

Children Missing Education (CME)

Guidance for Schools and those working with children and families September 2016

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Introduction

Every year children move between Portsmouth schools or leave the area for a school in another authority. Additionally children arrive in the city needing to access education and may require support and intervention to do so. There is a legal requirement placed on the Local Authority to monitor this movement and in Portsmouth this responsibility is undertaken jointly by Schools, Information Services, the School Attendance Team (SAT) and a range of partners.

The purpose of this guidance is to outline both the legislative requirements and operational details for managing this responsibility, so that all parties understand their responsibilities and undertake them consistently and promptly. This will help to minimise disruption to pupil learning and achievement that mobility can cause, and ensure that children's welfare is safeguarded.

This guidance does not replace any part of the Child Protection or Safeguarding procedures that already exist within the Local Authority (LA) and they should be followed as appropriate.

1 Statutory responsibilities and definition of Children Missing Education (CME)

1.1 Legislation

The DfE statutory guidance ensures that the LA follows the appropriate guidance, unless there is a good reason not to in a particular case.

The guidance relates to the following legislation:

Education Act 1996 (sections 7, 8, 14,19 , 436A & 437(1))

Education (pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 as amended

Education Act 2002 (sections 21 & 175)

Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 4 & 38)

Children Act 1989 (sections 17 & 47)

Children Act 2004 (sections 10,11,12,17 & 175)

The above legislation imposes a duty upon the LA to identify and investigate children missing education. The School Attendance Team (SAT) performs clear and specific duties with regards our responsibilities to CME.

Schools:

Schools, including Academies and Free Schools have safeguarding duties and play a vital role in protecting children from continued CME status by offering places on roll and securing good attendance. They can also act as first alert to the disappearance of pupils from their attendance registers to enable timely investigation and swift action.

School have a duty to:

- Monitor pupils attendance on a daily basis through their registers
- Notify the LA when a pupil is regularly absent from school or has missed 10 consecutive days or more without permission
- Notify the LA if a pupil is deleted from the admissions register for any reason under section 8 of the Pupil Regulations 2006.
 - Schools must record details of pupil's residence, name of person with whom they reside, the date from which they will reside there and the name of the destination school (where they can reasonably obtain this information)
 - Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school.

Key Partners:

Health professionals, including Hospital Accident and Emergency staff, Health Visitors, GPs, School Nurses, Child Protection Designated Nurse, Paediatricians, CAMHS, Midwives and others who may have information about children within families who are not receiving education are an essential source of information for the purpose of notification.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) may identify children at risk of becoming CME and can provide information to the SAT. The SAT does liaise on a regular basis with the MASH and the representatives from Social Care, Police, Housing and Health.

The Admissions Team regularly liaise with SAT to ensure children do not become lost and clear working protocols ensure close and joint working between the teams. The Admissions Team also advise the SAT when schools / academies have offered a school place but the place has not been accepted by the parent.

1.2 Definition of Children Missing Education

For the purposes of this document we define Children Missing Education as:

All children of compulsory school age who are:

- **not on a school roll**
- **on the roll of a school but where they have been absent for 10 consecutive days following an agreed leave of absence and no contact has been received from parents.**

CME also includes those children who are missing (**family whereabouts is unknown**) but are usually registered on a school roll or alternative provision.

This may include:

A child who is not at their last known address and either:

- **has not taken up an allocated school place as expected**
- **has had 20 or more days of consecutive absence from school without permission/explanation**
- **has left school suddenly and destination is unknown**

Children missing education can therefore be categorised into 2 groups, those who are not receiving an education and those whose family whereabouts has become unknown.

1.3 Children at risk of becoming CME

At different points in any child's life they can become more vulnerable to becoming CME. There are some recognised factors that increase risk and particular attention must be paid to these. The list of vulnerable groups is neither exclusive nor exhaustive but it offers a wide variety of indicators as to why a child may be missing education.

These can be children from families:

- Fleeing domestic violence
- Homeless or living in B & B
- Involved in anti-social behaviour
- Immigrants
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- High mobility, eg in the Armed Forces, Gypsy, Roma, Travellers and international students

Or children who are:

- Under the supervision of the justice system
- Affected by substance misuse
- Victims of bullying or discrimination on the grounds of race, faith, gender, disability or sexuality
- At risk of sexual exploitation, including trafficked children
- At risk of honour based violence including forced or arranged marriage
- At risk of female genital mutilation
- At risk of being drawn into extremism or radicalisation
- Privately fostered
- Young carers
- Teenage parents
- Permanently excluded
- Have long term medical/health problems
- Have parents with mental health problems
- Have parents with learning difficulties
- On reduced timetables

To successfully safeguard children who may fall into one of these vulnerable groups a collaborative approach is vital. Information sharing is essential to enable swift notification of children at risk of becoming CME and clear robust procedures in place to affect immediate remedial action.

1.4 Role of the Children Missing Education Officer

There is a designated officer with discrete responsibility for CME and the Team Leader of SAT holds the management responsibilities for this area.

The CME Officer helps to co-ordinate all aspects of children missing education by:

- Tracking children entering and leaving Portsmouth who may not have a verified school destination.
- Tracking children moving within Portsmouth who may not have a verified school destination.
- Tracking children who come off a schools admission register until they have been put on the admissions register of another school.
- Monitoring and gathering information in respect of CME.
- Liaising closely with a range of departments and key partners.
- Assisting the Admissions Team in tracking the validity of in-year admissions applications.
- Investigating referrals of children who have failed to return to school after 10 consecutive days (following a granted leave of absence) or 20 consecutive days (no permission given by school) of unauthorised absence where there has been no contact from parents and schools have followed all normal procedures to contact parents without success.

Please note the CME officer will only investigate children of school age who are not on the roll of a school or on the roll of a school and they have been absent for 10 consecutive days following a granted leave of absence or 20 or more days of consecutive absence from school without permission and there whereabouts has become unknown.

Pupils who are on the admissions register are not necessarily classed as CME when absent but schools must address poor attendance and if appropriate refer them to the LA as an irregular attender.

1.5 Information systems

The education database (Capita ONE) is the cornerstone for the tracking of all children on a school roll and helps to identify those who may go missing.

The CME Officer produces reports of pupils who have been removed from roll form ONE on a regular basis. This information is then checked for any anomalies or inaccuracies with schools, Admissions, Housing, and Education Information Services.

Using the secure DfE School to School (s2s) website, the CME Officer and Education Information Services support the tracking of pupils.

Schools must submit Common Transfer Files (CTFs) to the s2s website when a pupil is removed from their roll.

If the pupil's destination is unknown, they are leaving the maintained system, deregistered for elective home education or emigrating, a CTF is submitted to the Lost Pupil database. See Appendices 1 and 2.

2. CME notification

2.1 Who can make a referral?

Anyone concerned that a child is missing education can make a CME referral. This must be done electronically by schools via LA website. All other enquiries on to refer can be made by emailing (childrenmissingeducation@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

Schools are usually the first to be aware that a pupil has gone missing when they are on their roll. Schools should always make reasonable enquires to ascertain the whereabouts of the pupil. This may include contacting the parents or other family members by phone, writing to the last known address or making a home visit.

Should other Children's Services or Key Partner staff become aware of the likelihood of a child leaving a school or whereabouts becoming unknown, they should inform the school and Children Missing Education Officer.

2.2 CME school process

For the purpose of this guidance the process that must be followed by schools for children whose whereabouts has become unknown or who are believed to have left education falls into one of two categories:

- Pupil destination verified
- Pupil destination not verified (investigation ongoing)

2.3 Pupil destination verified

Schools must ensure that they have made reasonable enquiries to ascertain the verified destination and return to the local authority. They must:

- Complete a Pupil Migration LA Return form found at Appendix 3 (all details to be completed as set out by the Pupil Regulations 2016 (including the reason why pupil was removed), at the point of removing child from roll.
- Action the CTF transfer as outlined in Appendix 1.
- Inform the local social services department (MASH) immediately by phone - 0845 671 0271 where a child is subject to a Child Protection Plan that the child has moved or is believed to have moved. This should then be followed up in writing with the MASH (LAraduty@portsmouthcc.gov.uk) and SAT (schoolattendanceteam@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

2.4 Pupil Destination not verified

Schools must ensure that they have made reasonable enquiries in conjunction with the local authority to ascertain pupil's whereabouts' and return to the local authority. They must:

- Contact the parents by phone. If no response to the primary number, all other listed contact numbers must be used. If still no response, a letter must be sent to the last known address requesting contact and if possible a home visit should be made. It may transpire following this that the child has not moved and will be returning to school.
- If there is no response after 10 consecutive days, and there are no identified safeguarding concerns, then the matter should be referred directly to the School Attendance Team (childrenmissingeducation@portsmouthcc.gov.uk) using the online referral.
- If a school has safeguarding concerns, or a pupil is subject to a Child Protection Plan and they are 'missing', they should contact Social Care (MASH)/School Attendance Team immediately for advice prior to the 10 days outlined above.

The CME Officer will conduct an investigation into the whereabouts of the pupil and whilst this investigation is ongoing the child must remain on the school roll.

The CME Officer may:

- Make a home visit to the last known address providing that the school has made all reasonable efforts, as outlined above.
- Contact other schools where siblings are identified as being on roll.
- Liaise with other key partners who may have information regarding the family e.g. Social Care, Health, Housing and Police.
- Liaise with other local authorities where appropriate.
- Liaise with partners in sensitive cases. For example where there are domestic abuse issues or children and their parents are living at the Women's Refuge.

It is essential that once a CME referral has been made schools should keep in regular contact with the CME officer. The CME investigation can be very time consuming and any information obtained by schools post referrals should be disclosed to the CME Officer immediately. This may conclude any investigation quicker and give schools swifter outcomes.

Schools will be informed in writing by the CME Officer of the investigation outcome and at what point the pupil may be deleted from the admissions register.

2.5 Removal from school roll

Any pupil deletion from the admissions and attendance registers must comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

This means:

- Where a child has been continuously absent from school without authorisation for a period of 20 days their name may not be deleted from the admissions register until both the school AND the CME officer have failed to locate them after making reasonable joint enquiries.
- Where a child has been continuously absent from school without authorisation for a period of 10 days following a leave of absence their name cannot be deleted from the admissions register until both the school AND the CME officer have failed to locate after making reasonable joint enquiries
- Where a school has been notified in writing by a parent that a child is receiving elective home education, they should not be deleted from the admissions register until a copy of the deregistration letter has been received by the Elective Home Education team (electivehomeeducation@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).

A pupil can only be deleted from the admissions register under one the prescribed grounds contained within section 8(1) of the Pupil Regulations 2006. If a pupil does not meet the criteria of these prescribed grounds then they will remain on the school admissions register.

All schools now have a legal duty to inform the local authority when a pupil is removed from roll:

Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016;

s.5(6) Where the name of a pupil is to be deleted from the admissions register, the proprietor must make a return to the local authority for that pupil as soon as the ground for deletion under regulation 8 is met in relation to that pupil and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register.

From September 2016 all schools must complete the pupil migration LA return form at the point of any pupil deletion and return it immediately to LA at childrenmissingeducation@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.

Children Missing from Education

APPENDICES

1. s2s and SIMS Taking Children off Roll
2. s2s Migrating pupil flowchart
3. Pupil migration LA return

s2s AND SIMS

Children Leaving

Children's Services staff have been using the EMS PULSE database for a variety of data collection exercises including Turbulence, Pupil Counts and to support the SEN Audit.

Of particular importance is the management of leavers and new arrivals.

Please ensure you are following the appropriate guidance when pupils leave your school.

1. If a child is no longer attending, or you have been advised in writing the child will be elective home educated, please contact the School Attendance Team (schoolattendanceteam@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).
2. Once a child has left, please ensure that you have put their reason for leaving in their SIMS record.
3. Ensure pupil migration LA return form is sent to the local authority when pupil is deleted (childrenmissingeducation@portsmouthcc.gov.uk).
4. Please remember that the school which the child is leaving has a statutory responsibility to transfer their details electronically, using the standard CTF function in SIMS, to their next school **within 15 school days**.
5. If you are certain that a child has definitely left your school but you are not aware of their destination school, please submit a CTF record for that individual pupil on the DFE S2S (Schools to Schools) website with a file destination named XXXXXXXX. If you know that the child has moved to Scotland or an Independent school please use MMMMMMMM as the destination for the filename. For children leaving for service schools' overseas, see the note below.
6. If a child has left (especially when they have moved to another Portsmouth school), please co-ordinate the child's start/end dates, otherwise children will have history files showing them at more than one school at any time.

Data Transfers for Service Children

Please be aware that if you are receiving new children from Service Children's Education schools or children are leaving because a parent has been posted overseas, you need to use the DfE School to School (s2s) website to transfer their data to/from their next school.

Service Children's Education (SCE) are proactive users of s2s and are keen to ensure that they receive a pupil's information as soon as possible and s2s is the method for transferring their data.

Sending a child's data via s2s

s2s treats SCE as a Local Authority. It has 702 as its LA number. You can search for this LA number on Edubase's establishment finder (found on <http://www.edubase.gov.uk>) to identify the Service's school that a child will be attending, so that you can generate the destination school number for a child's CTF.

If you are not sure where a child is moving to, and the child is unable to tell you where their parent is being posted to, you can create the destination school for children using 702LLLL. The manager of SCE's file transfers will forward the child's CTF to the appropriate Service school for you.

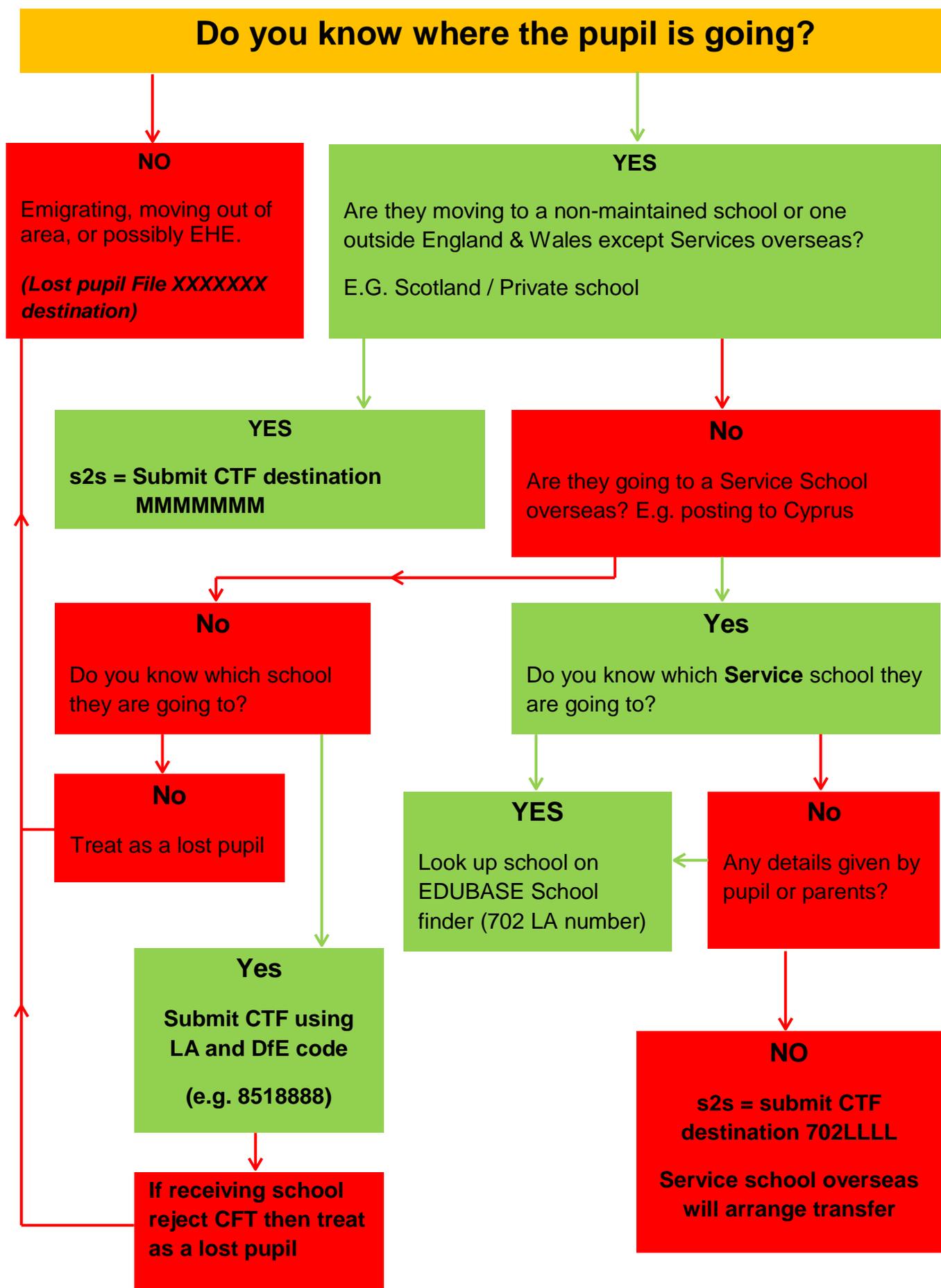
Receiving a child's data via s2Ss

If a child has started at your school and you have not received a CTF via the normal method please contact the Information Services Team.

PLEASE NOTE:

If you do not know the specific school a child has gone to, please do not send the file to the Local Authority number (LLLL), e.g. 851LLLL, 850LLLL. These children must be logged on the Lost Pupil Database.

s2s Migrating pupil flow chart



PUPIL MIGRATION LA RETURN (CME)

To be completed and returned to LA when a pupil is removed from roll

SCHOOL			
Name of child		DOB:	
Name of parent/s who pupil normally resides with			
Parents name		Contact no:	
Parents name		Contact no:	
Address			

***Only to be completed if a pupil moves to live with another parent**

Parents name		Contact no:	
Parents name		Contact no:	
Address			
Date pupil is expected to move / has moved to live with parent			

***Only to be completed if a pupil attends another school**

Is the pupil registered at another school?	YES / NO	Will the pupil be attending another specified school in future?	YES / NO
School and Address			

Reason for pupil deletion from roll (schools must complete this section)

Section 8 (Pupil Regs. 2016) reason for deletion			
Date removed from roll:		Date returned to LA:	

