



Children missing out of education

**This guidance encompasses:
Children out of School (COOS)
Children Not Receiving Education (CNRE) and
Children Missing Education (CME)**

Based on a policy written by
Telford & Wrekin Council
Updated with information from Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)

‘Being absent from education, as well as missing from education, can be an indicator of abuse, neglect, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation and other safeguarding concerns.’

**Reviewed: September 2026
Next Review: September 2027**

Introduction

Schools should recognise that attendance concerns are safeguarding concerns. Persistent, severe or unexplained absence may indicate abuse, neglect, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation, mental health difficulties, domestic abuse or other vulnerabilities and should be considered within the school's wider safeguarding response.

All children, regardless of their circumstances are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, aptitude and any special needs they may have.

Children Missing Education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming a person Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in later life.

Young people who grow up to be adults who lack qualifications face a difficult path, especially when trying to find employment. We owe it to all of them to ensure they are given every chance to stay safe and succeed.

Telford and Wrekin Local Authority (LA) is committed to ensuring that every child of compulsory school age receives a good quality full time education.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the clear procedures for schools and academies, free schools and independent schools, Telford and Wrekin L A and partner agencies to follow in order to ensure that those who are CME are tracked and are receiving education.

Whilst this document has a focus on processes and systems within the LA, the work should be seen within the context of the wider remit of all agencies to safeguard the welfare of all children.

It remains the responsibility of schools to follow appropriate procedures and be working towards children returning to school as quickly as possible.

Schools which respond quickly to any signs of disengagement, or children and young peoples' anxieties are more successful in helping them to achieve at levels comparable with those of their peers and return to full time education.

Legal Framework

The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Article 2 of the protocol No 1 states:

'No person shall be denied the right to education.'

Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 requires all LAs to make arrangements to establish the identities of children of compulsory school age in their area who are not registered pupils at a school, and are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than at school.

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 place duties on schools and local authorities regarding admission registers, attendance registers, notification requirements and deletion from roll procedures.

Definition

Children may be 'missing' education for a number of reasons which include:

- Having their access to a full time education reduced by being placed on a modified timetable.
- Being **absent from school for 10 or more school days consecutively**.
- Not having a school place yet allocated to them.
- Being Electively Home Educated (EHE) but not receiving a suitable education at home.
- Having disappeared from education and their whereabouts are unknown.

The LA recognises that whilst some children are out of school for a few days, others can go missing with their families and others do not have educational provision in place. All of these are forms of missing education. Modified timetables must only be used in exceptional circumstances, be time-limited, have clear objectives, include a planned review date and be agreed with parents/carers. Pupils on modified timetables remain on roll and schools retain responsibility for safeguarding, attendance monitoring and ensuring progression towards full-time education.

- **Children Out of School (COOS)**

These are children who have been absent from school for 10 or more consecutive school days and the absence is unauthorised. Schools are required by law to notify the LA of such children.

It is acknowledged that the majority of these children return to school within a short timeframe. Some of these however may become pupils who are not receiving education for some period of time and some have disappeared and their whereabouts are not known.

- **Children Not Receiving Education (CNRE)**

These are principally children who have not attended school for 1-3 months. Additionally the following groups are also regarded as CNRE:

- A child who is not on a school roll, but has a school placement pending.
- A child who is awaiting a school admission appeal. The parent is likely to have been offered an alternative school place and has made the decision to wait until the outcome of the school appeal is known before the child starts at a school.
- A child who is on roll at a Telford and Wrekin school and has moved to another school within the borough or out of borough and has yet to start at that school. These children must stay on the school roll for the first 20 days until they are either admitted to another school place or they are referred as a CME.
- Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) Children who are on roll with a school locally but are currently travelling.
- Children who are EHE but the education has been deemed to be unsuitable.

Safeguarding

All schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Schools should be particularly alert to children who are absent due to mental health difficulties, emotionally based school avoidance, SEND-

related needs or medical conditions, ensuring appropriate support and reasonable adjustments are considered.

All staff should understand that children who are absent from education repeatedly, persistently or for prolonged periods may require an early help response or safeguarding intervention. Any concerns should be shared promptly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

This guidance **does not** replace any Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures. Existing Safeguarding procedures are fundamental and should be observed at all times.

Delay is unacceptable and the welfare of the child is paramount. If there is good reason to suspect that pupil's absence may be the result of them being a victim of a crime a referral to the police should be made by phoning 101.

If you suspect that a child may be "missing" (other than missing education), or have particular Child Protection concerns please contact Family Connect on 01952 385385 or by email familyconnect@telford.gov.uk.

This protocol applies to pupils whatever their educational provision which includes alternative provision, regardless of where they are on roll. **The school where the pupil is on roll is responsible for monitoring the pupil's attendance, just as they have a responsibility to monitor the safeguarding of the pupil.**

Attendance team:

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will receive regular attendance information and attendance concerns will be considered within safeguarding discussions and vulnerability meetings. The attendance team meet regularly and review ongoing action plan.

Rachel Cook Headteacher
Amy McCullagh – DSL Assistant Headteacher
Justina Millington - Office Manager
Kylie Byrne Corbett - Inclusion Manager
Rose Hudson – Pastoral Support Assistant

Process for Children Out of School (COOS)

It is a statutory responsibility for all schools to share information with the LA of any pupil or young person **who has been out of school for 10 consecutive days without authorisation**. Schools should be mindful of pupils who are young carers and consider whether caring responsibilities are contributing to absence or reduced attendance.

Whilst this list is not exhaustive they are likely to:

- have an illness or medical condition,
- be on holiday or unauthorised leave from school,
- be subject to a 'grey' or unofficial exclusion,
- be a school refuser,
- have family circumstances that mean the family are not sending them to school, including young carers,

- be awaiting a school transfer to be processed and finalised,
- be believed to have re-located or moved house,
- have transport issues preventing attendance due to a house move,
- be a Child in Care pupil and have had a placement change,
- be a Gypsy Roma Traveller pupil and is currently travelling,
- have been accommodated in a refuge following incidents of domestic abuse or are temporarily homeless,
- have a parent who is refusing to send them to school,
- have gone missing from home.

The referral process to the Local Authority

If any school, academy or alternative education provider identifies a pupil as a COOS they should:

- Refer to the flow chart
- Input information onto Synergy (SAM portal).
- Consider whether an early help assessment is appropriate or a referral to Family Connect.
- Follow any advice or guidance from the LA to resolve the situation.
- Be aware of preparing for legal intervention after liaison with AST for non-school attendance.

Upon receipt of the referral form the Local Authority will:

- Record the pupil's details on a centrally held monitoring spreadsheet.
- Update the information on the VLS workspace of protocol.
- Record the pupils' details on the CWAFF tracking and monitoring sheet.
- Monitor the length of absence, when a child has been absent for 20 days they will be classed as a Child Not Receiving Education (CNRE)
- Where appropriate CNRE pupils are considered for inclusion at the LA internal educational multi agency meeting 'Ensuring Access to Education for All' (EAEA) where cases are regularly reviewed, tracked and monitored for pupils who are not in receipt of education.
- Ensure all cases of COOS, CNRE, CME and unsuitable EHE and unplaced Admissions are monitored and discussed at the bi-weekly 'Cross Case Management Meeting' and appropriate advice is offered to schools.
- Cross reference names against the MTT spreadsheet, information from schools referring to any new admissions and deletions.
- Track pupils expected return to school dates, ensure they have resumed educational provision before closing the case.
- Report the data relating to CNRE & CME to SLT on a monthly basis.

Children Not Receiving Education (CNRE)

The LA reviews the list of notifications for Children out Of School (COOS) regularly. When children have not been attending school for 28 consecutive days, the pupil is deemed to be a Child Not Receiving Education, unless they have information to the contrary that the child is in receipt of some education in which case they will be continue to be classified as Children Out of School.

Schools do not need to make an additional referral, but must be aware that they may be asked for additional information in relation to the pupil, their absence, and the plan to ensure the pupil is receiving education.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

Children Missing Education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at school. CME may include children whose whereabouts are known or unknown.

If the host school believes a pupil to have moved out of area or abroad and do not have a new address or school detail must use the referral form immediately to refer the pupil as a CME.

Schools must not remove the pupil from the school roll without the agreement of the CME tracking officer, and this will be after 20 days. The school must demonstrate that they have made reasonable attempts to locate the pupil. In referring the pupil, schools are asked to provide as much information as possible.

The CME Pupil Tracking Officer will make regular enquiries with other agencies and LAs to attempt to locate the pupil and ensure that they have been allocated a new school place and will provide this information to the previous school to enable the Common Transfer Form (CTF) and records to be passed to the new school.

The CME Pupil Tracking Officer will:

- Upload the pupil information onto the **S2S Lost Pupil** database
- Record on protocol VLS that the case is open as a CME
- Liaise with Family Connect and Social Care if appropriate
- Check local data bases within the LA
- Make contact with other LAs if the child is known to have previous associations there
- In the case of children of Service Personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Educational Advisory Service (on 01980 618244) if the child's family is in the Armed Forces
- Make continued enquiries with extended family and neighbours
- Contact social housing providers and private landlords, PCT, Benefits Agency, Police, Admissions and other agencies as required
- Check with UK Visas and Immigration and /or the Border Force
- Add the child's name to LA EAEA list

When the location of the child is established, the CME Pupil Tracking Officer will satisfy themselves that the child is receiving a suitable education. This would normally be through them having an allocated school place.

Parents' responsibilities

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full time education. Some parents may elect to educate their child at home and may withdraw their child from school at any time to do so unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order.

Schools Responsibilities

In accordance with the statutory guidance schools **MUST** enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date then the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts. The school should refer the case to the CME Pupil Tracking Officer once their enquiries have proved fruitless.

Schools must:

- Monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance.
- Notify the LA where a pupil has been absent for 10 consecutive school days.
- Make reasonable enquiries if a pupil's whereabouts are not known.

Schools should keep the admission register accurate and up to date, encouraging parents to inform them of any changes whenever they occur. This can be through a variety of means, including existing communication channels such as regular emails and newsletters.

Schools should also notify the LA of any pupil whose name is to be removed from the school roll using the D1 form via Synergy at a non-standard point under any of the 15 grounds set out in the Pupil Regulations as soon as that ground is met and no later than the time at which the pupils name is removed from the register. This does not apply to standard transition points.

If it is thought that the child is in imminent danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to Family Connect (01952 385385) and the police if appropriate.

A pupils name cannot be removed from the school roll until reasonable enquiries have been made and the school and LA have jointly failed to establish the pupil's whereabouts. The CME Pupil Tracking Officer will confirm with the school when the pupil can be removed from the school roll.

At our school the School office manager monitors day to day attendance and ensure 'first day calling' should there not be a message from parents. The attendance team (listed above) meet regularly to discuss persistent absent pupils and plan actions. The attendance action plan is reviewed regularly. All data for attendance is cross referenced with other vulnerability data to look for trends (Contextual Information Summary (CIS) report. The Attendance report is shared with staff after every data capture so that teachers and teaching assistants are aware of who is on the action plan. We promote attendance every week during our Achievement assembly.

Making reasonable enquiries

In line with the LA duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, schools and the LA must have in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries.

These will include checking with:

- Relatives
- Neighbours
- Landlords
- Other stakeholders who may be involved.

Schools should record all efforts and enquiries as part of their safeguarding responsibilities.

Measures to reduce the risk of CNRE/CME

There are a range of systems, processes and procedures currently used by schools and the LA to reduce the risk of children falling out of 'the system' and going missing from education.

Good practice measures to reduce the likelihood of children falling out of the education system include:

- Schools taking responsibility for the monitoring of the school roll and registers.
- Processes and procedures within the school to regularly update pupils' personal data and be vigilant of families with a history of mobility/multiple addresses.
- Swift referral to the Attendance Support Team (AST) with the referral form completed for those families who have left the school and the destination is unknown.
- Good communication between families, schools and the LA.
- Encouraging parents to inform a school they are moving out of the area.
- Parents providing a new address and school where they intend to register their child.

Guidance for the registration of pupils who are not attending school for 10 days or more.

Registration Codes

Any Pupil absence should be recorded accurately. Pupil absence should be either authorised or unauthorised:

Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

Authorised Absence from School

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are:

		• In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

Appendix 1

Keeping Pupil Registers

School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and associated DfE guidance.

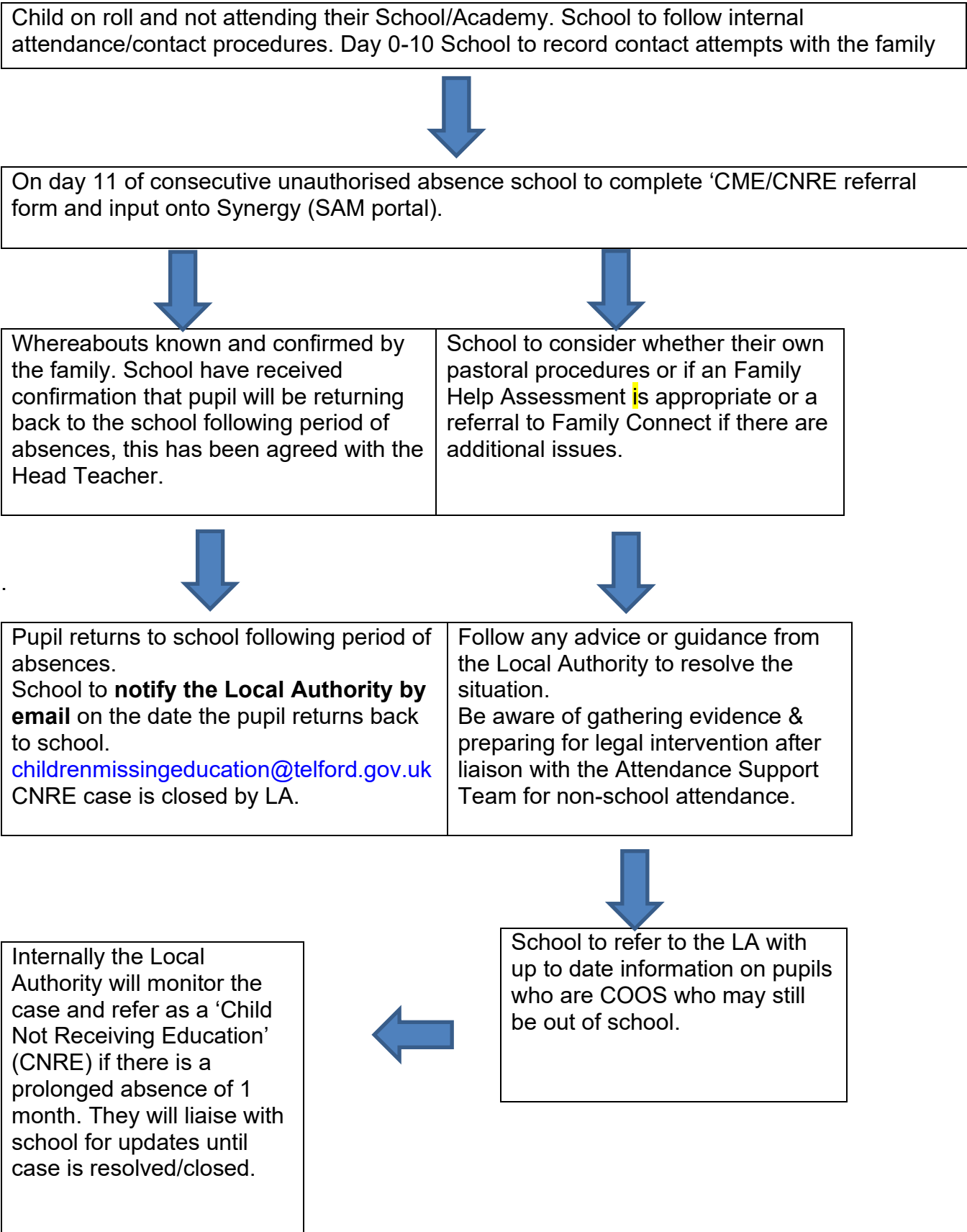
The regulations enable schools to delete compulsory school-age children in the following circumstances:

- a. The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order;*
- b. The School Attendance Order is revoked by the Local Authority*
- c. Completion of compulsory school age;*
- d. Permanent exclusion*
- e. Death of the pupil*
- f. Transfer between schools; and*
- g. Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside of the school system*
- h. Failure to return for an extended family holiday after both the school and the LA have tried to locate the pupil*
- i. A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age*
- j. In custody for more than four months*
- k. 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the Local Authority and school have tried to locate the pupil; and*
- l. Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil.*

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

- a. Left the school*
- b. 20 school-days continuous absence without good reason*
- c. Death of the pupil;*
- d. Permanent exclusion; or*
- e. Child who was admitted to the nursery is not transferring to the reception class.*

School Flow Chart A – Schools Use for Pupils Not Attending 10+ Days.



Appendix 3

School Flow Chart B – ‘Children Not Receiving Education’.

Young Person on roll and not attending their School. School to follow internal attendance/contact procedures and record all contact attempts with the family.



Whereabouts unknown and reasonable efforts have been made to locate the family, including home visits, visits to neighbouring properties and contact made with all persons on the pupil records.
If pupil is believed to be missing or moved out of the area, the school **should not** delay in notifying the Local Authority immediately. Do not wait until the 10th day of absences. Submit the ‘CME/CNRE’ form via Synergy (SAM portal). **Do not** remove pupil from the school roll.



School to maintain the LA with up to date information on pupils who are CME who may still be on roll and missing from education and complete on Synergy (SAM portal) which feeds into the Admissions MIS – school have been notified – NB this system is not to be used for deletions from roll)

If after 20 school days the child has not returned, the school are to contact the CME Pupil Tracking Officer before removing from the school roll, do not remove until following LAs confirmation to do so.



Once confirmed by the LA the child can be removed from roll, school have a statutory duty to inform the LA and to do so must complete D1 form within 5 school days via Synergy to inform the Local Authority of the deletion from the school roll.

