a reduction in the instance of children and young people missing education,
- the necessity to produce, monitor and evaluate data on children and young people missing education for Elected Members and Senior Officers in Children's Services.

How do Children Go Missing?

Children fall out of the education system and are at risk of 'going missing' because they:

- fail to start appropriate provision and so never enter the system (e.g. pre-school to Year 1, are new to the city and no application is made to school)
- cease to attend due to exclusion (e.g. illegal and unofficial exclusions), withdrawal or removal from roll with no named destination or
- fail to complete a transition between schools or providers (e.g. are unable to find a suitable school within Liverpool or following a move to a new Local Authority).

How children go missing



Who is a child missing from education?

For the purpose of this document a Child Missing from Education is defined as:

Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is registered at any formally approved education activity (e.g. school, alternative curriculum, home education), and has been out of any education provision for period of time, usually 4 weeks.

Some children who experience certain life events are more at risk of going missing from education. These include:

- young people who have committed offences
- children from families fleeing domestic violence
- children living in women's refuges
- Children and young people under the supervision of YOT
- young runaways
- children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation, a house of multiple occupancy or bed and breakfast accommodation .
- children with long term medical and emotional problems
- unaccompanied asylum seekers
- children of refugees and asylum seeking families
- children in new immigrant families, who are not yet established in the UK and may not have fixed addresses
- children of migrant workers
- children who have been bullied
- children not receiving a suitable education whilst being electively home educated
- looked after children or those who go missing from care
- children who are privately fostered
- children affected by substance or alcohol misuse
- young carers
- children from transient families
- children on the Child Protection Register
- teenage mothers
- children of families involved in anti-social behaviour
- children who have been permanently excluded from school (particularly those excluded illegally)
- young runaways
- children of families who can be highly mobile eg parents in the armed forces, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families
- children who have suffered discrimination on the grounds of race, faith, gender, disability or sexuality

- children at risk of sexual exploitation, including those trafficked into or within the UK
- children at risk of 'honour' based violence including forced marriage or female genital mutilation
- children whose parents take them abroad for a prolonged period
- children who have registered at a school that has closed and have not made transition to another school
- children of parents with mental health problems
- children of parents with learning difficulties
- children with long term medical or emotional problems

This Guidance does not replace any of the Child Protection Procedures. Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns are to be observed at all times.

What is the purpose of this guidance?

This guidance is intended to inform LA officers, schools, governing bodies and partner agencies about the procedures to be followed in order to identify, re-engage and maintain contact with those children and young people who are missing education and resident in Liverpool.

The implementation of these procedures will be endorsed by all Liverpool schools, Children's Services and partner agencies to ensure that ALL children within Liverpool achieve the five core outcomes under the Children Act (2004):

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

To limit the opportunity for children to go missing from education, a range of systematic processes and procedures have been identified. These include:

- procedures to ensure referrals (CME 2) are made directly to the Children Missing Education (CME) Pupil Tracking Officer who keeps an updated register of all children missing education.
- procedures to identify and locate children missing education through liaison with other services and agencies most likely to find such children
- procedures to re-engage those missing, with appropriate educational provision
- procedures to identify children missing education through liaison with other LA's and access to national databases (S2S)
- developing existing systems to identify those at risk of becoming CME
- publicity regarding CME and every child's right to an education

As CME may raise potential child protection issues, if schools believe a child or family has gone missing they should NOT remove any child from their roll without following the checklist procedures, completing the checklist form (CME1) and creating a Common Transfer File which they post electronically on S2S. (page 9 and FAQs pages 10-11)

Schools cannot remove pupil from roll until reasonable enquiries have been made over a period of no less than four weeks. If this process has been followed schools will be required to reinstate pupils back on their school roll.

If the new address of a family is known and in another part of the city, a child must not be removed from roll until taken onto the roll of another school.

Identification processes in Liverpool – Notification and referral routes

A CME officer has been appointed to co-ordinate, through multi-agency work, the identification, referral, tracking and engagement of children missing from education.

The CME officer will work in partnership with key stakeholders in Liverpool including Schools, Academies, Children's Services, Housing, Health, Looked After Children Team, Connexions, Youth Offending Team (YOT), Police, alternative education providers and voluntary organisations to develop the already existing inter-agency network so that all colleagues are aware of systems of referral for pupils who are missing or at risk of going missing from education (CME 2).

Referral from within Liverpool

- CME Referral Form (CME 2) available on the City Council Ednet website
https://ednet.liverpool.gov.uk/phseandpastoral/attendanceandbehaviour/children_missing_education/index.asp
- S2S Out of School Enquiry
- Email to CME Pupil Tracking Officer
joanne.mckenna@liverpool.gcsx.gov.uk OR
cme@liverpool.gov.uk
- Telephone CME Pupil Tracking Officer on 0151 233 1607 / 233 1411 / 225 6247 - Fax 0151 233 1449

Referral from other local authorities/agencies

Other local authorities and agencies use a number of methods to notify Liverpool of children new to the city including:

- Letter / Fax / Email to CME Pupil Tracking Officer or
CME@liverpool.gov.uk
- Phone call to Pupil Tracking Officer as above

- S2S secure messaging

If an Education Management System (EMS) search is not productive a referral will be made to the Pupil Attendance and Education Welfare Services (PAEWS).

Checking process

The CME Pupil Tracking Officer has access to centrally held databases against which a child's name can be checked to establish whether he/she is registered with a school or an educational provider, followed by schools letter/form (CME 3a & 3b). Enquiries directly to other LAs will be made if destinations are known (CME 4). When the Children's Index is fully operational this database will be used in addition to those currently accessible.

These databases are:

- CME Database
- EMS – Exclusions and Attendance modules
- S2S Lost Pupil Database
- Home Educated Database

Database and monitoring

The following guidance was given Circular No. 11/99 Social Inclusion: The LEA role in Pupil support,

“A central register of children who are out of school for any reason will help the LA to ensure that vulnerable groups do not become lost in system”

The CME Officer will access an up to date record of all pupils who are not on the roll of a school.

These include:

- Traveller Children

- Looked after children arriving in Liverpool
- Young offenders
- Home Educated children

Monitoring is an essential component of effective systems. The numbers and status of children on the CME database and the progress into provision will be reported on a regular basis:

- To the Children's Services Management Team
- Annually for wider circulation

Reports will be circulated to partner agencies and may also be requested and supplied from time to time for other purposes by other groups.

Other notification routes used to identify Children Missing from Education:

- **Truancy Sweeps**
- Undertaken by the Pupil Attendance and Education Welfare Services (PAEWS) and the Police
- **School Register Audits and schools' referral to PAEWS**
PAEWS to identify children who have left school with new destination unconfirmed
- **Online referral via CME email and City Council website**
(Available to all practitioners and the public)
- **Call Centre for Liverpool City Council Liverpool Direct Limited (LDL) 0151 233 3000 24Hrs**
- **Pupil Watch Line Freephone 24 Hrs 0800 0322 013**
- **Referrals received from other City Council Departments**
- **Referrals received from Primary Care Trust (PCT) through health visitors, school nurses and others**

- **Referrals received via DOE Lost Pupil Database**
- **DOE S2S database checked for pupils uploaded as 'missing' checked with local records.**
- **Multi-agency Response to Violence, (MARV)**
CME is represented on this panel and accepts referrals from all partner agencies
- **Children at Risk of Sexual Exploitation, (AIM).**
CME is represented on this panel and accepts referrals from all partner agencies

Common Transfer File Requirement

There is a statutory requirement to send specified information about a pupil moving school to the receiving school.

Since June 2002 this information has been transferred through the electronic Common Transfer File (CTF).

Detailed guidance on compiling and sending the CTF, including use of the Teachernet website, has been distributed via LAs and is available at www.teachernet.gov.uk/S2S in the Information Management Strategy (IMS) section.

The information must be sent within 15 school days of the pupil ceasing to be registered at the old school, unless the new school is not known. In this case, a transfer file using XXXXXXXX as the destination should be created and uploaded onto the secure site. If a request is made from the pupil's new school, it should be sent within 15 school days.

Where both the old and new school have the necessary facilities the CTF must be sent to the new school either:

- Through the secure file transfer service on the Teachernet website at www.teachernet.gov.uk/S2S
- As an email attachment or file over a secure network that links schools within an LA or within a regional broadband consortium.

When a pupil moves to an independent school or a school in Scotland then MMMMMMMM is used, this enables the CTF to be stored securely and is available if the child returns to a maintained school. This file should only hold information on one pupil.

Files XXXXXXXX and MMMMMMMM are located onto S2S in the same way as files for schools – the only difference is that files can only hold the details of one pupil to enable individual pupil information to be retrieved.

Children Missing Education (CME) Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is the Key Worker and what is their role?

The Key Worker is not always the person making the referral, they are usually the person who is in regular contact with an individual child. It is the responsibility of the Key Worker to ensure that the CME Officer is regularly updated on the current status of the child. This is done via email / meetings.

2. Who is responsible for ensuring an action plan is in place?

It is the responsibility of the Key Worker to ensure an action plan is in place for each child. If you do not have an action plan template there is one available.

3. What do I do with the pupil's record if I do not have a forwarding destination?

A pupil's record should be securely stored.

4. When can I take a child off roll?

When you have completed the CME checklist for 'Children Whose Whereabouts are Unknown' (CME 1) and have the signature of your PAEWS Office on completion.

5. If a child is on school roll but not attending who should I contact?

You should contact the PAEWS Officer for your school.

6. What are the CME contact details?

All CME referrals should be sent to the Pupil Tracking Officer at

Email: joanne.mckenna@liverpool.gcsx.gov.uk or
cme@liverpool.gov.uk

Tel: 0151 233 1607 Fax: 0151 233 1449

7. When can traveller children be taken off school roll?

Parents should be let school know when they are going travelling and what the return date is. Pupils should be kept on roll for this period. If the parents have not informed the school of the return date and they have been away for more than 4 weeks, the checklist (CME1) should be followed before pupils can be taken off roll.

8. What is the Common Transfer File (CTF) and when should it be used?

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- As an email attachment or file over a secure network that links school within an LA and within a regional broadband consortium.

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Files XXXXXXXX and MMMMMMM are loaded onto S2S in the same way as files for schools – the only difference is that these files can only hold the details of one pupil to enable individual pupil information to be retrieved.

List of Partner Agencies & Services Involved in the CME Referral & Monitoring Process

- Awards/Grants
- Barnardo's
- Behaviour & Education Support Team (BEST)
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Children, Families & Social Care (CF&SC)
- Children's Services
- Children's Advocacy
- Connexions
- Education
- Education Psychology Service (EPS)
- Emergency Housing
- Governors
- Legal Services
- Other Local Authorities
- Parent Partnership
- Police
- Primary Care Trust
- Pupil Attendance and Education Welfare Service (PAEWS)

- Revenues & Benefits
- School Nurses
- Schools
- Social Inclusion Operations Team (SIOT)
- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Truancy Watch
- UK Border Agency
- Women's Refuge
- Youth Offending Team (YOT)
- Youth Service

Appendix 1

Deleting Pupils from Registers.

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

Applies to: All maintained schools, independent schools, Academies, PRUs and Special schools.

Schools may only delete a compulsory school-age child 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 a 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
- pupil has left the school but not know where he/she has gone (after both the school and local authority have tried locate the pupil)

Schools can only lawfully delete non-compulsory school-age children in the following circumstances:

- left the school
- 20 school-days continuous absence without good reason
- death of the pupil
- permanent exclusion or
- child who has admitted to the nursery is not transferring to the reception class.

Detailed information on each deletion category should be accessed via the DCSF website:

[www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolattendance/\(legislation\)](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolattendance/(legislation))

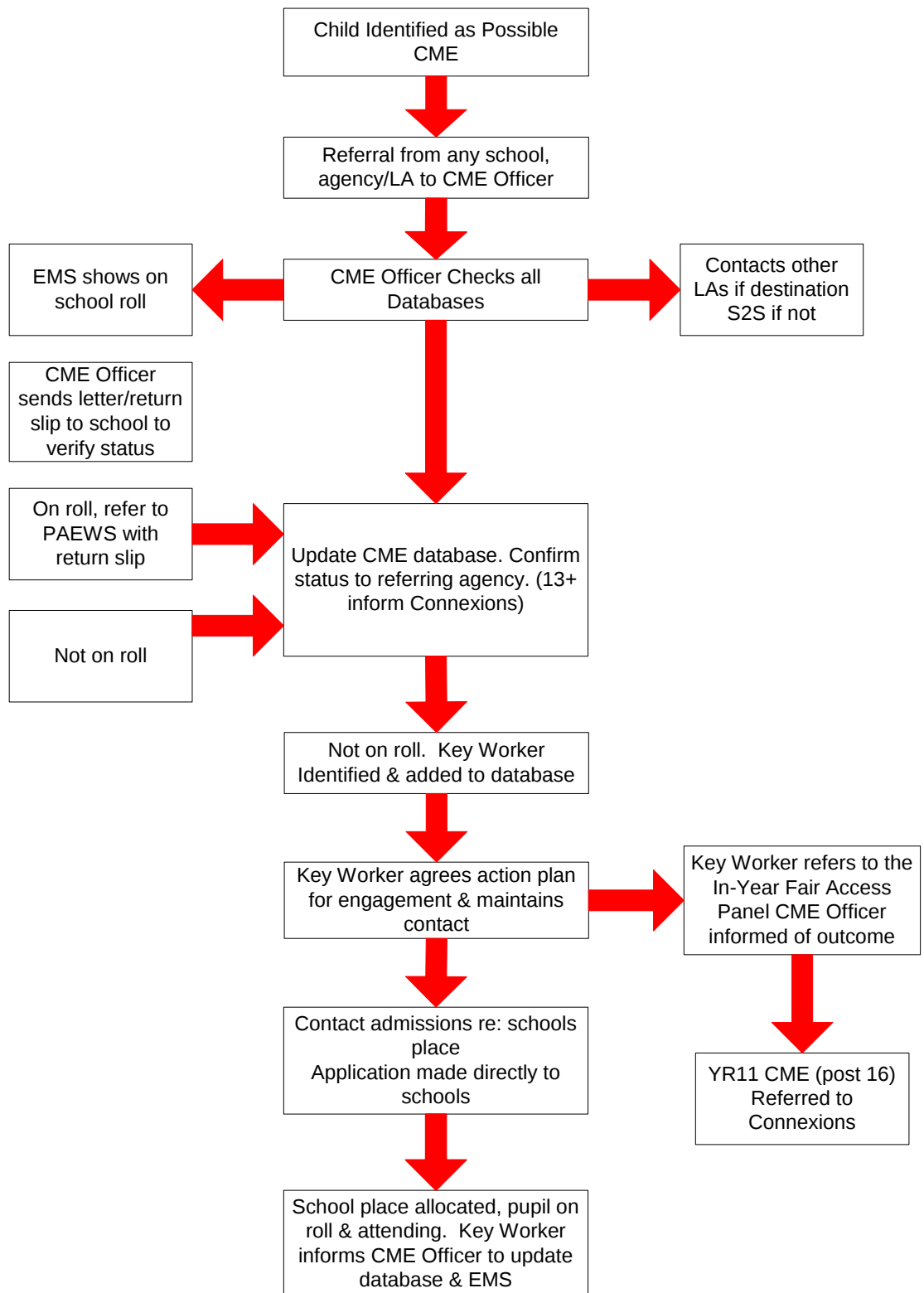
Guidance for schools is also being issued by Children's Services.

Schools are advised to note the DCSF warning that any deletions which do not conform with or fall outside the Regulations are illegal and could result in court proceedings against the person responsible.

Appendix 2

Children Missing From Education (CME)

Referral Checking & Engagement Process



Appendix 3

Useful Websites and Documents

- **Bullying**

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ibis/departments_policy/bullying.cfm

- **Children in Care**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/childrenincare/>

- **The Children's Plan**

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/childrensplan/>

- **The Children's Plan – One Year On**

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/oneyearon/>

- **Children Act 2004 Guidance**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/guidance/>

- **Children's Trusts (working with)**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/aims/childrenstrusts/>

- **Contact Point**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/contactpoint/>

- **Elective Home Education**

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/localauthorities/index.cfm?action=content&contentID=11357&categoryID=75&subcategoryID=106>

- **Exclusions & Alternative Provision**

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/exclusions/alternative_provision_policies/index.cfm

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/exclusion/>

- **Multi-Agency Statutory Guidance**

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/fco-in-action/nationals/forced-marriage-unit/fmconsultation1/>

- **Gypsy & Roma Travellers**

<http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/publications/inclusion/tes/s/>

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00063-2008&>

- **HM Revenue and Customs**

www.hmrc.gov.uk/

- **Information Sharing**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/informationsharing/>

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00065/>

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00340/>

- **The Lead Professional and Common Assessment Framework**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/integratedworking/>

- **Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/neet/>

- **Private Fostering**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/privatefostering/>

- **Pupil Referral Units and Alternative Provision – Guidance for Local Authorities (refs: LEA/0023/2005 and DCSF-00758-2008)**

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/>

<http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-00758-2008&/>

- **Pupil Registration Regulations**

<http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/>

or

[http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/legResults.aspx?LegType=All+Legislation&title=Education+\(pupil+registration\)&searchEnacted=0&extentMatchOnly=0&confersPower=0&blanketAmendment=0&TYPE=QS&NavFrom=0&activeTextDocId=2606483&PageNumber=1&SortAlpha=0](http://www.statutelaw.gov.uk/legResults.aspx?LegType=All+Legislation&title=Education+(pupil+registration)&searchEnacted=0&extentMatchOnly=0&confersPower=0&blanketAmendment=0&TYPE=QS&NavFrom=0&activeTextDocId=2606483&PageNumber=1&SortAlpha=0)

- **Registers (Keeping Pupil Registers)**

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolattendance/legislation/index.cfm>

Safeguarding

- **General Safeguarding Links:**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/>

- **Cross-cutting arrangement of safeguarding and inter-agency co-operation to improve the well-being of children: Children's Trusts:**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/guidance/>

- **Forced Marriage**

http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/familyandcommunity/childprotection/usefulinformation/typesofabuse/forced_marriage/

- **Forced Marriage - Information for professionals**

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/fco-in-action/nationals/forced-marriage-unit/info-for-professionals>

- **Local Safeguarding Children Boards**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/lscb/>

- **London Good Practice Guidance for Safeguarding Children Missing from School**

<http://www.londoncpc.gov.uk/procedures/>

- **Missing People**

www.missingpeople.org.uk

- **Parents and Abducted Children Together (PACT) website:**

<http://www.pact-online.org>;

support in relation to international child abduction is available from the voluntary organisation 'reunite':

www.reunite.org.

- **Missing Children Notifications**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/missing/>

- **Safeguarding Children - Trafficked/Subject to sexual exploitation:**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/>

- **Working Together to Safeguard Children:**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/workingtogether/>

- **Safer School Partnerships – Mainstreaming Guidance**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/spp/>

- **School Attendance**

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolattendance/>

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolattendance/truancysweeps/>

http://www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/keystage3/issues/behaviour/focus/attendance_manual/resources/

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance/>

- **Schools Admissions Code**

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/sacode/>

- **Tackling it Together toolkit**

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/schoolattendance/goodpractice/tackling.cfm>

- **Targeted Youth Support**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/targetedyouthsupport/>

- **The Training and Development Agency**

<http://www.tda.gov.uk/>

- **Transfer of Information**

<http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051437.htm> (Pupil Regulations 9 (3))

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/ims/datatransfers/CTF/>

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/ims/datatransfers/s2s/>

- **UK Border Agency**

<http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

- **Youth Offending Teams (working with)**

<http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/>

- **Youth Justice Board**

<http://www.yjb.gov.uk/en-gb/>

- **Young Runaways**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/youngrunaways/>

- **Youth Task Force Action Plan**

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/youthmatters/ytf/>