

Merton's Good Practice Guidance for Identifying and Safeguarding Children Missing from Education (CME)



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If you would like more information in your own language or information in larger print please contact the Education Welfare Service,
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LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

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1. Introduction

This Merton Good Practice Guide is designed to support professionals who work with children, young people and families both within the Local Authority (LA) and in schools and other educational establishments, together with, the Metropolitan Police, Children's Social Care, those who provide services for children and young people and Health services in their combined efforts to safeguard children who are missing from education.

In Merton a child of statutory school age is considered to be a Child Missing Education (CME) under the following criteria:

- Not registered at an educational provision;
- Not registered as being Educated other Than at School;
- Has been out of education for more than 20 calendar days;
- Has below 20% attendance.

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote and safeguard the welfare of children and to share information. This principal underpins this policy and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure that children do not "slip through the net" and become missing.

This Guidance addresses the statutory duty placed on LA's in clause 4 of the Education and Inspection Bill 2006; a the revised statutory guidance for LA's in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education and to identify children missing from education in their area (January 2009).

The Guidance is offered with the aim of providing a minimum standard of safety for children who live within the Borough of Merton or attend a Merton School, or for whom the Local Authority is the corporate parent (looked After Children) who are or go missing from school, and give rise to concern that they may be classified as missing whereabouts unknown.

It provides:

- a) A timescale for taking steps to safeguard a child who is missing from school;
- b) A description of the steps which can be taken; and
- c) A framework for consideration of relevant issues at each stage – with a view to helping practitioners to identify situations where a child is vulnerable to harm, or is being harmed, and in need of a specific safeguarding response.

Linked Guidance and Procedures

This Guidance should be read in conjunction with the All London Child Protection Procedures, overarching Multi Agency Protocol for Young Runaways and Missing Children (2010) as appropriate and the Education Other Than at School Policy (EWS), School Admissions Policy and Hard to Place Protocol.

This Guidance is consistent with the Statutory Guidance for LA's in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education. (January 2009) as based on the 'London Good Practice Guidance for Safeguarding Children Missing from School'.

Children Missing Education guidance should be read alongside a range of other safeguarding policies that effect each other:

- Prevention of Radicalisation
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Children Missing, Children at risk of Sexual Exploitation and Children at Risk of Radicalisation can all be identified through not being in school or on roll.

1. CME Chair also leads on Prevent of Radicalisation in schools;
2. Radicalisation referral process includes chair of CME;
3. MASE chair attends CME bi-monthly to review all shared cases and risk levels;
4. Children Missing from Care and protocol will identify information flow to CME.

2. Principles

The principles, which should be adopted by all agencies (including the LA who are corporate parents for LAC), who are responsible for locating children who go missing from school, include that:

- The safety of the child is paramount;
- Parents/carers are the custodians of the welfare and well-being of their children when the children are not in school;
- The primary objective is for local (and other) agencies to work together to locate and return the child to a safe environment;
- Child protection procedures are triggered where there are any concerns that a child may be at risk of harm or suffering harm;
- Agency actions under this guidance will link as appropriate with actions required under related protocols, such as the London Child Protection Procedures;
- Services will be put in place to ensure that when a child is found s/he receives the necessary on going support to enable her/him to live in a stable, safe environment and attend school;
- Careful planning should avoid children missing education. This is especially important when placing children in care.

It is important that all agencies and practitioners working with children recognise their responsibilities regarding CME and the implications for safeguarding children. It is the responsibility of each and every individual to ensure that children are reengaged back into education provision as a matter of priority. The cost of not identifying that a child is CME or notifying the appropriate professionals and responding quickly can put the child in immediate danger. These reports will be from the annual quality assurance process.

The London Child Protection Procedures

Sections 4 and 5.28 of the London Child Protection Procedures provide information which may help staff to recognise and/or manage circumstances in which children that are missing from school may be experiencing harm or be at risk of harm. These include: children subject to fabricated or induced illness or female genital mutilation, abuse by children, domestic violence, missing children and families, sexually exploited children, trafficked children and asylum seeking children. For several of these circumstances there are supplementary, detailed London multi-agency procedures, these, and the London Procedures can be accessed on the website: www.londoncpc.gov.uk

Research shows that children looked after by the LA are over-represented in the cohort of children who go missing from school.

Section 11 of the London Procedures addresses issues relating to families moving across borough boundaries.

3. Why Children May Go Missing From Education

There are complex reasons why Children become missing from education

- Fail to start appropriate provision, and hence never enter the education system;
- Fail to complete a transition between providers, for example by being unable or not trying to find a suitable school place after moving between LA's;
- Do not complete transition between key stages/schools, particularly if parents are unsuccessful with preferred schools;
- Have a family/carer that does not alert the LA of the fact they are resident in borough or does not know how to access education provision;
- Cease to attend due to withdrawal from provision by parents and schools
Take the children off roll (e.g. parents no confidence in school, behaviour and truancy issues, fresh start);
- School transfer more difficult to achieve than parents thought (e.g. school places, term-time agreement, school reluctance to admit, timescale key; Stage 4, curriculum capacity);
- Are on the point of permanent exclusion from school and they leave or are persuaded to seek a fresh start in another school;
- Are permanently excluded from schools out of the borough, particularly independent schools;
- Are on alternative curriculum arrangements which are not monitored effectively;
- Have SEN placements that are not completed due to one or more parties not complying with arrangements or able to meet needs;
- Are looked after within family arrangements, unaccompanied from abroad, placed in Merton by other LA's and not known to the LAC team;
- Are in the youth justice system and returning from secure accommodation;
- Are made homeless due to social or economic issues including domestic violence;
- Members of the Traveller or Gypsy community who move around frequently;

- Families with poor literacy skills or with EAL needs that find accessing information difficult;
- Have health needs or are disabled or where the child is a young carer;
- Are refugees or asylum seekers;
- Are involved in criminal activity;
- Families who live in poverty;
- Dependency on substances; (alcohol and drugs);
- Are placed by other LA's without notification e.g. temporary housing, safety move and witness protection schemes;
- Are let down by system failures between partners where information is not shared effectively to support the child;
- "Dip in and out" of elective home education at the request of parent/carers;
- Have parents who take extended leave/holiday and schools take them off roll or families leave the UK or borough for a period;
- Are bullied in and around schools and difficulties cannot be resolved in school;
- Young runaways who leave their normal residence, to live on the streets or in temporary emergency situations;
- Children that are at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation;
- Children that are trafficked.

4. Roles and Responsibilities in Merton

Without an appropriate LA policy and strategy that is implemented in a systematic and methodical way there is the potential for children to be missing from education for considerable periods of time which puts their welfare at risk and significantly impacts on their ability to enjoy and achieve and consequently make an economic contribution into adulthood. In Merton we believe that all LA officers and employees as well as the community as a whole has a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who may be missing out on their education. (See appendix 2 and 3).

Elected Management and Corporate Management

Monitoring by Corporate and senior management as well as elected members are a key element of Merton's CME strategy and the Local Children's Safeguarding.

Board will be informed during the academic year as part of the monitoring process which allows the Board to develop strategies to support the identification of CME.

CME Panel

Where students meet the criteria to be defined as CME the LA representative who is the allocated caseworker/ lead professional will place the child's name on the Children Missing Education or the Secondary Heads Placement Panel.

The Children Missing Education meets every four weeks to monitor children who are out of school due to not having been admitted to an education provider, non attendance, below 20% exclusion, with an alternative provider, on medical grounds or where the

parents have failed to show their child is receiving a suitable and efficient education whilst being educated other than at school.

The Secondary Heads Placement Panel (Hard to Place) supports the collective admissions function to ensure all children are in school. It meets monthly and is chaired by schools.

Both panels aims to ensure that the authority and partner agencies work together to share information to promote the welfare of children and ensure that a specific named worker takes action to reduce the amount of time a child remains out of education.

The panels comprise of level 3 and 4 managers, Head teachers and other relevant professionals within Education Inclusion, School Admissions, Education Welfare, SENDIS, Vulnerable Children, CAMHS, Exclusions, Alternative Education, The SMART Centre, Virtual School for LAC, schools, YJS, Social Care, Transforming Families and other agencies as appropriate. It will be chaired by the Education Inclusion Manager (Tier 3). The CSE Lead will attend bi-monthly to ensure effective join up with MASE cases/process.

Criteria for referral to CME Panel

- Not registered at an educational provision;
- Not registered as being Educated other Than at School;
- Has been out of education for more than 20 calendar days;
- In on the roll of an education provider and has attendance of 20% or lower.

Children Missing From Education Named Officers –It is the responsibility of the named officers to ensure that;

- To take the lead for the Authority on CME;
- To work with partner agencies to identify, track and ensure children are receiving an education;
- To publicise details of the LA's role in promoting and monitoring children missing from education;
- To liaise with other CME Officers from other Authorities;
- To provide training with other LA colleagues to governors, attendance officers and child protection officers as appropriate;
- To report to the Local Safeguarding Board during the academic year;
- To attend the CME Panels.

Special Education Needs and Integrated Service for Children with Disabilities

- Work to ensure that children with SEN and statements / Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) are found an appropriate placement to meet their needs in a timely manner;
- Monitor placements to ensure the child is attending and receiving an appropriate education;
- Ensure that they don't become missing from education and follow procedures if they do;
- Ensure that the team have a representative who attends the CME Panel.

Children's Social Care – To notify the CME Officer or School Admissions or Education Welfare Service where:

- Social workers have come into contact with families that move into the area where the children have been out of education for some time;
- Visits are made to the home and children of school age are not attending school or are not on the roll of a school;
- Children are being moved into the borough with a CP Plan or LAC and are out of education or will be without education due to the distance being moved;
- Young people themselves report that they are homeless or not in education;
- Social worker closes the case and the child is not in education;
- Ensure that there is a social care representative who attends the CME Panel;
- Lead can work with families where CME issues are of the level to require Social Care intervention to Safeguard a child.

Choices Advisor - The Advisor is based within the Education Welfare Service and will;

- Offer support and guidance to vulnerable families to access appropriate school places;
- Ensure that families understand the admissions procedures and their right to appeal;
- Assist families to complete an application form as well as supporting them through the process during transition from primary to secondary school (year 6 – year 7);
- Follow up where families have failed to make an application for a secondary school;
- Contact families that have not confirmed acceptance of places offered.

Community – (Residents, members of the public, relatives, neighbours) :

- A referral may be made where concerns exist that a child may be out of education by e-mail, telephone or in writing;
- Any referral can be accepted from a named individual or anonymously;

Council Employed or Commissioned Staff –

- Report children that maybe out of education that they become aware of;
- Support families that are becoming disaffected and disengaged with education or are not attending regularly;
- Support children whose learning, behaviour or language needs may make them more likely to be missing from education.

Education Establishments –

All educational establishments and alternative providers need to ensure that they follow this guidance when considering how to ensure children do not go missing from education.

- To adhere to The Education 2006 Pupil Registration Regulations 2006 and the Amendment Regulations 2013 that sets out the legal requirements and the circumstances when a child's name may be removed from the roll of the school admission and attendance register;

- Ensure that children are not illegally removed from roll or asked not to return to school;
- Ensure that the details of all children permanently excluded are passed to the Inclusions Officer for the borough in which the child lives;
- Update their Management Information System (MIS) as soon as the child leaves the school roll;
- Ensure that pupil records are transferred successfully between schools using the S2S, Common Transfer File and Lost Pupil Database. (See Appendix 4);
- Education Navigator MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) - To identify and assess safeguarding risks where children are not on school roll, not registered for home education and non-engagement with services trying to access the child and get the child into school or where attendance is under 66% attendance for 12 weeks or over an academic year to date (ie missed a third of their education)and to reflect this in the BRAG process;
- To feedback to MASH where young people aged 16-17 are not engaged in education or without education with training or NEET and to advise MASH to refer to My Futures team for anyone that appears to be NEET aged 16-19 (or 25 and with a disability).

Education Welfare Service -

- Follow up on referrals from all partners regarding children who may be missing from education or who are failing to attend an educational placement regularly;
- Following up on children in entertainment or employment who may not be licensed and may be being exploited as well as missing out on their education;
- Provide advice to parents/carer about education other than at school and maintain the education other than at school register as well as commissioning checks to ensure the education being provided is satisfactory;
- To follow up on all the children that are recorded on the S2S database as missing;
- To issues a School Attendance Order (SAO) where children are not receiving an appropriate education.

Health (School Nurses, CAMHS GP's, Health Visitors, Hospitals) –

- Report to CME Officer children that maybe out of education that they become aware of;
- Follow up on referrals that do not have a school included in the report;
- Support children who have long term medical needs that need support to engage with education;
- To follow up on referral from Accident and Emergency where the child has no identified school;
- To ensure that health visitors ask about a child's education on visits;
- To provide advice about contacting School Admissions to make an application for a place or Education Welfare if the parent wishes to home educate their child.

Housing -

- To provide School Admissions with a list of those families going into temporary accommodation.

Inclusion Officer -

- Ensure that all exclusion information is passed on to the Melbury College and network;
- Follow up to ensure that they access education by the 6th day of the exclusion or in the case of LAC on the first day of an exclusion;
- To work with parents and children where we become aware of a child that has been permanently excluded that the outgoing school has not provided notification of;
- To ensure joined up casework re CSE / CME Cases.

Merton Link -

- Provide information and advice to parents on the application process for a school place;
- Record details of families requesting application forms for Merton Schools;
- Pass these details to School Admissions;
- Advise School Admissions of contacts made where they suspect that the child maybe missing from education.

MASE – Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Group

- Notify CME officers of any young person who is recorded as missing for more than 10 school days;
- To work with schools to offer advice and support around young runaways.

MASH –

- The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub has the dual role of screening all referrals of school age children to ensure that they are not CME and processing “concerns” raised about Children Missing Education. If a child is referred to the MASH and is not at school the child should be referred to CME panel for safeguarding oversight.

Merton and Sutton Traveller Education Service –

- Identifying Traveller and Gypsy children that may be out of education;
- Assist parents to complete application forms, liaising with School Admissions where required;
- Provide educational support for Traveller and Gypsy children and their families both in traditional accommodation and those who are in fixed abodes;
- To advise CME Panel.

Metropolitan Police Service –

- To stop children not attending school to confirm the reason for not being in school;
- To notify the CME Officers of any children they come across who may not be in education that they have stopped during the school day;
- To take a child to a place of safety where they feel that they may be at risk of harm or to protect their welfare;
- To notify CME Officers/ Admissions when a family is rehoused in Merton for their own safety/under witness protection;
- Conduct truancy patrols with the Education Welfare Service as requested;

- To provide schools officers for secondary schools to support prevention and case work re CME.

Prevent –

- If a child is being radicalised they may be out of school, especially if they are travelling to a war zone. If there are concerns that the child is at risk of radicalisation and may be travelling a MASH / Prevent referral must be made. The Police and MASH will then consider what action is appropriate.

Refugees / Newly Arrived

- Identify young people who are missing from education and advise School Admissions;
- Provide advice and support for parents/carers about the educational system
- Work with newly arrived families to support access to education.

Research and Information Team –

- To be responsible for maintaining the S2S site (lost pupil database) for Merton being able to search and retrieve data;
- Post students details who go missing whilst being educated other than at school to the lost pupil database (S2S);
- Provide advice and training to schools on completing the Common Transfer File (CTF) and how to post this to the S2S secure site;
- Provide the CME officers with a monthly list of those children who are posted as missing on the S2S (lost pupil database).

Safeguarding –

- Wider safeguarding issues such as Female Genital Mutilation, People Trafficking, Forced Marriage may all be identified by a child missing education. If there are concerns MASH referrals should be made in all cases.

School Admissions

- “Allocate admission places for Merton and non Merton residents for all Schools in Merton”;
- Support and advise families to enrol children into schools and work with schools and neighbouring authorities to ensure accurate information to support the child’s entry into school is passed on;
- Adhere to the Pan London Timescales for ensuring that children are placed in an educational establishment;
- Contact families that Admissions become aware of where it is felt that a child may not be receiving an education. Monitor these cases and refer to Education Welfare Service where necessary;
- Where a school has no vacancies families are advised of their right to appeal;
- Refer to the Education Welfare Service to follow up on cases when Admission Officers become aware of children who are not attending any educational provision or stop attending whilst in the transfer process;
- Work with Housing to identify those families who have moved into the borough who are homeless to identify where children are without education provision to provide a proactive service to ensure that they receive support;

- Refer to Education Welfare Service where children have reached statutory school age and don't appear to be receiving an education;
- Work closely with the Choices Advisor to ensure that all children in Merton transferring to secondary school will be receiving an education.

Mainstream schools should inform School Admissions of all starters and leavers.

Virtual School for Looked After Children –

- Work to ensure LAC children don't become missing from education;
- Notify School Admissions when they are made aware that a LAC is residing in the borough and requires a school place;
- Support the child, the carer and work with other agencies to access education;
- To ensure the Alternative Education Officer provides for LAC is of a high quality.

Voluntary Agencies, refuge, faith groups, childminders, playgroups, young carers and other groups that have contact with young people –

- Notify the CME Officers where concerns exist that a child may be out of education;
- Provide support and guidance to families to ensure that they can access education;
- Refer family to Merton LA where necessary for further assistance.

Vulnerable Children Team (Safeguarding issues within education and Child Protection)

- Identify young people that may not be in education or are in danger of disappearing from system;
- Support social workers to identify CME;
- To provide training to designated safeguarding leads in Schools;
- To work with vulnerable families to support access to education.

Youth Justice Service (YJS) –

- Ensure that young people who have committed offences remain or become engaged with education provision;
- Work with the designated EWO based in YJS to ensure that support and guidance is provided;
- Notify CME Officers/CME Panel when young people are found guilty of an offence or where they are being released from Juvenile detention to ensure that educational provision may be identified;
- Where Young offender is a Merton Resident and found not to be in education they will be added to the CME list – Action Kieran O'Sullivan.
- If a case transfers to Merton YOT from another YOT and the young person is out of education a referral must be made to CME Officers and their name added to the CME;
- If already on a Supervision Order a formal transfer of the case will take place between the relevant Youth Justice Services;
- Where young people are bailed to an address the courts will advise the Youth Justice Service where the young person lives and educational engagement will be followed up.

Youth Service –

- Identify young people that may not be in education or are in danger of falling out of the system through the services they provide for young people;
- Notify CME Officers where young person is not in education;
- Offer support and advice to children and parents about the education system and assist them in making applications where necessary.

5. Children Missing Education Notification Process in Merton

There are a network of professionals, services, groups and individuals that can contribute to the identification of this group of children who may be missing from education both in identifying these individuals either proactively in order to prevent the child from missing their education or reactively once the child is missing their education in order to reengage them in education as quickly and appropriately as possible.

All cases of children and young people missing their education or being at risk of doing so should be reported to the Children Missing Education Officers (CME), School Admissions or the Education Welfare Service.

It is your responsibility to safeguard the welfare of the child or young person. You should make the referral in a timely manner and not assume that someone else will do it as it's preferable that a child is referred by more than one person rather than not at all as this puts children at risk.

For members of the public or voluntary agencies contact may be made by telephoning any one of the following contacts;

CME Officers –

Yvonne Wilkins (Education Welfare Service Manager)

Tel: 020-8545-3271. E-mail: yvonne.wilkins@merton.gov.uk

Address: EWS, London Borough of Merton, Civic Centre, 10th Floor, London Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5DX

Paul Stemp (School Admissions Co-Ordinator)

Tel: 0208-545- 3269 . E-mail: paul.stemp@merton.gov.uk

Address: School Admissions, London Borough of Merton, Civic Centre, 10th Floor, London Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 5DX

School Admissions –

Tel: 020-8274-4906. E-mail: admissions@merton.gov.uk

Education Welfare Service -

Tel: 020-8545-4021. E-mail: education.welfare@merton.gov.uk

For partner agencies and practitioner's advice prior to referral may be sought on the above numbers. However referral should be made on the Children Missing From Education Reporting Form (Appendix1) that is available on the intranet at www.merton.gov.uk/educationwelfare-2/cme_reporting_form_appendix1.doc

Upon notification that a child may be missing from education the School Admissions team determines within 2 days of a request if the child is registered with an education provider or has made an application for a place at a Merton school.

If the child is registered to the roll of a Merton School this will be passed to the Education Welfare Officer allocated to the school to follow up on.

Where School Admissions has no knowledge of the educational provider or the parent fails to return the admissions forms they will contact the parent/carer by telephone and/or letter to request they inform the LA what provision they are making.

Where there is no response to a phone call or letter they have requested the admissions team will make a referral to the Education Welfare Service or the Choices Advisor (Year 6 – 7 transfer) (within the EWS) to follow up within a maximum timescale of 20 days. Cases that require a more immediate response will be prioritised accordingly based on the CME Officers advice.

When School Admissions, the Education Welfare Service, are made or become aware of a child missing from education they will ensure that the child's details are placed on the appropriate panel and will follow protocol and casework management procedures to ensure the child does not "drop through the net".

6. Acting to Safeguard a Child who is Missing from School / Educational Establishment

Timescale

Schools and other agencies will always seek to engage parents and carers as partners in ensuring that their children are safe and able to attend school.

In the first 20 days that a child does not attend school, the school and other agencies, will make enquiries and assess the child's circumstances and their vulnerability by following the Process Steps below. In some cases the situation will be resolved between the school and the parent/carer. For other cases the timescale for initiating a multi-agency response will depend on the school's view of the vulnerability of the child.

Concern for a child may be so high that a referral may be made to the Police immediately the child is found to be missing. Alternatively, information may emerge over the course of time, which raises the level of concern about a child's welfare,

and a referral should then be made to the Police and Children's Social Services (the CME Officers or EWS may already be aware of the child at this time).

The length of time that a child remains out of school could, of itself, be an alerting factor of risk of harm to the child. Accordingly if a situation is not resolved within 20 days, then referrals should be made to the Police and Children's Social Services, as appropriate.

Leave of Absence

Where the school agrees a leave of absence that is authorised by the Headteacher, at which point a return date is set. In these cases the time line for enquiries starts from when the child does not attend school on the expected return date, not from the day the extended leave started

Recording Actions

Information known or received, people spoken to, decision and actions – and the reasons for taking them, should be recorded contemporaneously. If the child is subsequently reported missing to the Police, or is found to be a victim of crime, full records will be required.

Process Steps

Day One

The school identifies that a child is not in school.

1. A staff member trained to do so telephones the child's home to seek reasons for the absence and reassurance from a parent/carer (person with parental responsibility for the child) that the child is safe at home. A detailed accurate record of this call or correspondence should be kept.
2. The results of this telephone call could be that:
 - a) There was no answer at the home;
 - b) The person who answered was not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or safe;
 - c) The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is concerned;
 - d) The parent/carer answered the call, the child is not with them or safe and the parent is not concerned.
3. In the case of a), b) and d) the staff member who made the telephone call should consider, with the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection / SMT, the degree of vulnerability of the child; using the guidelines below.
4. In the case of c) the staff member who made the telephone call should advise the parent to:
 - Contact all people and places the child is known to talk to and visit to tell them

that the child is missing and ask if they can help to find the child, by providing information which may shed light on the child's whereabouts or actively searching for the child;

- Contact the Police using 101 to inform them the child is missing and complete the relevant paperwork as they advise.

Assessing a Child's Vulnerability: immediate response

1. Assessing vulnerability requires a combination of professional knowledge and experience of child welfare issues and knowledge of local circumstances. Considering the following questions could assist the process. If in doubt a practitioner should always consult with the designated teacher for Child protection or a member of the Senior Management Team or their line manager.
2. The CASA (Common and Shared Assessment Framework) also known in Merton as the Merton Wellbeing Model) should be completed to assist the professional in gathering information about the young person or child.

a) **If the answer to any of the following questions is yes**, the Police and children' social care should be informed by the parent and or school/LA officer dependent on who is the lead professional dealing with the matter.

		YES	NO
1.	Is there good reason to believe that the child may be the victim of a crime?		
2.	Does the child have a formal child protection plan (used to be defined as being on the Child Protection Register)?		
3.	Is the child looked after by Merton LA or by another LA and have Social Services been notified of this?		
4.	Has the child got a children's social worker?		
5.	Is there planned or current Children's Social Services or Adults Social Services involvement? e.g. s.47 enquiry about to start?		
6.	Is there a person present in or visiting the family with previous convictions for an offence against children (Schedule 1 offender, Children and Young Persons Act 1933) or other person suspected of previously harming a child? Has there been Children's or Adult's Social Services or Children's or Adults Criminal Justice System involvement in the past?		
7.	Is there a history of domestic violence, parental mental health issue, substance misuse or sexual exploitation?		
8.	Is the child at risk of child sexual exploitation? Are they on MASE Panel?		
9.	Are there wider concerns about the child and family with regards to radicalisation?		

b) The answers to further questions could assist a judgement whether or not to inform LA Children’s Social Services and the Police.

		YES	NO
1.	In which age range is the child? – younger children are more at risk (0-11).		
2.	Is this very sudden and unexpected behaviour?		
3.	Have there been any past concerns about the child associating with significantly older young people or adults?		
4.	Was there any significant incident prior to the child’s unexplained absence?		
5.	Are there health reasons to believe that the child is at risk? e.g. Does the child need essential medication or health care? Was the child noted to be depressed/self harming prior to the child’s unexplained absence?		
6.	Does the child have any special educational needs?		
7.	Has the child been a victim of bullying in or out of school?		
8.	Are there religious or cultural reasons to believe that the child is at risk? e.g. Rites of passage or forced marriage planned for the child? Female genital mutilation? Historical information relating to older siblings?		
9.	Has the child gone missing with their family?		
10.	Have there been past concerns about this child and family, which together with the sudden disappearance are worrying? e.g. Is there any known history of drug or alcohol dependency within the family? Is there any known history of domestic violence/self harming? Are there concerns about the parent/carer’s ability to protect the child from harm?		
11.	Could this child be at risk of radicalisation? Could they be travelling abroad?		

		YES	NO
12.	Has there been any change in the child/family's financial circumstances?		
13.	Is there a history of poor attendance? Have the parents been subject to legal proceedings in relation to attendance?		
14.	Is there a history of mobility? Are there immigration issues? Children living in women's refuges Children of homeless families perhaps living in temporary accommodation, house of multiple occupancy or bed and breakfast Young runaways Unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees or children of asylum seeking families Children with a Gypsy/Traveller background Children from transient families		
15.	Children with long term medical or emotional problems		
16.	Young carers		
17.	Teenage mothers		
18.	Children who are permanently excluded from school		
<p>"What to do if you're worried a Child is Being Abused" (DfES, 2003 and Pan London 2010) contains guidance on what actions an individual should take to safeguard a child about whom there are concerns.</p>			

The Common Assessment Shared Framework (CASA/ Merton Wellbeing Model) should be completed. If the school can obtain no information about the child or family on Day One or information obtained leads you to decide that there is no reason to believe that the child is at immediate risk of harm (use risk factors above) then the school should follow the EWS guidance. (See Appendix 5). This will enable you to make a judgement about whether a child is at level3 of the Merton Wellbeing Model.

Police Contact and Response

Step one:

- Contact the local police station (24 hour response); 101 in non emergency or 999 only if immediate danger
- Explain that you are reporting a child missing. **Please note that all information shared with the Police will be documented;*
- Any suspicion/evidence of crime must be clearly stated;
- The circumstances and all available information regarding the child and family will be required; - including a risk assessment
- Under the Education Act 2002 section 175 and the January 2009 Statutory Guidance for LA's in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education it is our duty to promote the welfare and safeguard our children therefore the need to share relevant information about the child and family/carer is essential.

Step two:

- The missing person report will be risk assessed and the local police response team will carry out immediate actions;
- The investigation will be progressed by the police response team, in conjunction with either the local Missing Persons Unit and/or the CID.

Step three:

- The missing person report will generate a notification to the relevant police - Police MASH team
- The Police MASH work with, and refer information to, Social Services;
- Social Services, who must be contacted ASAP in these circumstances, will also liaise the Police MASH/ Missing persons unit/ CAIT as necessary in order to identify, and act upon, any suspicion of child abuse or child related crime.

Reasonable Enquiry

1. The process of 'reasonable enquiry starts with assessing the vulnerability of the child using the criteria outlined above, and includes school staff checking with all members of staff who the child/young person may have had contact with, and with the pupil's friends and their parents, siblings and known relatives at this school and others. School staff should also make telephone calls to any numbers held on record or identified, sending a letter to the last known address and consult with their designated safeguarding lead/SMT.

2. If the above is unsuccessful, the school should then contact the LA. The process of reasonable enquiry will then be conducted, in most cases by the Education Welfare Service and should include, assessing a missing child's vulnerability (including revisiting the question on the child's vulnerability). The LA should make enquiries by visiting the child's home and asking for information from the family's neighbours and their local community – as appropriate. The Education Welfare Service should also check databases within the LA, use agreed protocols to check local databases, e.g. Housing, Health and the Police; check with agencies known to be involved with the family, with the LA the child moved from originally, and with any LA to which the child may have moved. (See appendix 5).
3. When making enquiries to another LA in England, staff should telephone first and make contact with the correct person and then ensure that personal information is shared securely (secure messaging is available using s2s).

Days Two to Twenty

1. If the judgement on Day One is that there is no reason to believe that the child is at risk of harm, and the school delays further action, the process of reasonable enquiry should be repeated and enhanced, including reviewing the responses to the questions of assessing vulnerability, for up to 20 days. This should be undertaken jointly between the school and the Education Welfare Service and/or the LA designated person.
2. If the school has enough information to judge that the child is not at risk of harm, however the child has not attended for 10 days and the absence is unauthorised, the Education Welfare service and/or LA designated person should be informed.
3. It is a statutory responsibility of the school where the pupil attends or LA if the child is educated other than at school to complete a Common Transfer File (CTF) within a maximum of 15 days where the child is missing from education and details should be uploaded to the DfE s2s site (lost pupil database) (See Appendix 4).

Child Missing from School for More than 20 Days

1. If a child continues to be missing from school for 20 days and the LA has exhausted enquiries and has been unable to locate the pupil and her/his family, under current Regulations, it is permissible for the child's name to be removed from the school roll once the school has been advised by their EWO that they may do so.
2. However, if concerns remain in relation to the safety of the child, the Education Welfare Service and/or the LA designated person should continue to pursue reasonable enquiries and missing person activity in accordance with local procedures.

3. If the Education Welfare Service or any other agency becomes aware the child has moved to another school the service should ensure all relevant agencies are informed so that arrangements can be made to forward records from the previous school.

7. Information Sharing Procedures

- This should be read in conjunction with Merton's Information Sharing Policy and procedure;
- When sharing information between schools and LA you should use the London Grid for Learning (LGfL) document exchange facility to ensure that information remain secure and confidential;
- All schools should have an account on this system to enable information to be securely transferred;
- When sharing information between LA's the document should be password protected and contact made with the named CME Officer for the Authority;
- Always ensure that you consider is the person entitled to this information and is it in the best interest to share this information for the benefit or safety of the child;
- Ensure that a detailed record is kept of who you spoke to or emailed information to and that this is retained within your team;
- Only essential named people within the organisation have access to the Children Missing Education Panel database and access this securely. Access can only be granted to individuals through the CME panel agreeing this;
- Cases may be added to panel by contacting either CME officer or the Administrator of the Panel where the individual does not have access to the database.

8. Quality Assurance Processes

As part of Merton's drive to improve the CME processes, to ensure that all children that go missing from education are followed up on in a timely manner and that we follow our own policy, we will carry out an annual quality assurance process starting from July 2011 in December of each year.

The overarching aim of the assurance process will be to identify if all children potentially missing from education have been identified and logged on the LA databases CME or s2s and progressed in a timely manner.

The annual Q/A Audit will create an action plan for the CME panel to be reported to CSF Management and Safeguarding Board.



Each team that comes into contact or identifies CME will have a role to play. School

Admissions will audit under the following criteria:

- Check that forms have been provided by the Contact Centre or Main reception in the Civic Centre where a parent requests a School Admissions form;
- Match the forms that have been received to applications received within 20 days;
- Where application forms have not been returned or the child reaches statutory school age ensure that a follow up was completed to find out whether the child is in education or not;
- Where the parent has been advised that there is not a space in their preferred school and has been asked for additional preferences, has a follow up been completed within 20 days;
- Where no application has been received or where parents have no indicated an additional preference was the case passed to the EWS in a timely manner.

Education Welfare Service will audit under the following criteria:

- Did the EWO's follow up within 20 days of receiving the information from R and I regarding children shown on the s2s as missing;
- Did the EWS send back the completed information sheet within the given month;
- Did the EWO's identify all cases where students have been out of school for more than 20 days;
- Did the EWO put the child's name on the CME/OS Panel within 20 days;
- Did the EWS follow up on referrals received from out of borough CME officers/EWS, SENDIS, other agencies or School Admissions in a timely manner.

Research and Information will audit under the following criteria:

- Did the officer produce monthly lists of those recorded as lost pupils on s2s and forward these to the EWS Manager;
- When the lists were completed did the officer follow up in a timely manner to direct files to the appropriate school, LA or other educational establishment;
- How many schools have used the s2s database and is this consistent with the number of leavers.

Special Educational Needs and Integrated Service will audit under the following criteria:

- Have SENDIS identified all children with a statement who have been out of education more than 20 days;
- When a statemented child moves from one borough to another is the information on these children being forwarded on in a timely manner;

- Did the Casework Officer, Lead Practitioner or CME representative add the case to the database once they had been out of education for 20 days or more once Notified.

Virtual School for LAC will audit under the following criteria:

- Number of young people not in educational provision;
- Did the caseworker add the young person details to the CME/OS Panel.

Youth Justice Service will audit under the following criteria:

- Have the service identified the young people who are not in education;
- Where the Youth Justice Service have arranged an educational placement have School Admissions department been notified;
- Did the caseworker add the young persons details to the CME/OS Panel.

All Children Social Care teams [MASH/First Response Team; Safeguarding & Care Planning Teams; Vulnerable Children Team; LAC Permanency Team; Children with Disabilities Team and 14+ Team]

- To ensure that the child's plan includes an educational element;
- To run a list from CareFirst on children missing from education and to sample cases to ensure that referrals were made to CME Officer /EWS in a timely manner;
- To sample cases to check that social workers told CME Officers or EWO's when they step down or close a case if the child is not in education.

Other services involved in CME will be included in the second and subsequent audits and their auditing criteria will be agreed in advance, this includes:

As part of the auditing process of the CME database the effectiveness of the panel will be reviewed looking at:

- Cases added to the database meet the criteria;
- All cases that meet the criteria have been added to the database;
- Panel members attendance at meetings or where they have provided updates if they are unable to attend;
- Have cases progressed in a timely manner to enable children to be returned to education.

Children Missing From Education Reporting Form

This can be downloaded from: www.merton.gov.uk/children_missing_from_education-2.htm and sent to education.welfare@merton.gov.uk, sent by the internal courier or posted to London Borough of Merton, EWS 10th Floor Civic Centre, Morden, Surrey SM4 5DX.

EDUCATION IS THE HUMAN RIGHT OF EVERY CHILD AND YOUNG PERSON

Do you know a child or young person aged 5-16 who isn't receiving an education?

To report a child or young person who is missing out on their education please telephone the Education Welfare Service on 020-8545-4021, e-mail to education.welfare@merton.gov.uk

.....

Details of person reporting

Your name:

Your contact details (telephone & email):

.....

Details of young person believed not to be receiving an education:

Child's names (including any aliases):

.....

Child's D.O.B. or approximate age:

Child's address:

Child's school:

Child's gender and ethnicity:

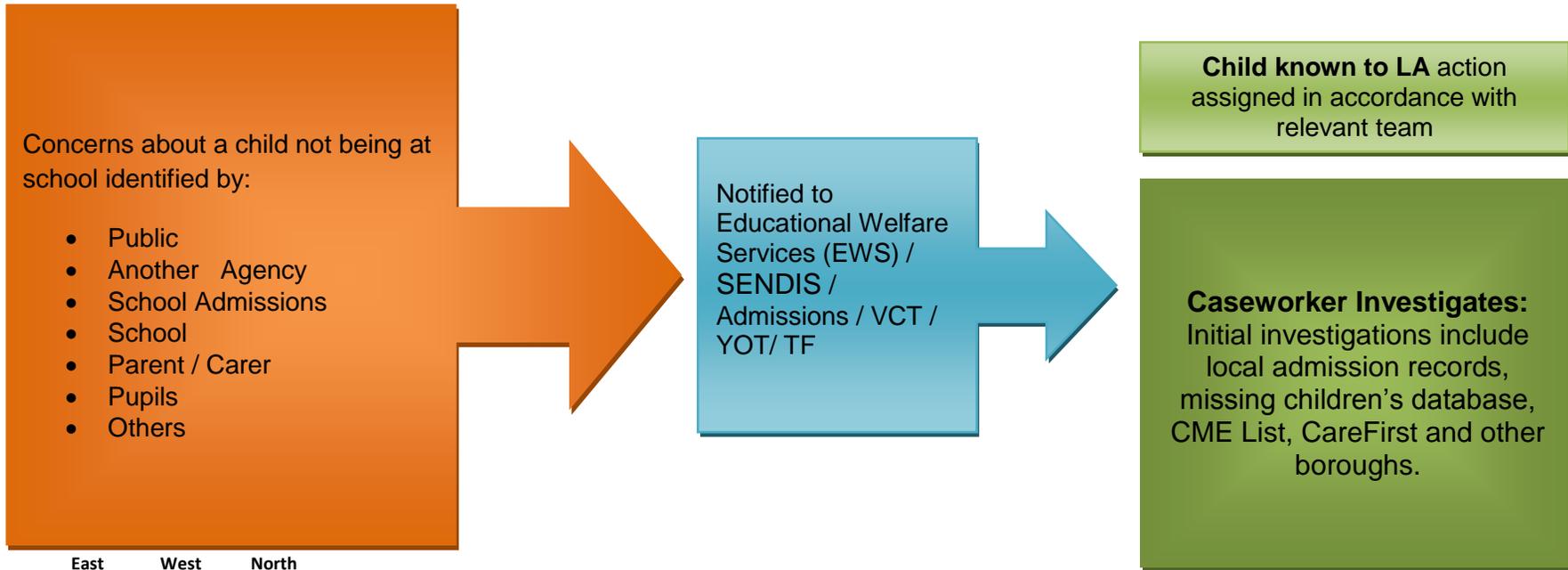
Details of your concerns:

.....

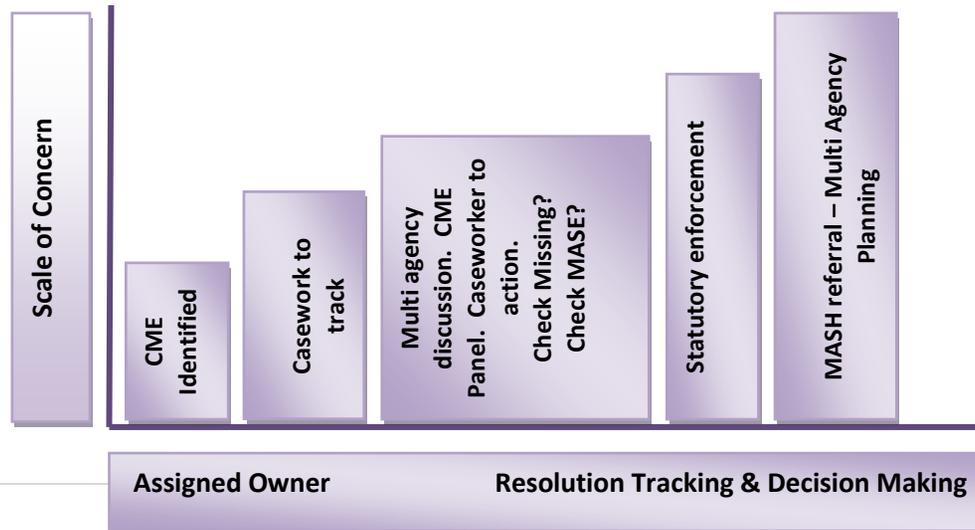
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Children out of school - A high level view of the LA's approach



East West North



Transfer of information using Common Transfer File

1. The Common Transfer File (CTF) is the mechanism whereby schools transfer “common transfer information” as specified in the Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005 Statutory Instrument (S.I.) No.1437 (hereafter referred to as Pupil Information Regulations) to a subsequent school when a pupil leaves together with associated Explanatory Memorandum 2005 S.I. No. 1437 and subsequent amendments The Education (Pupil Information) (England) (Amendment) 2008 S.I. No. 1747 and associated Explanatory Memorandum 2008 S.I. No. 1747.

In particular, regulation 10(3) provides that: “The head teacher of the pupil's old school shall send the information (the common transfer information and educational records) within fifteen school days of the pupil's ceasing to be registered at the school” (see links to Statutory Instruments below).

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/uksi_20051437_en.pdf

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/em2005/uksiem_20051437_en.pdf

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/pdf/uksi_20081747_en.pdf

http://www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2008/em/uksiem_20081747_en.pdf

DfE Guidance

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270497/ctf_13_guide_v_1_0.pdf

R&I Guidance for Merton Schools

<https://lacms.lgfl.net/merton/performance/datatmanagement/SitePages/Home.aspx>

- a) For those pupils where the destination is unknown, the child has gone ‘missing’ or is ‘lost’, moving abroad or into the independent sector, the school has a statutory obligation to transfer information in the form of a Common Transfer File (CTF). The submission of these files must also be completed within the 15 days, allowing Merton to take appropriate child protection action if the pupil’s disappearance from school leaves them vulnerable or at risk.
- b) The DfE has developed a secure internet site Secure Access with a porta (s2s) for the electronic transfer of information Common Transfer Files (CTFs) from school to school when a child moves school, <https://sa.education.gov.uk> Merton produces comprehensive guidance of the Common Transfer and s2s systems, updated regularly, which is made available to all schools. Training is scheduled for all schools at peak transfer times in the school calendar year and telephone

support is available throughout the year for school administrative staff.

- c) There are occasions when it is not considered appropriate to pass on details of a pupil's history to a new school. Each case would need to be judged on its *merits in consultation with relevant parties*. *Circumstances when it is not considered appropriate to pass on details via a CTF might include: a family escaping a violent partner; or the family is in a witness protection programme.*

Lost Pupil Database (LPD)

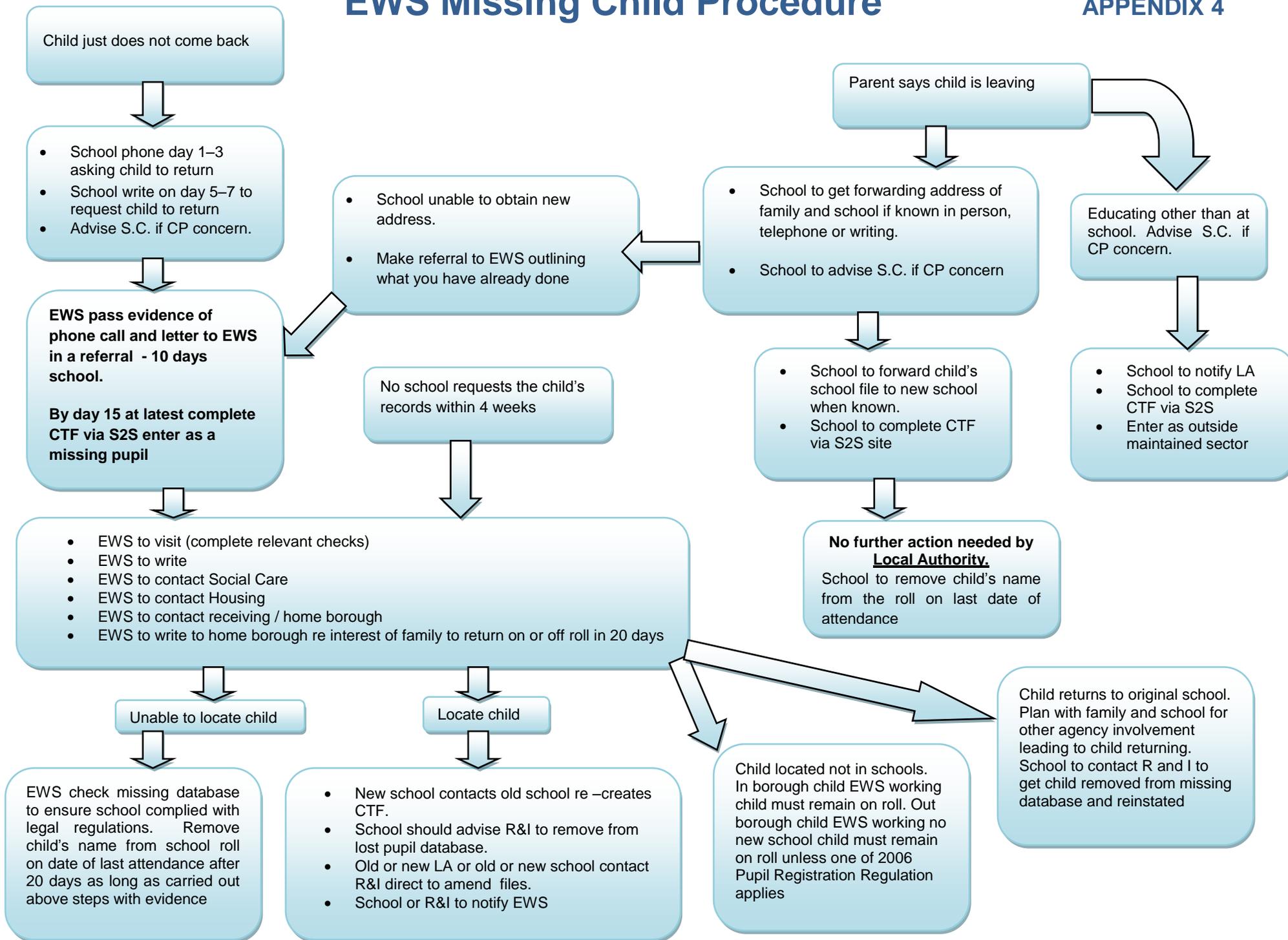
- The LPD is not a separate database, it is a searchable area of the s2s website containing CTFs of pupils where the destination (or next) school of the pupil is not known to the school the pupil is leaving;
 - where a school knows that a pupil is leaving but cannot identify the school to which the pupil is transferring, the school creates a CTF with just that pupil in it and identifies the destination school as unknown;
 - the CTF file is then posted to the s2s website;
 - the school which has just enrolled a new pupil but cannot identify the previous school, requests the maintaining LA to conduct a search to see if they can locate a CTF for the pupil;
 - the LA searches the s2s website using the available pupil related data provided by the school and, if a match is found, downloads the CTF and forwards it to the school (some editing may be required to ensure that the file can be imported by the new school).
2. A similar process is used when a pupil is leaving a school and is known to be transferring to a non-maintained school or to a school outside England and Wales.
3. The 'Lost Pupil' Contact for s2s for Merton is Lynne Doyle – 020 8545 3378 .
Advice is available at R&I Guidance for Merton Schools

<https://lacms.lgfl.net/merton/performance/datatmanagement/SitePages/Home.aspx>

4. Monthly uploads and download reports, of pupils without a destination, are produced and circulated to the Educational Welfare Service. For known missing pupils for whom the CTF procedure has not been completed, schools will be contacted and statutory regulations reinforced.

EWS Missing Child Procedure

APPENDIX 4



**Any transfer at any time between educational establishments
aged 3 (Nursery) - 16 years (end of year 11)
using CTF via S2S Database**

School complete CTF via s2s.

- 1 If you have the name of the new school look up the DfE number and send CTF to this establishment.
- 2 Type in xxxxxxx if pupil is missing or you don't have the name of a school they are attending and send this CTF.
- 3 Type in mmmmmm if outside maintained sector, educated other than at school, moved abroad or in a school in Scotland and Northern Ireland and send this to CTF.

Common and Shared Assessment (CASA) Referral Form

www.merton.gov.uk/casa-forms

Merton Education based Criteria as evidence of potential Safeguarding Risk

These criteria may form the basis for

- The threshold of a MASH discussion re risk;
- Section 47 decision;
- What could be tracked in CP / CIN as targets;
- Deciding if step down is appropriate;
- They do not replace ALL London Safeguarding Procedures.

Key Factors

1. Child Missing Education

Not on school roll, not registered for home education and non-engagement with services trying to access the child and get the child into school. This might follow attendance order. Out of school, no action to get into school – **Red**. Out of school **Amber**.

2. School Attendance

Under 66% attendance for 12 weeks or over an academic year to date (ie missed a third of their education) not improving – the lower the attendance the higher their concern – the longer the non attendance the higher the concern. The higher the unauthorised the higher the concern.

Action taken by EWS (warning letters Penalty Notice, no payment, court action) – no progress. No medical evidence provided for child with Chronic non attendance i.e. below 90% for 3 years. The younger the child the more concerning this is.

Red below 50%. **Amber** 50 – 85% and/or chronic.

3. Raising Participation Age

Young people aged 16-17 must be in education, training or employment with

training. They cannot be in full time work without training or NEET. Legal action cannot be taken to enforce engagement with education. If you are aware that the young person is not engaging in education it should be ranked as amber. MASH should refer to My Futures team for anyone that appears to be NEET aged 16-19 (or 25 and with a disability)

Education BRAG: **Amber**

Wider School / Contextual evidence which may increase / decrease concern:

Environmental

- Engagement of parent;
- Disengaged / non engaging parents; Parents with Mental Health / Substance Misuse / DV / engaged in treatment;
- Emotional warmth;
- Strong attachments;
- Siblings / cousins – history of sibling non engagement – poor attendance and exclusion; sibling with disability – young carer. Concerns from another school with sibling.
- Positive sibling engagement;
- Neglectful home environment – positive home environment.
- Unstable housing / unsuitable housing – stable suitable;
- 3 or more school moves – stable schooling;
- Large families with high number under 5;
- At point of transition primary / secondary etc;
- Multiple bereavements / loss / separation.

Child

- Behaviour in the community – history of offending / anti social behaviour. Positive action in the community – volunteering etc;
- Behaviour in school – Multiple School exclusions multiple internal exclusions - a history of challenging behaviour in school – the younger the more significant the exclusion history. A risk of permanent or permanently excluded - no exclusions, level of praise / positive rewards;
- Special Education Needs (not being well met or managed);
- Substance misuse / addiction;
- Educational progress – not meeting expected developmental goals/ significant under achievement;
- Health concerns not being well met or managed – healthy;
- Poor attachment – strong attachment;
- How is the child presenting in school;
- Engagement with out of school / extra curricular activities;
- Bullied / bullying role models;
- Mental Health concerns – strong well being;
- Level of agency involvement within education/schools:
- School commissioned: TAMHS, PSA, Elsa etc;

- Other agencies -LA: VBS, VCT, EW, EPS, Children's Centre, LBL, parent Partnership, SENDIS, Admissions;

Parent

- Concern shown over child's education;
- Behaviour management skills / capacity of parent.

Previous Evidence

Has there been a TAC meeting?

Has there been a CASA?

Has the child been reviewed on a network meeting / Youth Support Panel / CME Panel?