



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

Roinn an Fhoghlaim is Seirbheisean Chloinne
Department of Education and Children's Services

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION POLICY

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Department of Education and Children's Services

Children Missing from Education Policy

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EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Children Missing from Education Policy

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper provides guidelines for schools to follow when a child or young person is missing from education. Authorities are supported in this by Children Missing from Education (CME) (Scotland), a national co-ordinating body developed to track and trace children and young people missing from education.
- 1.2 There are many reasons why children may not attend school, but in all cases it is important to know where children are. This policy sets out the procedures to be taken when a child's location can not be confirmed for a period of time. Timescales set out in this document are to be considered the maximum allowed. Where staff have any information or concerns, they should act on them immediately.

SCHOOL TRANSFER: NORMAL PROCEDURES

- 2.2 Procedures for school transfer are straightforward and, in the majority of cases, work well.
 - Parent contacts school staff and informs school of their forwarding address, school and timescale.
 - The child remains on the schools register until the new school requests the Pupil Progress Record (PPR). The PPR should be sent immediately by registered post to promote good information transfer and Child Protection.
 - Once the PPR is requested, the child is removed from the register of their original school and is formally enrolled in a new school.
- 2.3 If the PPR is not requested by the receiving school, this may be due to the receiving school overlooking or delaying following procedures. Contact with the school should clarify the situation.
- 2.4 The child's name should remain on the school register until the PPR has been sent to the new school, or until such time the school is authorised to remove the child from the school register by the CME Officer. The school should retain the PPR in all cases, including those of children whose family moves abroad, until the PPR is requested.
- 2.5 Until the child is removed from the school register, non attendance should be registered as 'family reasons'. Once the date of enrolment at a new school is confirmed, the child's removal from the school register should be backdated to that date.
- 2.6 It may be that the child has not been enrolled in a new school. In a minority of cases, the child may be at risk because the parents/carers do not fulfil their legal obligation with regard to education and do not ensure their child's attendance at school. In either case, the child can be lost to the education system and, by implication, to the supports and child protection procedures adhered to by local authorities.

PRE-SCHOOL

- 3.1 As there is no statutory requirement for a child to attend nursery, the above procedures cannot apply.
- 3.2 However, the following principles do apply when a child stops attending a pre-school:
 - If there have been any concerns at any time about a child's safety and well being, Child Protection procedures must be followed.
 - If a child stops attending nursery on a regular basis without explanation or prior notification, staff have a responsibility to investigate the reason for the child's non attendance. This should be done through contact with parent(s)/carer(s), the child's emergency contact(s) and/or involvement of relevant agencies such as Health Visitor services, Social Work Department.

WHEN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES GO MISSING OR WHEN TRANSFER IS NOT STRAIGHTFORWARD

- 4.1 The following sections (5 and 6) give details of the steps to follow when children and families go missing or when transfer is not straightforward.

STEP ONE – LOCAL INVESTIGATIONS

- 5.1 When a child appears to be missing, authorities have a maximum of 28 days, from the point of concern, to make local investigations before referring to CME (Scotland). It is the responsibility of the school's Child Protection Coordinator to take the lead role and to take the following steps:
- Notify the Learning Community Principal.
 - Notify the Authority CME (Scotland) contact (who will provide guidance if required).
- 5.2 If the Child's name is on the Child Protection Register, is a LAC, is a LAAC, or involved with Children and Families Social Work Team on a voluntary basis, the Lead Professional should be notified that the child is missing.
- 5.3 If there are concerns at any time about a child's safety and well being, the Child Protection Coordinator should contact the Children and Families Social Work Service to pass on Child Protection concerns.
- 5.4 The Child Protection Coordinator should carry out discrete internal investigation into the whereabouts of the child using the following guidelines:
- Review records held on the child and discuss with support staff.
 - Phone any home and mobile numbers registered to parent/guardian.
 - Phone any emergency contact numbers registered on file.
 - Make enquiries with other pupils in the class.
- 5.5 If at this stage the family's new location has been identified, but there has been no contact from the new school, the Child Protection Coordinator should contact the new school and make arrangements to pass on the child's school records. If the new school has no records of the child being registered, the child has not been registered with a new school or the family's new location has not been confirmed within 10 days, the Child Protection Coordinator should inform the Learning Community Principal and refer the matter to the Authority CME (Scotland) contact using the referral form at Appendix 1.
- 5.6 **Additional Points**
- If there are concerns at any time about a child's safety and wellbeing, the Child Protection Coordinator should contact the Children and Families Social Work Service to pass on Child Protection concerns.
 - A child whose name is on the Child Protection Register is deemed missing, if within **2 days** of reporting difficulty with contact, his/her address is still not known. The Lead Professional should be notified that this child is missing.
 - Travellers may arrive and leave the authority without awareness of procedures. It is important that schools adhere to the procedures outlined to ensure travellers' children are subject to the same protection as other pupils. If a child stops attending school on a regular basis without explanation or prior notification, school staff, in collaboration with other agencies, have a responsibility to investigate. Highly mobile families decrease the opportunity for effective intervention, which may increase the likelihood of risk or harm to the child/young person. School staff should feel free to discuss concerns about the children of travelling families with the authority's designated point of contact. As such children from travelling families should only be referred to CME (Scotland) if there are Child Protection Issues or significant concerns.
 - Local agencies and professionals should bear in mind, when working with children and families where there are outstanding Child Protection concerns, that a series of missed appointments, or abortive home visits may indicate that the family has suddenly and unexpectedly moved out of the area. Social Work and the Police should be informed immediately if such concerns arise.

- The Local Authority will maintain a 'virtual register' of children who are still missing after 28 days or for other reasons, such as approved home education. Children will continue to be traced from this virtual register. Schools should remove child from roll after confirmation from CME Officer.

5.7 These procedures must be applied in all cases. The welfare of the child is paramount and consequently it is better to take action than not.

STEP TWO - REFERRAL TO CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION (SCOTLAND)

- 6.1 If the actions of step 1 to find a child locally have proved unsuccessful, CME (Scotland) should be contacted. Collaborative risk assessment with key colleagues will inform the timing of contact, but this step should be initiated within and no longer than **28 days** from the first concern being raised.
- 6.2 The referral form (Appendix 1) should be sent to the authority's designated officer by the school's Child Protection Co-ordinator. The Learning Community Principal should also be notified.
- 6.3 Once the referral has been received the Authority CME (Scotland) contact will take on the lead role and take the following steps:
- 6.4 The Authority CME (Scotland) contact will carry out a discrete external search with in the local community and make enquiries with other agencies. If at this stage the family's new location has been identified, but there is still no contact from the new school, the Authority CME (Scotland) contact will make further enquiries to identify where the child is being educated.
- 6.5 If the child has moved within the authority's jurisdiction, the Authority CME (Scotland) contact will make arrangements for a visit to be carried out and the family will be provided with any support required to register the child in a new school or make alternative arrangements for the child's education.
- 6.6 If the child has moved out of the authority area, the Authority CME (Scotland) contact will advise CME (Scotland) and request assistance in locating a new school.
- 6.7 If the local authority's search has been unable to locate the child, the Authority CME (Scotland) contact will refer the matter to CME (Scotland) using the referral form at Appendix 2.
- 6.8 The Western Isles CME (Scotland) contact is:

James Mitchell, Lionacleit Education Centre, Lionacleit, Isle of Benbecula, HS7 5PJ
Tel: 01870 603580 **Email: james.mitchell@cne-siar.gsx.gov.uk**



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Appendix 1

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION - REFERRAL FORM

Personal Details			
Full Name		Date of Birth	
Name Known As		SCN	
Possible Aliases			
Last Known Address			
Tel No		Mobile No	
Emergency Contact No			
Address of any other known family			

School Details			
Last school attended		Year group/class	
Name of school contact		Date of last day at school	

Local Search Details			
Home Phone		Date Phoned:	
Outcome of call			
Emergency Contacts Phone		Date Phoned:	
Outcome of call			
Review records held on the child		Date Reviewed:	
Outcome of review			
Discussion with support staff		Date:	
Outcome of discussion			
Enquiries with other pupils		Date:	
Outcome of enquiries			

Forwarding Details

Local CME Officer: James Mitchell, Lionacleit Education Centre, Isle of Benbecula, HS7 5PJ.
james.mitchell@cne-siar.gsx.gov.uk

Date forwarded to local CME officer:

Details of person referring:

Guidance for completing this form

Personal Details

- It is critical that these are accurate as any incomplete or inaccurate information can result in unnecessary delays.
- SCN (Scottish Candidate Number). Each child in the Western Isles has an SCN allocated when they enter P1.

Local Search Details

- Please add as much information as possible here including comments which might appear to conflict with each other: -
Some possible outcomes might be;
No contact despite several attempts
Pupils were told family moving to
Agencies heard family home educating
Emergency contact says family on extended holiday abroad

Forwarding Details

- The form should be e-mailed to the local CME Officer who will confirm receipt of the form to the person named on the form as the referrer.



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National Referral Form - Children Missing from Education

Personal Details			
Full Name		Date of Birth	
Name Known As		SCN	
Last Known Address			
Tel No		Mobile No	
Other family names			
Other known family / close family whereabouts			

School Details			
Last school attended		Year group/class	
Date of last day at school			
Other schools attended and dates			

Further Details			
Child Protection Register	Yes / No	Traveller family	Yes / No
Additional Support Needs	Yes / No	Educated at Home	Yes / No
Child protection investigation	Yes / No	History of Exclusions	Yes / No
Looked After Child	Yes / No	Medical issues	Yes / No
Cultural Issues	Yes / No	History of holidays in term time / over 2 weeks	Yes / No
Details of above or any other related concern			
Characteristics/ distinguishing features of child or family			

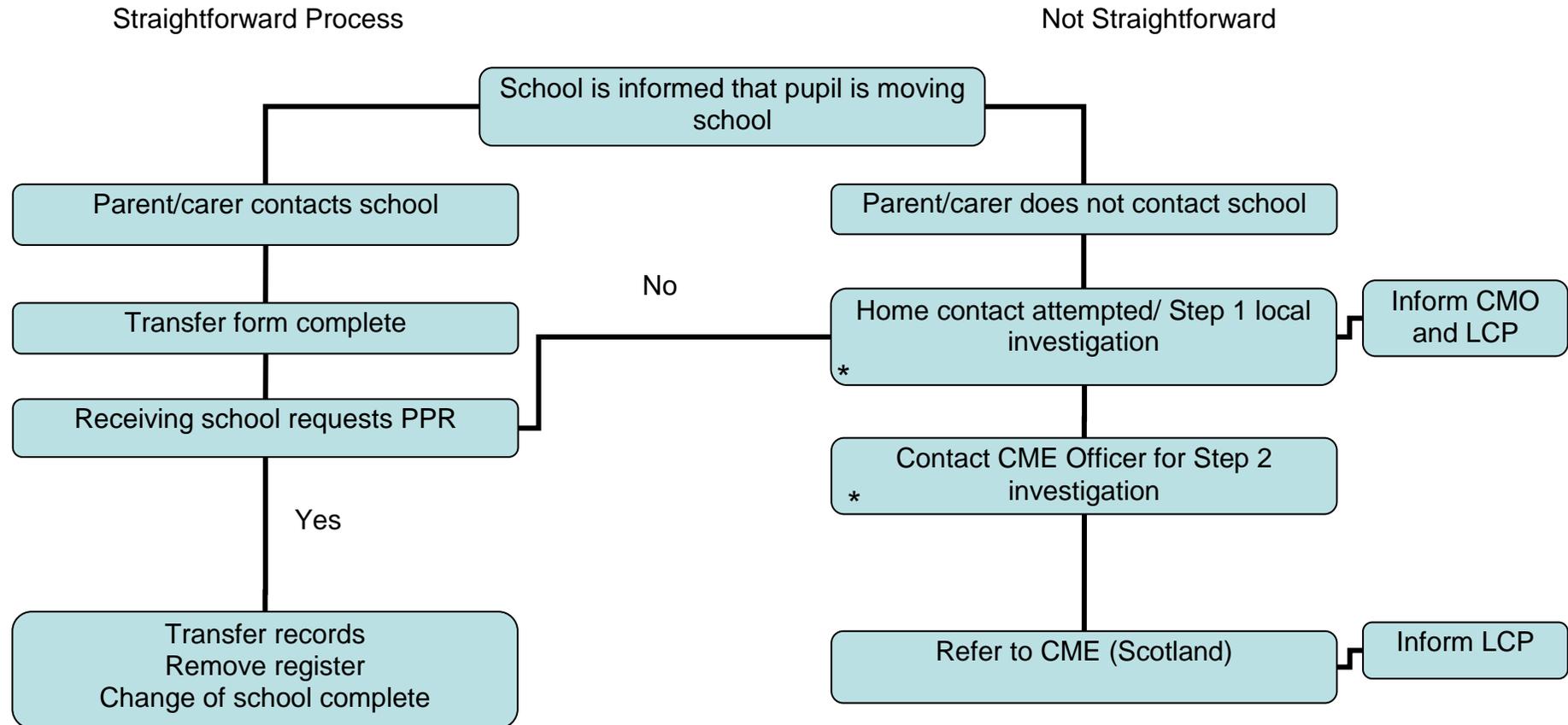
Result of local search (attach record): Details of referrer			
Name		Designation	
Date			
Organisation and Local Authority			
Contact number			
Contact e mail			

Send to
Laura Mulheron, Scottish Government, ScotXed Unit, CME (Children Missing From Education) Scotland / S2S, Area 2-D (south), Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ Tel - 0131 2441510 or 07920595405 E-mail: laura.mulheron@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

Guidance notes for completing referral form

1. This form should only be used by the Authority CME Officer.
2. Prior to completing the application form the following must be checked:
 - a. A home visit has concluded that the child is not there
 - b. Friends / relatives have been asked
 - c. Other schools in the local authority confirm the child has not transferred
 - d. The housing department confirm that the family have left / been evicted/ been re-housed
3. The form should have full and accurate details.
4. Hand written forms should be legible and completed in black ink.
5. Children withdrawn for home education and traveller children should only be referred if they are on the child protection register or there has been a child protection investigation carried out or pending.
6. Other agencies involved with the child have been checked with for information.
7. If you would prefer to give details by telephone please do so.
8. Be aware that the term "Child protection concerns" is far reaching at both ends of the spectrum. **Please refer rather than not!**
9. The maximum time a child should be deemed as "missing" is 20 school days. Referrals will be received earlier.

If a local authority has information about a specific address in another local authority there is no need to refer to CME (Scotland) in the first instance. Contact can be made with the new local authority directly. If the child is not located this way then referral to CME (Scotland) should be made.



* Responsibility of school Child Protection Officer