



Children Missing Education (CME) Protocol

January 2016

Education, Health and Social Care Directorate

Current Document Status

Version		Approving body	
Date	09 November 2016	Date of formal approval (if applicable)	
Responsible officer	Andrew Simpson	Review date	January 2018
Location			

Version History

Date	Version	Author/Editor	Comments
January 2016			

Comprehensive Impact Assessment Record

Date	Type of assessment conducted	Stage/level completed (where applicable)	Summary of actions taken decisions made	Completed by	Impact Assessment review date

1. Background

This guidance is intended to inform Local Authority (LA) officers, schools, governing boards and other involved agencies about the procedures to be followed in order to identify and maintain contact with children missing education.

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and to share information. This principle underpins this guidance and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure children are safely on school rolls.

The Government has placed a duty on local authorities (Education and Inspection Bill 2006) to make arrangements to establish, so far as it is possible to do so, the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education. This duty is now supported by statutory guidance available at www.gov.uk.

The LA is concerned about any child or young person who is missing from education. Every local authority is required to have systematic arrangements in place to identify children missing from education, so that suitable provision can be made for them. Where children are missing from school their educational attainment may be at risk as well as their safety and welfare.

Cornwall LA is committed to ensuring that:

- all pupils who go missing or are lost from schools in Cornwall and move to other areas are speedily located;
- support is given to other local authorities to locate their own missing/lost pupils.

Who are Children Missing Education (CME)?

Children of compulsory school age who are:

- not on a school roll;
- not being educated other than at school e.g. privately or in alternative provision;
- on a school roll but have suddenly stopped attending without reason and the school have been unable to contact parents at the home address.

Why do children go missing from education?

There are a number of reasons why a child may not be accessing education and hence be deemed missing. These include a child who:

- fails to start appropriate provision and hence never enters the system;
- ceases to attend, due to exclusion or withdrawal;
- fails to complete a transition between providers (e.g. being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new LA, failing to make a successful transition at Year 6-7).

There are also a number of more serious circumstances by which a child could go missing from education and as a result all children and young people who go missing from education in Cornwall are deemed to be at risk. A child missing education could be a missing child.

Children at risk of missing education include¹:

- young people who have committed offences;
- unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees or children of asylum seeker families;
- young runaways;
- children with a Gypsy/Roma/Traveller background;
- children who are permanently excluded from school;
- children at risk of harm or neglect;
- children within Armed Forces families;
- children who cease to attend school.

2. Identifying Children Missing Education – LA procedures

The LA, in line with statutory requirements, has a Children Missing Education (CME) Officer within the Education Welfare Service.

To reduce the risk of children and young people becoming lost to the education system, the LA has established a pupil tracking system, led by the CME Officer, in order to:

- locate, monitor and track all school aged children who are not on a school roll;
- act as a link with other statutory bodies and services, within Cornwall and other authorities, to ensure that all children missing education are promptly identified and re-engaged with educational provision;
- implement a range of systematic processes and procedures to track potentially vulnerable children who leave Cornwall with an unknown destination.

School Admissions

The CME Officer will work closely with the Pupil Placement Manager to identify the whereabouts of children missing education or to identify children who may be at risk of missing education.

School Admissions procedures to support this work include:

- Providing information as requested by the CME Officer on applications received for pupils being tracked.
- Asking schools to confirm the non-arrival of any allocated pupils at the normal point of entry (i.e. starting in September in the reception year, year 3 of a junior school or year 7 in a secondary school) and reminding them to follow CME procedures if necessary.

¹ Taken from 'Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities', Department for Education January 2015

- Asking schools to confirm when a child that has been allocated a place during the school year (an 'in-year' placement) has not started at the school and reminding them to follow CME procedures if necessary. The School Admissions Team will follow up with any school that does not confirm a start date.
- Asking parents to confirm in writing if they wish to refuse the offer of a school place and then to confirm what education arrangements they will be putting in place. This will give a starting point for the CME Officer should investigation be necessary or allow allocation of an Education Welfare Officer if the parent is opting for Elective Home Education but has not followed the correct procedure. Overall, this will potentially reduce the time that the child is either not receiving provision or their education provision is not being recorded accurately.
- Supporting schools in their investigations by checking if the pupil has started at another school or by providing additional contact information where possible.
- Reporting to the CME Officer, in writing, any concerns that arise through the admissions process in a timely manner.
- Updating the Education Management System with school base details in a timely manner to allow the CME Officer and others to access up-to-date information about a child's location and to reduce the list of 'children without a registered base'.
- Maintain a detailed procedure document to support CME statutory duties.

Transfer of Information

The Department for Education has developed a secure internet site for the transfer of information Common Transfer Files (CTF) from school to school (S2S) when a child moves school. On the home page for S2S there is a description of the process. S2S can also be used to identify children missing education, recording when a child has left a school but a file hasn't been requested by a new school.

Enquiries from other Local Authorities

Where another local authority contacts Cornwall seeking help regarding a missing child, the CME Officer will search for the missing pupil on the Education Management System (EMS) database. If the child is found, the enquiring local authority will be contacted. If the child is not found, the CME Officer will continue to make enquiries until the child is either located in Cornwall or confirmed to be elsewhere.

3. Identifying Children Missing Education – schools' duties

There are certain circumstances when a school must notify the LA of concerns for children missing education and/or when they remove a child from their roll:

1. A school becomes aware of the arrival or existence of a child in Cornwall not in education.

The school should notify the CME Officer to help ensure that vulnerable children and young people in Cornwall are identified promptly and can be monitored until new education provision is in place.

2. A pupil is expected to join the school either at a normal point of entry (e.g. reception or Year 7), or at any time (child allocated a place 'in-year') and s/he does not arrive.

The school should attempt to make contact with the parent/s by telephone or letter. If no contact can be made the school should ask the School Admissions Team if the child has registered elsewhere. If this is not the case, a CME Referral should be made. Schools will be asked by the School Admissions Team to confirm the non-arrival of any allocated pupils at the normal point of entry or during the school year and reminded to follow CME procedures if appropriate. Although the child may not have been added to the school roll, schools should take responsibility for identifying the whereabouts of any allocated child and reporting as CME as necessary.

3. If a pupil ceases to attend without warning the school should make every effort to contact the family. If no contact can be made and there are reasons to believe the pupil or family are no longer at the home address, then the school should immediately notify the CME Officer for investigation. Schools should make every effort to contact the family if a child is absent. If no contact can be made and there are reasons to believe the pupil or family are not at the home address, then they should refer to CME Officer for investigation.

The school should complete the CME Referral Form.

Schools are asked to complete a referral form (Appendix 3), sending this to the Children Missing Education Officer at the LA, by email:
cmeenquiries@cornwall.gov.uk

Schools can also gain advice on **01872 323400**.

The CME Officer will then coordinate the response and may ask the locally based Education Welfare Officer to make initial enquiries.

Verifying information

Where a school receives confirmation that the place with them is not required, they should ask the parent to confirm this in writing. They should be satisfied that the information is correct by making enquiries e.g. if the parent states that they are moving out of county/staying out of county, verifying this by either checking that the CTF is requested by a new school or referring to the CME Officer to check with the other authority.

Safeguarding

Should the child be subject to a Child Protection Plan or should the school have a particular child protection concern about the child, the school should immediately contact the local Multi Agency Referral Unit (MARU).

File transfers

Whenever a pupil joins or leaves the school then a Common Transfer File (CTF) must accompany him/her.

Removal from roll

Once a school refers to the CME Officer for investigation, then they should allow 20 school days for this to be completed before removal from roll, and should only do so following consultation with the CME Officer.

The Education Welfare Service will complete the missing children checklist, (Appendix 1). If the child remains missing, the school should discuss the removal of the child from the school register with the Education Welfare Service. If agreed and removal complies with Legislation, Department for Education Guidance and local arrangements (the CME Protocol), the school should send the pupils Common Transfer File to the S2S site.

Should a child be removed from a state-funded school (maintained or academy) in Cornwall by his/her parents to go to an independent school or to a school outside England, then, on receiving written confirmation of the parent's intentions the school should remove the child's name from roll and notify the LA.

If a child is removed from school to be Electively Home Educated (EHE), schools must refer to the Education Welfare Service, using appropriate forms available in School Messenger - www.cornwall.gov.uk/school-messenger-home and send to: ehadmin@cornwall.gov.uk.

The school should then send the CTF to the S2S database, so that the CTF goes in the database of pupils who have moved outside the maintained system.

Contact details

CME Officer

Cornwall Council
Room 38
One Stop Shop
39 Penwinnick Road
St Austell
PL25 5DR

Tel: 01872 323400

cmeenquiries@cornwall.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Children Missing Education Checklist (LA use)

Children registered at schools in Cornwall reported to the Children Missing Education Officer (CME) as no longer attending.

Enquiries to be completed within 20 school days.

Steps

- Written referral from school/EWO/other sent to CME Officer
- Log onto tracking EMS (CME Officer)
- Check Education Management System (EMS)
- CME Officer to then allocate or record an EWO as an involvement
- CME Officer or EWO to make initial enquiries
- EWO to send letter to last known address making appointment to visit, if appropriate (standard letter one)
- Home visit (if appropriate)

Information given re: whereabouts of child:

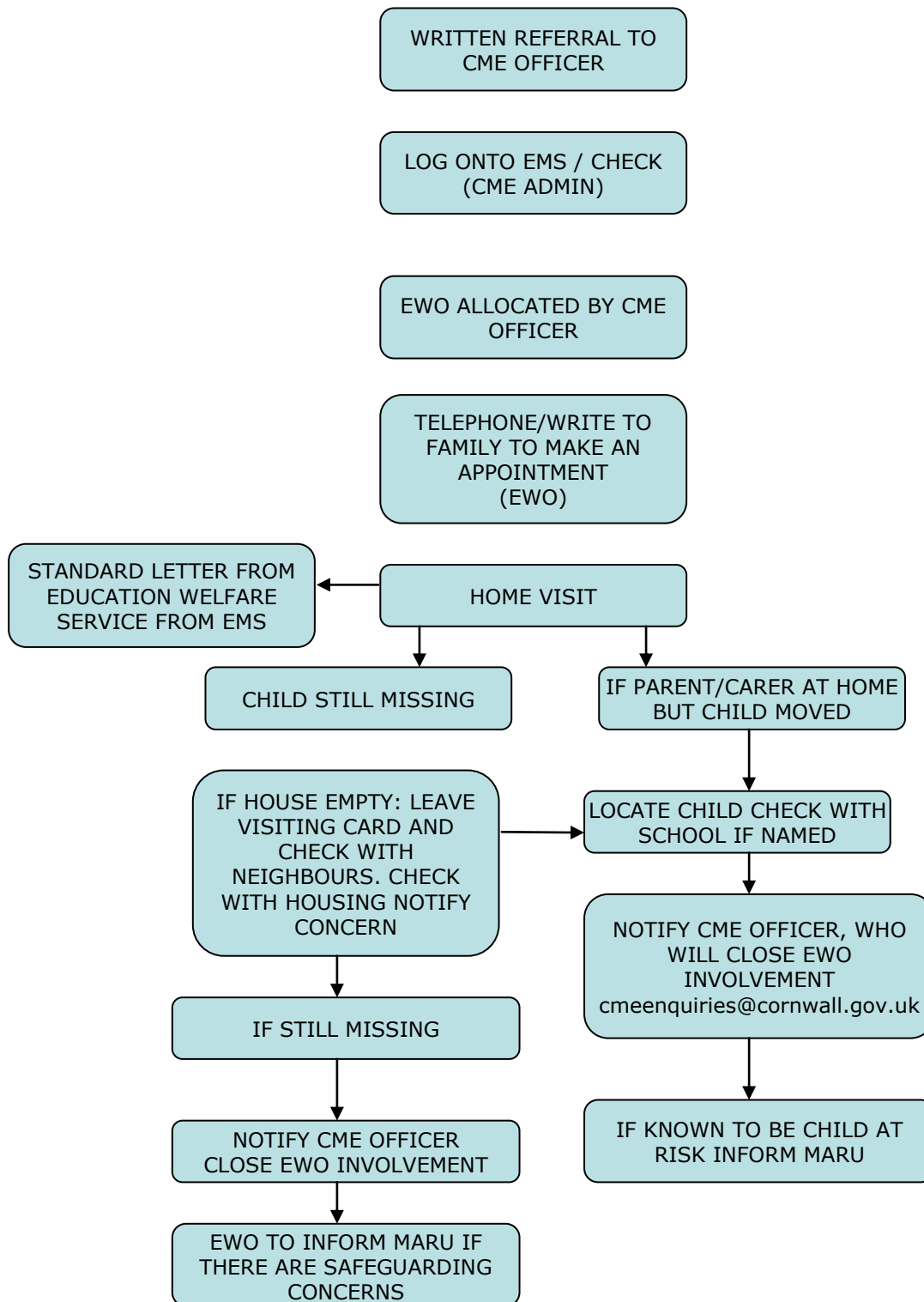
- Check with school if named (EWO)
- EWO then pass to CME officer
- CME Officer to close EWO involvement
- CME Officer to notify Social Care if known child at risk

Whereabouts of child not established

- Check with neighbours (leave card)
- EWO then pass to CME Officer
- Notify housing of concern

APPENDIX 2: Flowchart

Children Missing Education



APPENDIX 3: CME referral form (available as separate form)

PLEASE RETURN TO: cmeenquiries@cornwall.gov.uk Tel: 01872 323400
 Or alternatively you can post to: CME Officer, Education Welfare Service, Rm 38, St Austell One Stop Shop, 39 Penwinnick Road, St Austell PL25 5DR

Pupil name	M F	Year group	
Date of birth		School	
Parent/carer full name		Address	
Home tel. no.		Work tel. no.	
Others with PR			
Other agencies involved			
Is child in care?	Y N	Is pupil a young carer?	Y N
Have you any reason to suspect this child is also missing from home, or that there is a risk to their safety?		Y N	
If yes, please provide full details of what action you have already taken to address this, eg. Referral to Social Care/ Police			
SEN status			
Support	IEP <input type="checkbox"/> IBP <input type="checkbox"/> PSP <input type="checkbox"/> PEP <input type="checkbox"/>		
Please state your reasons for referral, including how long the child has been missing from school (if you believe the child is still in Cornwall, please do not remove them from roll until you have heard from the new Cornwall school)			
Prior action taken by referrer (include details of contact with parents)			
Other family contacts you have tried to establish whereabouts			
Details of any Police 121A incident reports you have received about this child with this referral			
Please confirm that you have attempted to inform the parent of this referral to the EWS			
Referred by		Title	
Date		Tel. no.	

NB The information contained in this referral may be shared with the family

Prepared by:

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January 2016

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If you would like this information
in another format please contact:

Cornwall Council
County Hall
Treyew Road
Truro TR1 3AY

Telephone: **0300 1234 100**

Email: **enquiries@cornwall.gov.uk**

www.cornwall.gov.uk