



South Tyneside Council

**CHILDREN MISSING FROM
EDUCATION
Ss Peter and Paul RC Primary School**

Policy and Procedures

September 2015

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

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SOUTH TYNESIDE LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (CME) POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. INTRODUCTION

1.0 This document is intended to inform Local Authority (LA) officers, schools, governing bodies and other agencies and professionals about the policy and procedures to be followed in order to prevent children from going 'missing from education'. It should be read in conjunction with LA advice and guidance on school attendance issues and particularly the Children and Families / Child Poverty Strategy, the Inclusion Education Strategy, and the Child Protection Policy.

1.1 Children (a child) missing from education, in this document, refers to all pupils of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more).

1.2 In the context of 'Every Child Matters' and the Children Act 2004 South Tyneside LA acknowledges that "education protects" and that it is a key responsibility of the LA and its schools to safeguard all the children resident in South Tyneside or attending South Tyneside schools. The best way for the LA and its schools to ensure the welfare of all children is to ensure they are all on a school roll and that children do not get 'lost' from school rolls and become 'missing'.

1.3 The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and to share information. This principle underpins this policy and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure children are safely on school rolls. This policy is based on the premise that **safeguarding is a shared responsibility** and that each agency must continue to monitor progress towards locating a child and ensuring that s/he is engaged in education even after referring the case to the next stage in the processes.

1.4 There is now considerable research available that identifies the reasons for children and young people being 'missing from school'. The most common reasons include that a child may:

- i) fail to start appropriate provision and hence never enter the system;
- ii) cease to attend as a result of exclusion (including unofficial, illegal exclusions);
- iii) fail to complete a transition between providers (e.g. being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new LA);
- iv) undergo frequent moves of house, including periods of homelessness or periods in a refuge;
- v) suffer family breakdown or bereavement;
- vi) truant persistently, leading to non-attendance (especially in Years 10 and 11);

- vii) become disaffected resulting in pupil and/or parent dissatisfaction with the school and the parent withdrawing the pupil or 'being asked to leave';
- viii) commit an offence;
- ix) move with their mother to live in women's refuges;
- x) become homeless; perhaps living in temporary accommodation, house of multiple occupancy or Bed and Breakfast;
- xi) run away from home;
- xii) suffer from long-term medical or emotional problems;
- xiii) be unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees, or children of asylum seeking families;
- xiv) be Looked After Children;
- xv) be children with a Roma / Traveler background;
- xvi) be young carers;
- xvii) be children from transient families;
- xviii) be teenage parents.

In addition children and young people at risk of Forced Marriage and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) may go missing from education and must be considered within this procedure.

Pupils' personal circumstances, or those of their families, may also contribute to the withdrawal process and the failure to make a transition between schools/placements.

1.5 It will be recognized that the factors listed above make children and young people 'vulnerable' in every sense and it is therefore particularly important they are not allowed to 'go missing' from education.

1.6 Research indicates certain groups of children are more likely to be affected by the factors listed above and include:

- i) Looked After Children (LAC);
- ii) refugee and asylum seeking children;
- iii) travellers;
- iv) children who have suffered bereavement, trauma, domestic violence or other adverse family circumstances;
- v) children with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

2 THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS

2.0 When a pupil is expected to join the school, either at a normal time of starting (e.g. Nursery, Reception or Year 7) or at any other time, and s/he does not arrive, the school must first try to make contact with the parents by phone or letter. If, after **one week**, no contact has been made the school must inform the Local Authority Admissions Department to find out if the pupil has been registered elsewhere. If the pupil has not registered the school must complete a referral to Services for Young People who will follow the procedures for 'missing pupils' outlined in, 'Guidance and Best Practice'. The pupil must not

be removed from roll until the SYP Officer / CME Officer has ascertained the pupil's whereabouts and safety, and has confirmed that the pupil is registered at another school or is being educated otherwise. The pupil should be marked on the register as an unauthorised absence.

2.1 If a pupil has unexplained absence from school for a prolonged period, the school must follow the normal procedures for investigating pupil absence (i.e. telephone calls, letters, invitations to meetings at the school, etc). If, after **two weeks**, the pupil does not return to school the matter must be referred to Services for Young People where the procedures for 'missing pupils', outlined in 'Guidance and Best Practice', will be followed. As above, the pupil **must not be removed from roll** until confirmation is received from the CME Officer.

2.2 If a pupil fails to return from a holiday, the school must follow the normal procedures for investigating pupil absence (i.e. telephone calls, letters, invitations to meetings at the school, etc). If, after **two weeks**, the pupil does not return to school the matter must be referred to Services for Young People where the procedures for 'missing pupils', outlined in 'Guidance and Best Practice', will be followed. As above, the pupil **must not be removed from roll** until confirmation is received from the CME Officer.

2.3 If a pupil 'disappears' without any warning the school and the School Young Person's Lead (YPL) have been unable to locate him/her, the school must immediately refer to the CME Officer, using the appropriate referral form.

2.4 There are strict rules about when schools can delete pupils from their Admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 9 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 as amended in 2006:

"Deletions from Admission Register

9. (1) *The following are prescribed as the grounds on which the name of a pupil of compulsory school age shall be deleted from the admission register:*

(a) *where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local education authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local education authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school;*

(b) *except as provided in regulation 10, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has been registered as a pupil of another school;*

(c) *in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school;*

(d) *except in the case of a boarder, that he has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered;*

(e) *in the case of a pupil granted leave of absence exceeding ten school days for the purpose of a holiday in accordance with regulation 8(3), that the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted, and the proprietor is not satisfied that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause;*

(f) *that he is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age;*

(g) *that he has been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than four weeks and both the proprietor of the school and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil;*

- (h) that the pupil has died;*
- (i) that he will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets and intends to cease to attend the school;*
- (j) in the case of a pupil at a school other than a maintained school, that he has ceased to be a pupil of the school;*
- (k) where the pupil is registered at a maintained school, that he has been permanently excluded from the school; or*
- (1) where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception class at the school.*
- (2) In a case not covered by paragraph (1)(a), (h) or (k), or regulation 10, the name of a child who has under arrangements made by a local education authority become a registered pupil at a special school shall not be removed from the admission register of that school without the consent of that authority or, if that authority refuse to give consent, without a direction of the Secretary of State”*

2.5 When a pupil's name is deleted from the Admission register the school must clearly indicate, on the register, the date and the reason for the removal from roll. In the event of a pupil moving to another school the name of the school must be indicated and the pupil's records must be sent to the new school within **15 days**, using the Common Transfer File (CTF) via the S2S website. If, for any reason, a child's name is removed from the school roll the appropriate Information Centre Representative must be informed immediately.

2.6 In the event of a parent informing the school that s/he is removing the pupil to educate him/her at home, the Officer with responsibility for Elective Home Education, who can be contacted through the Alternative Education and Behaviour Support Service, must be informed. The pupil's name will be logged into the tracking system and arrangements will be made by the LA to monitor the efficiency and suitability of the education.

2.7 If the pupil has moved or transferred and is on roll at another school, the Information Centre Representative must be informed.

2.8 Pregnancy is not a reason for a pupil to be removed from the school roll. Schools, in liaison with their allocated/named SYP Lead / Reintegration Officer, must fully investigate all cases of non-attendance at school and must never remove a pupil from roll until they have evidence this investigation has been carried out.

2.9 Schools must monitor all deletions from school rolls by race, ethnicity, gender, SEN and disability to ensure that they are fulfilling their obligations under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001).

2.10 If a school learns of a school aged pupil without a school place (e.g. a sibling or friend of a current pupil, or a child on its waiting list) the school must inform the LA of the pupil by completing a CME 1. (appendix B)

2.11 If a pupil is a resident of another Local Authority it is the educating school's responsibility to notify the 'home' Authority of any of the circumstances above, in line with South Tyneside Protocols that cover cross-borough issues with pupils.

2.12 Removal from roll for any reason other than those specified above is **illegal**.

3. THE USE OF SCHOOL TO SCHOOL (S2S) AND THE LOST PUPIL DATABASE (LPD).

3.0 If a school knows to which school a pupil is moving they must 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. The CTF must be sent to the new school no later than **fifteen days** after the pupil has moved (**this is a legal requirement**) but it is better to send the file as soon as the transfer has been confirmed.

3.1 If a school does not know to which school/LA the pupil has moved, then **four weeks** after the pupil has left the school, a CTF must be created using XXXXXXXX as the destination. This must then be uploaded onto the secure site – this information will be held in a secure area of S2S known as the Lost Pupil Database. **This file must hold information on one pupil only.**

3.2 If a child leaves the school to go to an independent school, or a school outside England, then the destination code MMMMMMMM must be used – this file will be held in a secure database, which can be searched by the Local Authority.

3.3 If a CTF is rejected schools should recode the file MMMMMMMM.

3.4 Schools must check S2S regularly to look for the CTFs of newly admitted pupils. If a new pupil is admitted, and the CTF is not available, schools should request the LA Data Team to search the Lost Pupil Database for the pupil's CTF, which can then be forwarded to the school.

3.5 Information and training on S2S and the LPD are available from the School MIS Service (SIMS team). To request training please contact the Information Centre.

3.6 Schools can look up information on 'Schools in England' by using the DfE database <http://www.edubase.gov.uk/EstablishmentFind.aspx>. This will give the address and telephone number of the school as well as its DfE number.

4. EXCLUDED PUPILS

4.0 The Services for Young People Exclusion Specialist must be informed of all exclusions from school (both permanent and fixed term). It is expected that all schools will follow the DfE statutory Guidance on Exclusion from School.

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00042-2012>

5. THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY (LA)

5.0 The Services for Young People Safeguarding Lead Officer has responsibility for CME.

5.1 It is the LA's responsibility to ensure that all school aged children are in receipt of suitable and efficient education, appropriate to their age, aptitude and ability, whether at school or otherwise. (There are separate procedures in place to cover children who are educated at home.)

5.2 The Strategy and Performance Team Manager has the delegated responsibility for maintaining the Out of School database.

6. THE ROLE OF SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (SYP)

6.0 When a pupil is referred to the CME Officer by a school or other agency/body as being in danger of going missing from school, the case will be prioritised and case-worked until either the pupil is back in school or it is confirmed that the pupil is without a school place, in which case the procedures identified in Tracking and Tracing Pupils (sect 11) will be followed.

6.1 During truancy sweeps school age pupils found out of school will be stopped and enquiries made as to their educational status. If necessary the pupil will be escorted back to school. If the pupil is found to be without a school place: action resulting from 'Notification of a child/young person 5 – 16 yrs without a school place' will be implemented.

6.2 Services for Young People (SYP) have a statutory duty to inspect school registers and to ensure that they are being kept in accordance with Department for Education (DfE) regulations. This will include the monitoring of pupils who have been removed from roll to ensure that the procedures and regulations described above are being followed and that no pupil is allowed to 'disappear' from a school roll. Schools are legally required to ensure that SYP have access to school registers and attendance data on request.

6.3 For monitoring and quality assurance purposes full attendance audits may be carried out by SYP in sample schools.

7. THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL ADMISSIONS TEAM

7.0 The Admissions Service has responsibility for:

- i) The co-ordination of admissions to reception classes, ensuring, in co-operation with primary admission authorities, that no more than a single offer of a reception class place is made to applicants for South Tyneside Schools;
- ii) the co-ordination of admission arrangements for pupils transferring from primary to secondary school, ensuring, in co-operation with secondary admission authorities and other Local Authorities, that South Tyneside-resident pupils receive no more than a single offer of a secondary school place;

- iii) processing requests for in-year admissions and school transfers,
- iv) identifying, through the Authority's data systems and other agencies, those children who require the allocation of a school place for the "normal round" intakes at reception and secondary transfer but, also, in respect of other school years;

7.1 To contribute to the work of ensuring that all pupils are on a school roll and attending school, the Admissions Service works as follows:

- i) Prioritises work on the allocation of school places for LAC;
- ii) ensures that advice about admissions and support with the application procedure is readily available for families new to the area;
- iii) carefully considers each request for a transfer of school, ensuring that parents are aware of the implications of a change of school;
- iv) ensures, at every opportunity, that parents are advised not to withdraw their children from school without first having secured an alternative school place;
- v) identifies pupils who are out of school and unable to readily benefit from a mainstream school placement so that consideration may be given to other appropriate placements;
- vi) contributes to the maintenance of an efficient pupil database which, following liaison with schools and parents as necessary, records the school places offered and those taken up or declined;
- vii) shares information with other LAs and admission authorities regarding individual pupil placements within their schools;
- viii) investigates, with parents and schools, as necessary, those cases where pupils fail to take up school places or where it becomes evident that a pupil is out of school;
- ix) follows-up and monitors the outcome of admission referrals made to the Authority's schools.

8. THE ROLE OF THE ETHNIC MINORITY TRAVELLER, REFUGEE AND ASYLUM SEEKER SERVICE (EMTRAS)

8.0 Traveller children are frequently identified as being "missing from school". This can be for a variety of reasons but particularly because:

- i) they fail to make a successful transition at Year 6-7;
- ii) they live within families who frequently move from place to place within the borough, across borough boundaries and, sometimes, to other parts of the UK;
- iii) they may live within families who are on the move in trailers, and who may camp illegally.

8.1 Pupils with no school place usually come to the attention of EMTRAS through:

- i) referrals from the Refugee and Asylum Service;
- ii) home visits made with regard to older or younger siblings who are in school;
- iii) referrals received from other boroughs with information about families that are known to have moved to South Tyneside;
- iv) anonymous complaints/information from members of the public.

8.2 EMTRAS' response to finding a pupil who is not on a school roll:

- i) discuss with parents and facilitate an application for admission;
- ii) follow up applications for admission;
- iii) inform the Children and Families Education Support Service when parents oppose school placement;
- iv) make home visits accompanied by the Young Person's Lead (YPL); and
- v) when parents opt for Education Otherwise, refer the case to the YPL who will inform the officer responsible for supporting Elective Home Educated pupils.

9. THE ROLE OF THE MULTI-AGENCY LAC TEAM INCLUDING 'THE PLACE'

9.0 The team, which includes a SEWO, promotes the health and educational attainment and progress of looked after children who are the responsibility of South Tyneside. The team is also able to offer limited help and advice with looked after children living in South Tyneside but placed here by other Local Authorities. South Tyneside Looked After Children are regularly tracked and monitored by the team, with school attendance being a major factor in this work. The Project for Looked After Children's Education (the PLACE), in the context of CME, is able to help and advise social workers, designated teachers and foster carers with regard to school attendance, and ensure that looked after young people are engaged with education. The PLACE will facilitate the interface between Children's Services, schools and other agencies involved with the pupil, and in particular Social Care.

10. THE ROLE OF OTHER AGENCIES

10.0 Other agencies, especially Children's Services, Health, Police, Housing and the Youth Offending Service frequently come into contact with school-aged pupils. It is an expectation of 'Every Child Matters' that any professional coming across a school aged child will ask where that child is registered at school. If a child is found to be not on the roll of a school, other professionals should complete a referral to the CME Officer.

11. TRACKING AND TRACING OF PUPILS REFERRED TO SERVICES for YOUNG PEOPLE

11.0 On receipt of the 'Notification of a Child Without a School Place', Appendix A, the Idear database will be checked. If the recorded school is different from the last known school then the recorded school will be asked if the pupil is on roll.

11.1 If IDEAR shows the pupil is out of school, or not recorded at a South Tyneside school, checks will be made through:

- i) SYP;
- ii) Pupil Services;
- iii) The Admissions Team;
- iv) The PLACE;
- v) EMTRAS;

- vi) The Information Centre (to check for any record on local or national databases such as recent Schools Census, S2S or National Pupil Database),

as appropriate, to see if the pupil is known and if educational provision is being made.

11.2 If the pupil is not known to any of the above, the CME Officer will investigate the circumstances of the pupil being out of school (with support from the Admissions Team) taking into consideration the pupil's and parents' wishes for provision. The pupil's details will be flagged as an alert on the Idear database.

11.3 Every effort will be made to secure an appropriate school place or the procedures outlined in the Fair Access Protocol may be followed, if necessary Court action or a School Attendance Order will be considered in order to ensure a pupil attends the allocated provision/school.

11.4 The SYP Lead may make a referral to the Fair Access Panel in order that appropriate provision can be identified.

11.5 In the event of a pupil being 'missing' the CME Officer will liaise with all agencies including Police and Social Care and follow the Child Protection Procedures.

11.6 The case will not be closed until the pupil is securely on roll in a school or other appropriate educational provision is identified, all possible investigations exhausted and the referrer notified.

11.7 The CME Officer will follow any protocols established with regard to cross border issues.

12. THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (LSCB)

12.1 The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) will have an overview of this policy and procedure through the Performance Management and Evaluation sub-committee. This group will monitor numbers of children missing from education and trends over time.

12.2 Individual children missing from education and potentially subject to sexual exploitation as either cause or effect of this will be monitored through the 'South Tyneside Exploited and Missing (STEM)' sub-committee. This sub-committee will provide an analysis of the data to the Performance Management and Evaluation sub-committee.

South Tyneside Children, Adults and Families Directorate

Notification of a child/young person 5 – 16 yrs without a school place

The child/young person named below is believed to be without a school place

Child's Name:.....**Date of Birth:**.....

Any known aliases.....**M/F**.....

Address:.....

.....**Tel No**.....

School last attended (if known).....

.....

Does the child have SEN? Yes/ No

Has a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) been carried out? Yes/No

Are there any support agencies involved with the child? Yes/No

Details.....

.....

Referred by:.....**Date**.....

Name & Job title:.....

Address:.....**Tel**.....

Please return to:
Children Missing Education Officer
SYP Safeguarding Lead
Level 1, Town Hall and Civic Offices
Westoe Road
South Shields
NE33 2RL
0191 4246332
Email: sypadmin@southtyneside.gov.uk

South Tyneside Children, Adults and Families Directorate

Notification of a child/young person 5 – 16 yrs who has been removed from a school roll and the destination is unknown

The child/young person named below has been removed from the school roll and the new school is not known:

Child's Name:..... **Date of Birth:**.....

Any known aliases..... **M/F**.....

Address:.....

..... **Tel No.**.....

Reason for leaving: (if known).....

.....

Any other information which might help in locating the pupil: (eg area to which pupil may have moved).....

.....

Has the pupil's Common Transfer File (CTF) been uploaded onto S2S? Yes/No

Has a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) been carried out? Yes/No

Are there any support agencies involved with the child? Yes/No

Details.....

Contact/Worker..... Tel No.....

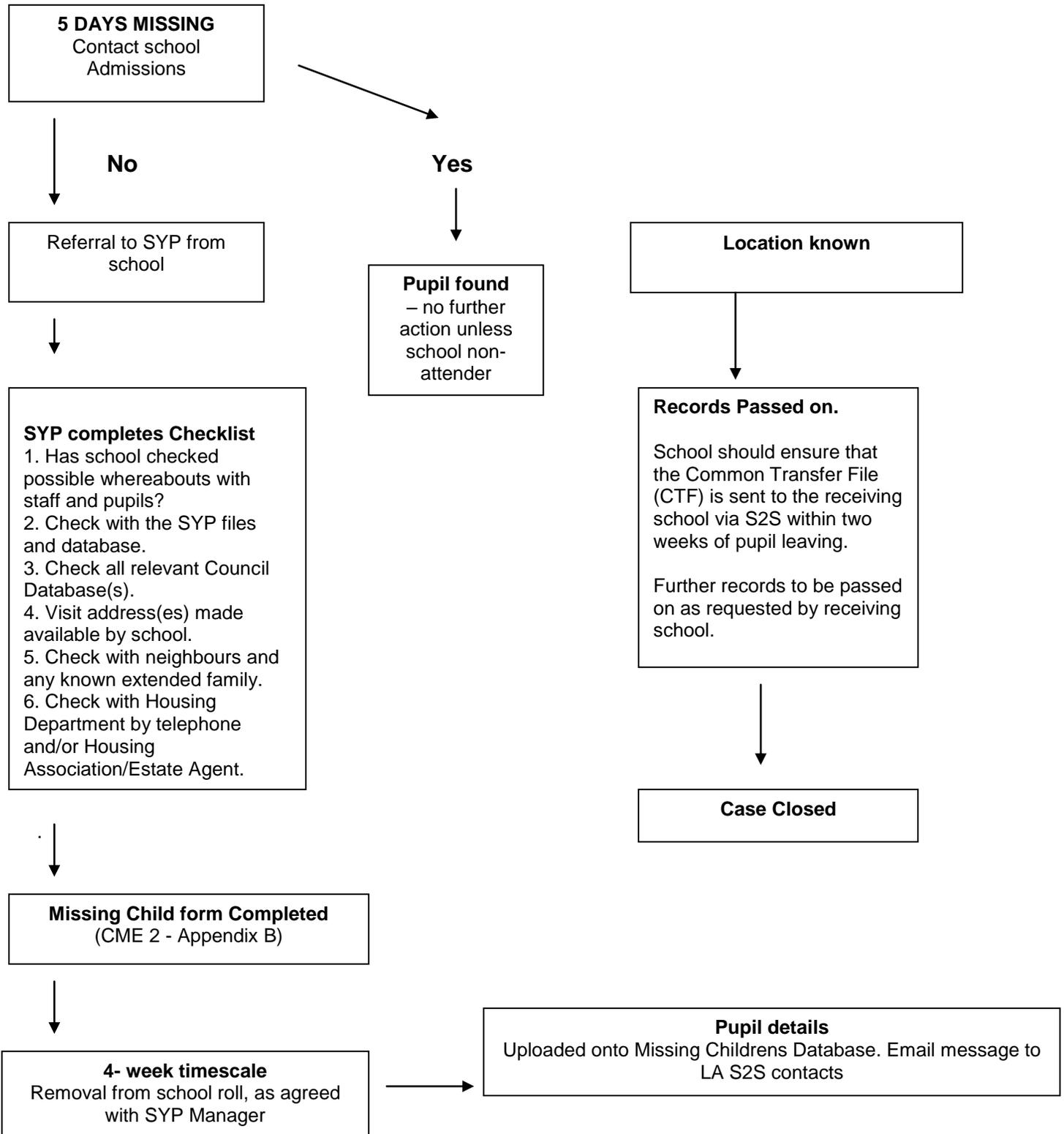
Referral made by Date.....

Job title:.....

Address:..... Tel No.....

Please return to: Children Missing Education Officer
SYP Safeguarding Lead
Level 1, Town Hall and Civic Offices
Westoe Road, South Shields
NE33 2RL 0191 4246332
Email: sypadmin@southtyneside.gov.uk

Children Missing Education Flow Chart Pupil Leaving South Tyneside



Appendix CME 4

DCSF Children Missing Education Factsheet

The Government is concerned about any child or young person missing education, as it is not just their educational attainment that is at risk, but also potentially their safety and welfare.

That is why they are intending, via Clause 4 of the Education and Inspections Bill 2006, to introduce a new statutory duty on all local authorities to make arrangements to identify children missing education.

Background

In 2002, DCSF set a target in its strategic framework document to “By 2005, ensure that robust multi-agency systems are in place in each local authority to identify and track children missing education or at risk of doing so”.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children (Dec 2004) reiterated: “by December 2005 every local authority should have systematic arrangements in place to identify children missing from education, so that suitable provision can be made for them, drawing on the non-statutory guidance issued in July 2004”.

All local authorities (LAs) now have a named individual responsible for receiving details of children found missing education, and for brokering support for them through the most appropriate agencies.

From contacts with the named individuals, we know that while some LAs and their partners have improved their wider arrangements to identify such children, progress is inconsistent.

The DCSF has commissioned a research organisation to conduct an independent survey of all LAs to assess in more detail their progress in this area. We expect to publish the results of this survey in the summer.

What do we mean by Children Missing Education (CME)?

All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise (e.g. at home, privately, or in alternative provision).

Why do children go missing from education?

There are a number of reasons, including they:

- fail to start appropriate provision and hence never enter the system;
- cease to attend, due to illegal exclusion or withdrawal;
- fail to complete a transition between providers (e.g. being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new LA; or because of

- personal factors, such as disengagement or disenchantment by parents and pupils;
- transience/family mobility;
- family problems.

National Guidance

Guidance issued in July 2004 *Identifying and maintaining contact with Children Missing, or at risk of going missing, from Education* highlights good practice which exists in LAs and provides a practical model of process steps to help LAs improve their systems. The guidance includes a self-evaluation checklist, which was developed to help LAs check their progress.

Two further sets of guidance aiming to enhance the quality and accessibility of alternative provision were published in February 2005 – *Guidance for LEAs'* and *Commissioning Alternative Provision*.

Scotland, Wales, Ireland

Effective links have been established with Wales and Scotland. Work is ongoing to ensure effective links with Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

This is to ensure that children who move to and from these areas can be successfully relocated to new schools with the minimum of interruption to their learning and that their records follow them promptly.

Find out more

Further information on CME and links to all the documents mentioned can be found at: www.ecm.gov.uk - Annex A of the July 2004 guidance outlines other statutory duties upon LEAs that may also apply to CME.