

Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning

CHILD MISSING EDUCATION POLICY

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Children Missing Education (CME) Policy

Introduction

The Welsh Government (WG) has placed a duty on local authorities (Education and Inspections Act 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** at school or otherwise.

The purpose of this document is to establish a set of principles under which the local authority:

- can fulfil its statutory duty
- can track children and young people missing from education (CME);
- maintains contact with those missing, and those at risk of missing education.

This underpins the policy and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure that children and young people do not 'slip through the net' and become missing.

These 'missing' children and young people will be some of the most vulnerable in the authority and it is vital therefore that services work together to identify and re-engage these children and young people with appropriate education provision as quickly as possible. Education is a child's right and if children are not receiving a suitable education they are more likely to be vulnerable and at risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), they can be more prone to offending behaviour and be more at risk to exploitation.

There is also a possibility a child missing from education may be at risk of significant harm. Point '1.23' of Welsh Government Guidance [Statutory guidance to help prevent children and young people from missing education], has stated '***There have been a number of high profile cases in recent times involving the tragic death of children and young people who were supposed to be attending school, but instead disappeared from the system. These very sad cases have highlighted serious gaps in systems meant to support vulnerable children and young people***'.

Each Local Authority and school has a responsibility to attempt to trace all pupils who cease to attend education. There should be no assumption made that a child will arrive at the new local authority area provided to schools, we must on every 'out of county' school move make contact with the receiving LA. Schools/Education Welfare Service should ensure lateral checks are completed before a child is removed from a school register and where it has been identified a child is missing from education, the school should immediately alert their Education Welfare Service (EWS).

Legal Context – CME Defined:

Children (child) missing from education (CME) in this document, refers to all *‘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.*

Relevant Legislation includes:

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Section 436a of the Education Act 1999, as amended by section 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, places a duty on all local authorities to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered at a school and are not receiving a suitable education.
- Circular 06/10 statutory guidance to help prevent children and young people from missing education.
- Circular 18/06 Educational Records, School reports and the Common Transfer System – the keeping, disposal, disclosure, and transfer of pupil information.
- SAO – School Attendance Order – Under Education Act 1996, Section 437-443. Where a parent of a compulsory school age pupil fails to prove that they are receiving a suitable education, and where the Local Authority believes that the child should attend school. A School Attendance Order will be used to direct a parent to send their child to the nominated school and should be used when a child is not on role.
- The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 places a duty on agencies to report a child or adult at risk.
- The Children Act 1989, Section 47, remains the key piece of legislation for investigating concerns that a child is at risk of significant harm. A child who goes missing from education may be considered, in some cases, to be at risk of significant harm. It is important that if a child who is already known to Social Services as a child in need of protection that this is reported to the child's social worker as early as possible. In addition, if a school has concerns that are heightened by a child going missing from education, even if there is no current Social Services involvement, this should be reported to the statutory authorities, such as Education Welfare Service, Social Services and Police.
- The Children's Act 2004 and Welsh Assembly Government's Safeguarding Children Working Together under the Children's Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and to share information.
- Deletion from admissions register; Regulation 9 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 and The Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) (Wales) Regulations 2001, has set clear guidelines. This includes where a pupil has ceased to attend a school, because they no longer reside within a reasonable distance from the school; each case should be referred to the Education Welfare Service for investigation before removal from the school roll, this would include all cases where children & young people are at risk of or become CME. It is important that all of the steps are clearly documented to ensure there is a clear audit trail of the actions taken to locate a young person. Only once the Education Welfare Service have completed their enquiries and advised the school in writing should a young person be removed from school the roll.

Keeping Learners Safe, Welsh Government Guidance document no: 283/2022 gives additional guidance and information about Safeguarding children in specific circumstances and any of these may increase the risk to a child missing from education.

Children & Young people with Provision Who Are Missing, or At Risk of Missing Education

Schools and other education providers are responsible for monitoring and identifying pupils who are on their register and who are missing or at risk of missing education.

Children who are on a school roll may go 'missing' because they:

- fail to start at a school having accepted a place;
- at risk of exclusion;
- fail to attend regularly;
- stop attending altogether, or leave the school without ongoing provision being identified.
- Not receiving a suitable education at home to their age, ability and aptitude.

Schools must advise the Education Welfare Service of any pupil who has 10 days or more continuous unauthorised absence in order that steps can be taken to ensure that the pupil does not go missing from education and that they are safe.

If the pupil is located, then it will be usual for a pupil to remain on the school's roll and for the case to be dealt with as one of persistent absence.

Vulnerable groups

There are some specific groups of vulnerable children and young people who may be more at risk of missing education, these are (not exhaustive):

- young people who have committed offences and are within the criminal justice system;
- children living in women's refuges;
- families fleeing domestic violence;
- children of homeless families, perhaps living in temporary accommodation, house of multiple occupancy or Bed and Breakfast;
- young runaways;
- children with long term medical or emotional problems;
- children affected by substance misuse;
- 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 who have been trafficked to, or within the UK;
- children who are or have been looked after (CLA);
- children who are privately fostered;
- young carers;
- children previously educated in the private sector

- children whose parents have withdrawn them to elective home educate, but are not receiving suitable education
- children from transient families;
- children who are taken on extended holidays or heritage visits by their family; children of parents that are in the armed forces and move on regular basis; teenage mothers; children who are permanently excluded from school, particularly those excluded illegally, e.g. for problematic behaviour or offending. Children from Gypsy, Roma and traveller families (GRT).

Children & Young People without provision

These may be children new to the authority, reception aged children whose parents/carers have not applied for a school place, children who have ceased to attend independent schools and those who cease to be electively home educated.

Children and young people who are identified as being of compulsory school age, not on a school roll and with no other form of educational provision will, in the majority of cases be expected to join a mainstream school via the normal admissions process.

In order to facilitate this, a member of the Education Welfare Service will work with the child's parents or carers to establish the nature of any previous educational provision and offer advice and the necessary support to effect a timely admission to a school.

Where children and young people have a Statement of Special Educational Need or an IDP, they will be referred to the Neath Port Talbot's additional learning needs (ALN) team who will work with the parents/carers to identify an appropriate educational placement.

Partner agencies and services involved in the identification and referral of Children Missing Education

Social Services Departments, Housing Departments, Accident and Emergency, School Nurses, Police, Fire Service, Health Visitors, Careers Wales, Voluntary Agencies, Youth Offending Team, Housing Departments, Homeless Hostels, Women's Refuges etc.

Many, if not all, Local Authority services and other partners have some level of responsibility around the issue of children missing education. Whenever anybody becomes aware of any child or young person who does not appear to be accessing education appropriately they should make a referral to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in referrals being made for children and young people already known and on a school roll. However, given concerns around the safeguarding and welfare of this group of children, this is more beneficial than not receiving notification.

Partner agencies and services may become aware of children missing, or at risk of becoming missing from education, for example Health, Women's Aid, Police, Social Services, Fire Service to name such a few. These services should make referrals but will not necessarily be best placed to pursue an appropriate provision, although where there are additional needs, some services may support a child in making the most of their educational opportunities.

Members of the public are also encouraged to make referrals where they have reason to believe that young people are not in education.

This guidance aims to support such agencies and stakeholders as well as schools, in knowing what to do if they have concerns that a child is missing education.

The role of the Schools Admission Team

The School Admissions Officer has an important contribution to make in ensuring all pupils are on a school roll and attending school.

Children may not be on a school roll where a parent has not accepted a school place for a phase transfer or failed to follow up an application after moving into the LA or unable to secure a place in their preferred school and fails to take up another offer.

When the Admissions Officer becomes aware that children / young people are living in Neath Port Talbot and not attending school they will inform the Education Welfare Service. A record of the child(ren) should be recorded as a 'Children Missing from Education' in EMS educational database.

When children / young people do not arrive at school following the offer of a place, the school should attempt to contact the parent/carer. When all attempts have failed, the school will need to contact the Education Welfare Service.

Notification and referral routes

The Education Welfare Service must be notified of any children thought to be missing from education through the following referral route and using the referral form;

Appendix One: Referral form for schools

Appendix Two: Schools check list

Appendix Three: Partner agency referral

Appendix Four: CME Other Local Authorities Enquiry / Notification form

Email, referrals: ews@npt.gov.uk with exception to Neath Port Talbot schools who need to contact their Education Welfare Officers.

For advice and guidance, all Education Welfare Officers (EWOS) and the Manager Education Welfare Service will be able to support schools and partner agencies with CME concerns and process. Hayley Thomas, Manager Education Welfare Service, is the named lead officer for the Local Authority for CME enquiries: h.thomas@npt.gov.uk

Hayley Thomas, CME, Education Welfare Service, Neath Port Talbot Council, Baglan Education Centre, Elmwood Road, Baglan, Port Talbot, SA12 8TF. Telephone: 01639 686042

All cases of children and young people missing education or at risk of doing so should be reported to the EWS to ensure that comprehensive data is recorded. **The case must be referred even if it is anticipated that the child or young person might soon be starting at a school or other educational provision.**

Referral from within the Neath Port Talbot

- CME Referral Form Appendix One (Referrer to keep a copy)
- S2S Lost Pupil Database to be updated by school

Referral from and to other Local Authority / Agencies

Other Local Authorities and agencies use many different methods to notify the Neath Port Talbot Education Welfare Service of children new to the Authority, including:

- CME Referral Form
- Secure messaging

Once a referral has been received, the child's details will be checked against the local authority's pupil information system (EMS). When a child is confirmed as missing education they will be added to the CME database on EMS and EWS will take steps to seek and locate the child and support their access into suitable education.

CME Database

The CME database comprises information held on the local authority's Information Management System (EMS) and contains data relating to children and young people:

- identified as missing from education who have been removed from a school roll where the future educational provision is unknown;
- who have been permanently excluded and are not accessing full time provision.
- who have not started at a school following one of the key transition points;
- who have been identified as living in the LA but who have no known school base at the time of referral, e.g. as a result of a Police Protection Notice (PPN).

The database will be regularly updated to take account of any changes to the status of the children and young people concerned e.g. where an alternative educational provision has been made. Children will not be removed from the database until the LA is satisfied that the child has been located and is receiving a suitable education or has been transferred to another LA's CME database due to information as to their location, or until the child ceases to be of statutory school age. Efforts to locate children who remain on the CME database will continue to be made periodically such as via re-entering of their details on the School 2 School database.

Locating children identified as missing education

If a child is not registered with an educational provider, then the Education Welfare Service will make reasonable enquiries in an effort to locate the child.

Checks will be undertaken against existing databases within the education service and with those held by partner agencies and may include the following:

- Child Health Department
- Children's Services (SSD)
- Police Service
- Housing Services
- Revenue and Benefits
- Any other agency known to be involved with family

- The local authority from which child moved originally, if known
- Where appropriate check with the custodial institution from which a child has left via the Youth Offending Service (YOS)
- Check with any local authority to which a child may have moved
- Inland Revenue

In the case of children from families of those in the Armed Forces, check with the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS)

The Education Welfare Service will attempt to make direct contact with the child's family by telephone, post, visiting the home or other appropriate methods such as text. Enquiries may be made of any known emergency contacts for the child held by a school, and if appropriate, enquiries will be made with neighbours.

If information is received that establishes where the child/children has/have moved, but there is no clear information about whether they have registered at new schools, agencies should complete the **Other LAs movement of children form/letter (Appendix 4)** and send to the receiving authority so that contact can be made to ensure a fast and smooth transition into local schools. A copy of the form should be placed on the child's file as well updates on EMS and recorded on LA CME database.

If all attempts to trace a child fail, then the completed **CME/school checklist** at Appendix 1&2 should be passed to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service.

School to School (S2S) Website and the Lost Pupil Database

If a school knows which school a pupil is moving to they should ensure that the Common Transfer File (CTF) is sent to the receiving school via S2S as quickly as possible. The new school may then apply for the full school record.

Education (Pupil Information) Wales regulations 2004, amended in 2007 require schools to transfer pupil data in electronic format. Secure 2 Secure (s2s) is a data transfer website designed & managed by DCSF to enable Common Transfer Files (CTF) to be securely transferred. <https://interactions.signin.education.gov.uk/>

"Lost pupil database" is the searchable part of s2s website containing CTFs where the (next) destination was "unknown" or "non-maintained". **CTFs for these destinations should contain 1 pupil only.** Schools can populate this section but only Lost Pupil LA officers are permitted to search/download from "lost pupil database". CTF will contain UPN plus other personal data, securely stored until pupil returns to a maintained school. For establishments that don't participate in s2s website, CTF should be posted for "non-maintained". This destination includes independent sector providers and/or parent education at home (EHE).

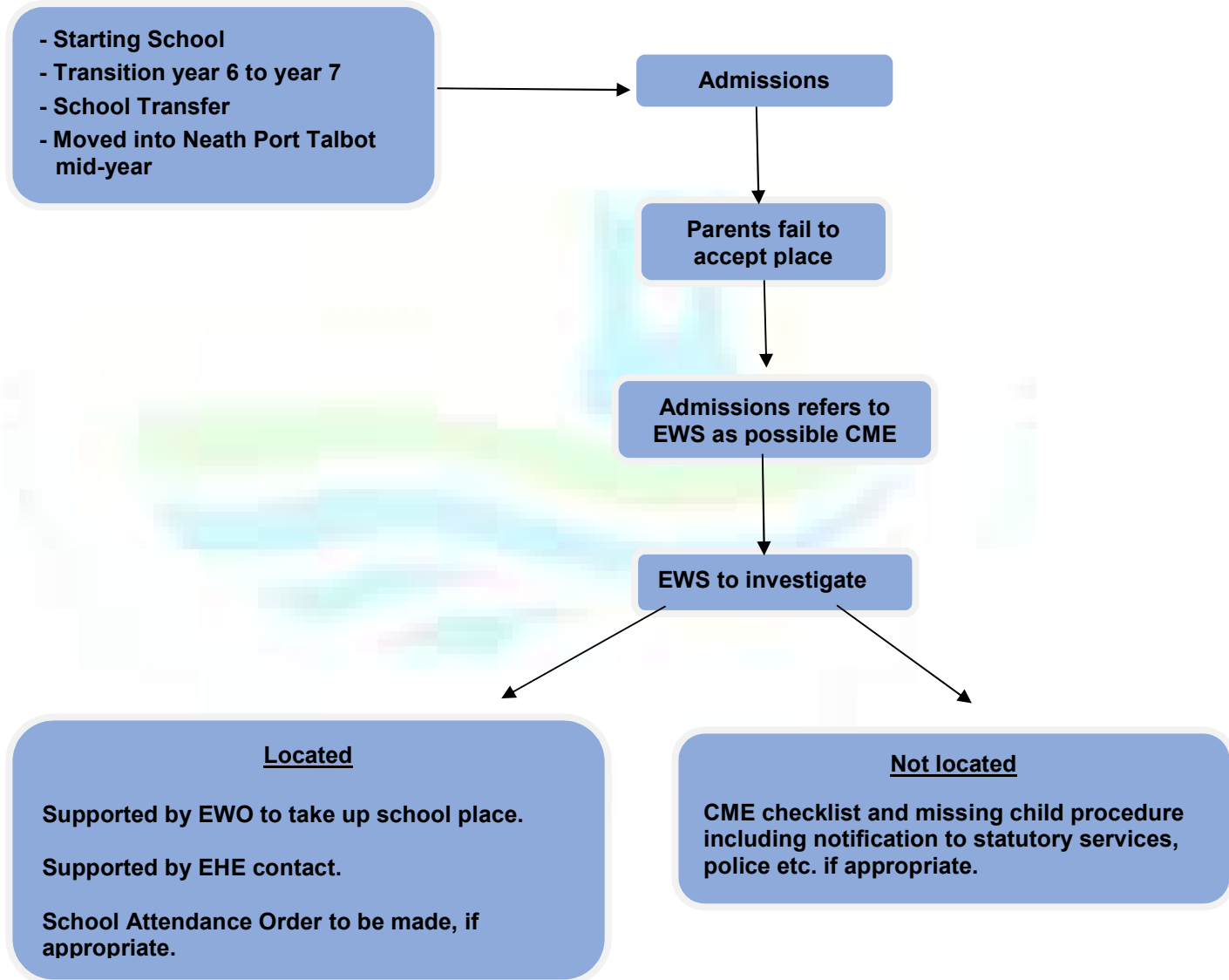
School management information systems will be setup to include the following destinations
 Destination Unknown (LA number XXX establishment number XXXX)
 Destination Non-Maintained (LA number MMM establishment number MMMM)

When pupil leaves and CTF is posted for specific establishment number (but rejected) the original school must consider CTF for Destination Unknown.

When pupil arrives at new school without CTF (the previous destination is unknown/non-maintained) the new school should ask Lost Pupil LA officer to search "lost pupil database". This includes arrivals from Scotland, Northern Ireland plus overseas

nations. If LA officer locates pupil, CTF will be removed & re-posted for the new school 7 digit reference number. s2s website should “alert” establishments of CTF pending download.

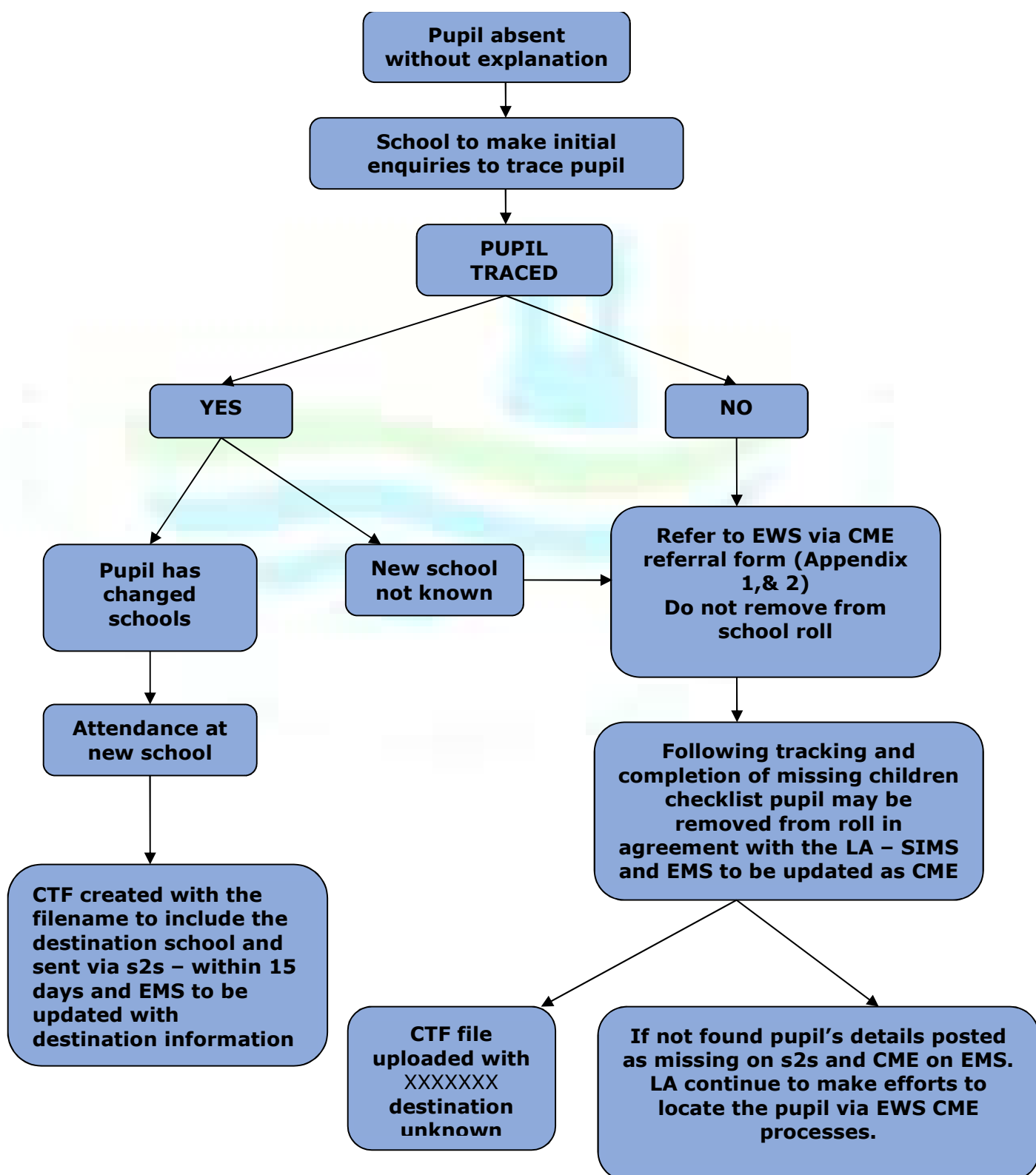
Children Missing Education at Start of Education/ School Transfer/Transition KS2 to KS3



All maintained schools in Wales have a statutory responsibility to use the Common Transfer System (CTS) for England and Wales to transfer specific information electronically, via the ‘school2school – s2s’ website when a pupil joins or leaves a school.

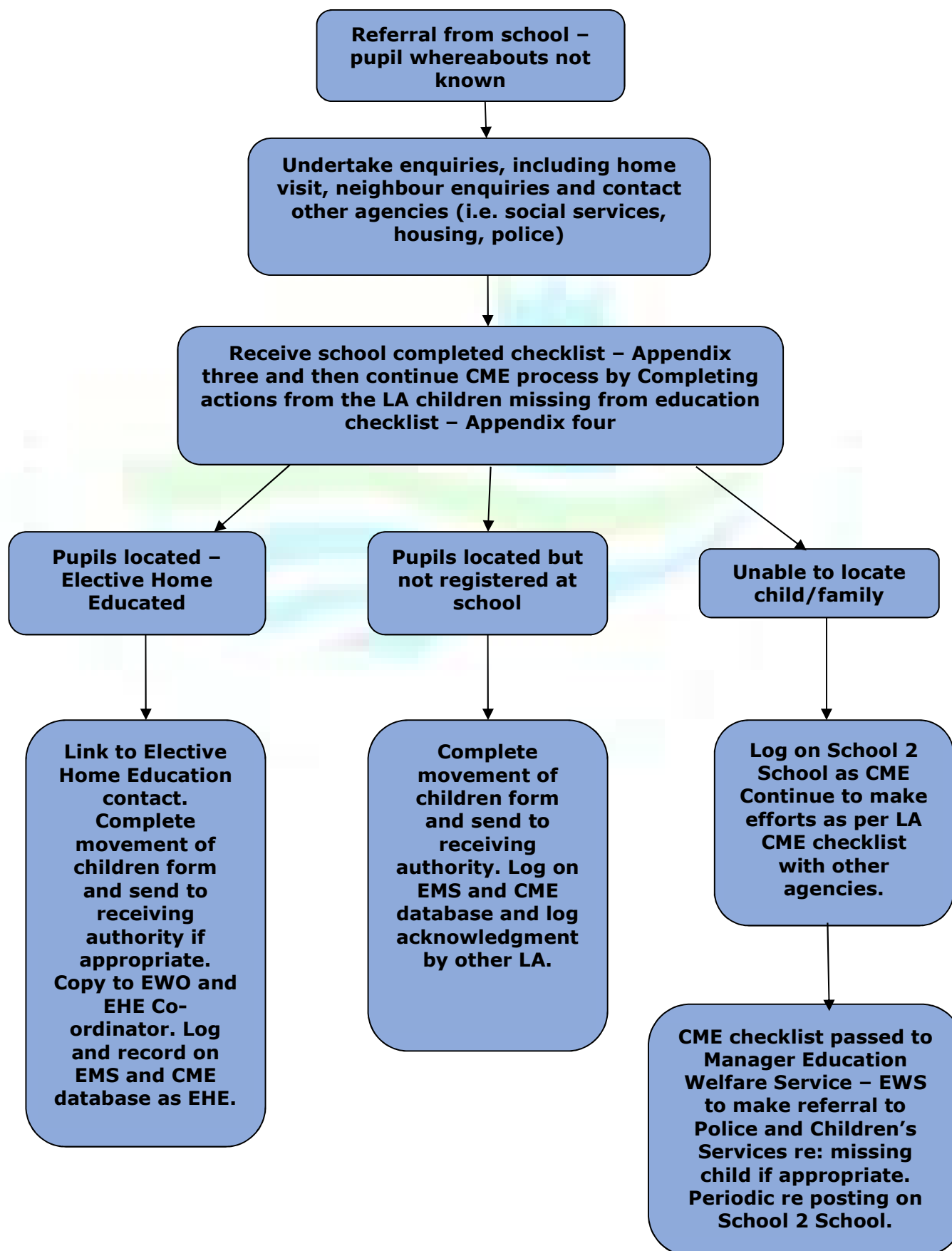
The following diagrams shows the process for tracking or reporting missing pupils at the school and then LA stages of the CME process:

Schools Tracking Process



Once a child is identified as missing or at risk of missing education and located:

Children Missing Education – EWS Tracking Process





Appendix 1



NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Notification of Children Missing Education (CME) Referral Form

For children who have not attended for 4 weeks and where school do not have a CTF transfer form for another school – Please read CME policy if unsure or seek EWS guidance. No child should be removed from roll without a CTF unless the parent has written a de registration letter or unless school have due diligence evidence of a move to another country etc and should make efforts to evidence this and ensure follow up to education establishment of authority in that destination.

If you have safeguarding concerns then a SPOC referral or emergency measures should be taken first.

Name of referring School:

Pupil Information			
Name of Pupil:		Year/Class:	
Date of Birth:		Age in Y/M:	
Address held at school:			
New Address if known (if family have moved):			
Young Carer:	Yes ☐	No ☐	
First Language:		Home Language:	

Contact Information (if blank this data is not held by the school)			
Name of Contact	Relationship to Pupil	Home Tel No	Mob Tel No

Siblings if known and school if known:	Date of Birth

Last date of Attendance (NB child cannot be removed from roll under CME process unless 4 school weeks have elapsed– or 10 school days after due return from school holiday period – and only after referral to and discussion with EWS - during which time school have made all efforts to locate and have made this referral.) :

Attempts made to locate pupil(s): see also Schools CME checklist at Appendix Three

Other Agencies known to be working with the child / family:

Any other relevant Details:

Referrer Details

Name:		Designation:	
Date:		Contact Details:	

NB: Do not remove from roll until EWS have concluded investigations and confirmation received. After the school has received confirmation from EWS that a child should be removed from the school roll, the school must upload a CTF to the S2S website



Appendix 2



School CME checklist

Actions to be taken by **Schools** to locate the child/young person

Name of Pupil/s:	Pupil UPN:	M/F	DOB	NCY	LAC: Y/N	On CPR: Y/N
Name of parents/primary carer:						
Address:				Telephone:		
Basic details of concerns (E.g. Has not been in school since.... There has been no communication/contact from home... etc.)						
Not returned to school after holiday / school break ☐						
To the best of your knowledge is the child or young person: Refugee / Asylum Seeker: Yes ☐ No ☐ or from another particular background of origin. Please state:						
On the Child Protection Register: Yes ☐ No ☐				In Public Care: Yes ☐ No ☐		
Known to Youth Offending Team: Yes ☐ No ☐				Wellbeing concerns: Yes ☐ No ☐		
If yes, please highlight Are they at risk of County line, radicalisation, sexual exploitation?						

School actions - Has the school done the following?

Attach this checklist & any evidence; letters sent etc

If the school has any Child Protection concerns, the matter must be immediately referred to Social Services and the police.

You must still proceed with the referral to the Education Welfare Officer, even if a child protection referral has been made.

Actions	Date / Time	Outcome
Carry out first day calling / contact		
Attempt telephone contact with all emergency numbers		
If siblings attend different schools make contact to share information		

Actions	Date / Time	Outcome
Check with wider school community e.g. staff, other pupils, carers, friends and any known		
Any other contact / relevant information		
Write to last known address and address of emergency contacts if known		
Speak to appropriate agencies e.g. youth workers, school nurse		

Referral Details	
Date referred to Education Welfare Officer/Service:	
Name of School:	
Name of Referrer:	
Contact Number of Referrer:	

NB: Do not remove from roll until EWS have concluded investigations and confirmation received.

After the school has received confirmation from EWS that a child should be removed from the school roll, the school **must** upload a CTF to the S2S website. If the child is no longer educated in a maintained school in the UK, the CTF **must** be uploaded to the Lost Pupil Database.

School management information system details	
Date child removed from school roll:	
Date CTF transferred to next school or Date CTF uploaded to Lost Pupil Database	
Notification to EWS if child is not attending another Neath Port Talbot School and has an independent or out of LA destination. Date notified to EWS:	



Appendix 3: Notification to the Local Authority of a Child or Young Person Missing Education

This form should be completed by any professional or agency undertaking an assessment or being aware of a child or young person of compulsory school age who does not appear to be attending a school.

Agency/Department: _____

Names:	DOB	Male/Female
Address:		Tel:
Parent(s) / Carer(s) details:		
Relationship:		
Previous address if new to area:		
To the best of your knowledge is the child or young person: Refugee / Asylum Seeker: Yes ☐ No ☐ or from another particular background of origin. Please state:		
On the Child Protection Register: Yes ☐ No ☐		In Public Care: Yes ☐ No ☐
Known to Youth Offending Team: Yes ☐ No ☐		Wellbeing concerns: Yes ☐ No ☐
Reason for referral:		
Not registered at a school ☐	Not known if registered at a school ☐	
Unknown whereabouts	House empty:	
Not returned to school after holiday / school break ☐		
This notification passed to EWO _____ on _____		

How did this child/young person come to your attention and what are your concerns?
--

Any additional information about previous educational provision: <i>(past or present: e.g. date of last education provision, known attendance difficulties etc)</i>	
Are any other agencies known to be involved with the child/young person concerned? <i>Please give details:</i>	
Any other relevant information including any safety factors to be acknowledged when visiting this family:	
Any information relating to health and wellbeing of the young person, for example: depression:	
Are they are risk for Sexual exploitation/radicalisation/county line:	
Details of Agency Making the Referral:	
Referrer's Name:	
Designation:	
Address:	
Tel No:	Email:
Reason for involvement of professional making the referral and any other relevant information:	
Date that child/young person became known to agency as missing education:	

Form sent to:
Date sent:

Confirmation by receiver:	Form received on:
Response to refer made on:	
Added to Register / Record of Missing Children:	

Appendix 4

CME Other Local Authorities Enquiry / Notification form

Enquiry Form - Movement of Children/Young People

The children/young people below are reported to have moved into your authority. Would you kindly make enquiries to establish if they are now resident in your area? Where not known, please notify me as soon as possible. Please cc in h.thomas@npt.gov.uk.

Please return to:		Date of Enquiry:
Name DOB		
Last school attended:		
School admitted to:		
Last known address:		Comments: (Agency involvement etc)
Parent/Carer:		Confirmation of current address:

Outcome and replies to be recorded on EMS and CME spreadsheet/ database