
Bath & North East Somerset Council

Children Missing Education Service

Children Missing from Education

Children Missing Education Service
Autumn 2014

Introduction

The Government has placed a duty on local authorities to identify, as far as possible to do so, children (of statutory school age) missing education and get them back into education under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (added by section 4 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006). This duty is supported by statutory guidance November 2013 and replaces the 2009 version.

The purpose of this document is to establish a set of principles under which the local authority:

- Is able to fulfil its statutory duty to provide an education for all children of compulsory school age;
- Is able to track children and young people missing from education (CME);
- Identifies those at risk of becoming missing from education and has a range of effective interventions;
- Maintains contact with those missing, and those at risk of missing education.

Children and young people missing education will be some of the most vulnerable in the authority, these are children and young people who do not or cannot attend full time education in the usual way. It is vital therefore that services work together to establish the identities of children in Bath & North East Somerset and re-engage these children and young people with appropriate education provision as quickly as possible.

Children and young people missing education, not attending school or other similar provision are at risk not only of social and educational failure but also of physical, emotional and psychological harm.

How and why do Children go missing from Education?

Children missing education are:

- Children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and not being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, privately or in alternative provision).
- Children who have had significant absence from school without good reason, including any child who is not accessing or have no access to any alternative full time appropriate provision.

This will include the following pupils:

- Persistent absentees (85% and below).
- Pupils who have moved into the area and are not yet on a school roll
- Pupils in receipt of alternative educational provision but not on a school roll
- Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Statutory Education & Health Care Plan awaiting an appropriate placement.
- Those pupils offered alternative provision but who do not access this provision

This guidance does not replace Child Protection Procedures. Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns, including when children go missing from home or care, are to be observed at all times. Further information on the authority's child protection procedures can be found on the council's website at:

<http://intranet/cms/children-need-and-child-protection-handbook>

Children fall out of the education system and are at risk of 'going missing' due to a wide range of factors including:

- They fail to start appropriate provision and so never enter the system (e.g. pre – school to Yr 1, new to area and no application made to school);
- Cease to attend, due to permanent or fixed term exclusion (e.g. illegal or unofficial exclusions) or withdrawal; removal from roll with no named destination;
- Fail to complete a transition between providers (e.g. being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new LA or within Bath & North East Somerset);
- Fail to attend school regularly and this is not appropriately or timely addressed by the school or academy;
- Have particular social & behavioural difficulties and may have arranged part time attendance plans;
- Have complex needs and no suitable school place is available.
- Have mental health needs

- Have medical needs other than mental health needs
- Failure of schools & academies to administer compliance to the School Admission Code (February 2012), making it difficult for parents & carers to secure in-year placements;

In addition to these key points there are also some specific groups of vulnerable children and young people at particular risk of missing education:-

- Pupils at risk of harm or neglect
- Children of Gypsy, Roma & Traveller families
- Families of Armed Forces
- Missing children/runaways
- Children & young people supervised by the Justice system
- Children who cease to attend school
- Young people returning from custody
- Children & young people new to the country
- Looked after children & children who are privately fostered
- Children & young people living in temporary accommodation/refuge
- Young people (reached 16 but still of compulsory school age) in supported lodgings or living independently
- Young carers
- Teenage parents

Children and young people who are missing or at risk of missing education are identified and supported by the Children Missing Education Service and is a point of contact for information and advice for other teams and services. Regular analysis of attendance data is available through the authority's Education Management System (ONE); Children Missing Education Officers are able to monitor the attendance of children & young people registered with a local authority maintained school and academies where data sharing protocol is established.

Identifying Children Missing from Education

In Bath & North East Somerset the Children Missing Education Service (CMES) will lead on this area of work, although the responsibility for identifying and supporting CME cases is shared across all agencies, teams and services.

'Working together to safeguard children' make it very clear that effective early help relies upon local agencies working together to identify children and families who would benefit from early help.

Effective sharing of information between professionals and local agencies is essential for effective identification, assessment and service provision. Part of a high quality assessment is identifying a statutory school aged child or young person's educational provision.

It may be the case that another agency, team or service becomes aware of the arrival or existence of children living in the authority but not in education. All should follow the agreed procedures for information sharing; this will ensure vulnerable children, including those who may be missing from education, are identified, referred appropriately, their needs assessed and co-ordinated interventions made.

The CMES will work with these agencies to raise awareness of the Children Missing Education agenda and their roles in identifying and responding to the needs of children missing, or at risk of going missing from education. This will include;

- Information to schools and senior managers of other agencies annually to ensure protocols are understood.
- Circulating information on the notification route to all schools and agencies annually and posting this information on the authority's Intra and Internet sites including the HUB.
- Producing advice and guidance to schools on the maintenance of good registration practices including removals from roll.
- Developing and implementing a monitoring programme with maintained schools to ensure compliance with the legislation relating to the maintenance of admissions and attendance registers.

Partner agencies and services involved in the identification and referral of children missing from education.

Many, if not all, Local Authority services and other partners have some level of responsibility around the issue of children missing education. Whenever anybody becomes aware of any child or young person who does not appear to be accessing education appropriately they should make a referral to the Children Missing Education Service. This may result in referrals being made for children and young people already known and on a school roll. However, given concerns around the safeguarding and welfare of this group of children, this is more beneficial than not receiving notification.

Having said this, there are services with a direct responsibility for ensuring that provision is made for children and young people who might not be accessing appropriate education. It is anticipated that the following Services or Teams will have a responsibility in working with individual children and young people:

Children Missing Education Service
Social Care Teams
Special Educational Needs Teams
Virtual School
Hospital Education & Referral Service
Connecting Families
Connexions
Youth Offending Team
Admissions & Transport Team
Academy Trusts
School's Governing Body

Alongside these services there will be others that may become aware of children missing, or at risk of missing education. These services should make referrals but will not necessarily be best placed to pursue the child's or young person's placement in an appropriate provision, although where there are multiple or complex needs they may support a child in making the most of their educational opportunities.

Sirona
Housing Services
Voluntary Services
Police Service

Members of the public are also encouraged to make referrals where they have reason to believe that young people are not in education.

Notification and Referral Routes

The Children Missing Education Service must be notified of any child thought to be missing from education through the following referral routes:

E-mail – CMES@bathnes.gov.uk

Telephone – 01225 394241

Post – Children Missing Education Service
Bath and North East Somerset Council
Lewis House
Manvers Street
BATH. BA1 1JG

All cases of children and young people missing education or at risk of doing so should be reported to the CMES to ensure that comprehensive data on the issues is recorded. The case must be referred even if it is anticipated that the child or young person might soon be starting at a school or other educational provision.

A referral form (CME1) is available on the web site so that Council staff, non-council staff and members of the public can access it. However, information is better than no information; if a referral form is not available please email information to CMES @bathnes.gov.uk

Referral from within Bath & North East Somerset

- Referral form (CME1) (Referrer to keep a copy)
- Analysis of school attendance registers
- s2s Lost Pupil Database
- Email Children Missing Education Service – CMES@bathnes.gov.uk
- Telephone Children Missing Education Service on 01225 394241

Referral from and to Other Local Authority/Agencies

Other Local Authorities and agencies use many different methods to notify Bath & North East Somerset of children new to the Authority, including:-

- Referral form (CME1)
- Email to the ChildrenMissing.EducationService@bathnes.gcsx.gov.uk
- s2s secure messaging
- Secure email programmes

Once a referral has been received the child's details will be checked against the Authority's pupil information system (ONE); when a child is confirmed as missing education they will be added to the CME database and appropriately followed up.

CME Database

The CME database comprises information held on the authority's Education Management System (ONE) and contains data relating to Children & Young People:

- Identified as missing from education
- Who have been removed from a school roll where the future educational provision is unknown.
- Who have been permanently excluded and are not accessing full time provision.
- Who have not started at a school following one of the key transition points.

The database will be regularly updated to take account of any changes to the status of the children and young people concerned e.g. where an alternative educational provision has been made.

Locating Children Identified as Missing Education

If a child is not found to be already registered with an educational provider then the Children Missing Education Service will make reasonable enquiries in an effort to locate the child.

Checks will be undertaken against existing databases within the education service and with those held by partner agencies and will include the following:

- Child Health Department (Sirona)
- Children Social Care Teams
- Northern Safeguarding Unit (Avon & Somerset Police Service)
- Housing Services
- Connecting Families
- Revenue and Benefits
- Any other agency known to be involved with family
- the local authority from which child moved originally, if known
- where appropriate check with the custodial institution from which a child has left
- check with any local authority to which a child may have moved
- in the case of children from families of those in the Armed Forces, check with the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) on 01980 618244

In addition the Children Missing Education Service will attempt to make direct contact with the child's family by telephone, post and home visiting. Enquiries may be made of any known emergency contacts for the child held by a school, and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s).

The CMES will carry out regular weekly (and at times daily) monitor against the S2S site and the Lost Pupil Database to check for messages from other Local Authorities looking for missing pupils.

School to School (S2S) website and the Lost Pupil Database.

The Secure Access Portal <http://www.sa.education.gov.uk> allows registered users access to the Department for Education's systems. Access to systems is granted on an individual basis and therefore some systems may not be visible.

If a school knows which school a pupil is moving to they should ensure that the Common Transfer File (CTF) is sent to the receiving school via S2S as quickly as possible. The new school may then apply for the full school record.

If the new school is unknown, the CTF should be coded XXXXXXXX (destination unknown) or MMMMMMMM (moved to Independent Sector or out of country, including Scotland) and uploaded onto S2S in the normal way. These records are then stored in a secure area of S2S known as the Lost Pupil Database. If a CTF file is rejected schools should recode the file MMMMMMMM.

Schools should check S2S regularly to look for the CTF's of new pupils which have been sent to them. If a new pupil is admitted and the CTF is not available schools should ask the CMES to search the Lost Pupil Database for the pupil's CTF which can then be forwarded to the school.

Child identified as missing or at risk of missing education and located Children without provision

These may be children new to the authority, reception aged children whose parents/carers have not applied for a school place, children who have ceased to attend independent schools and those who cease to be electively home educated.

Children and young people who are identified as being of compulsory school age, not on a school roll and with no other form of educational provision will, in the majority of cases be expected to join a mainstream school via the usual school admission process.

In order to facilitate this, if parents/carers are finding the process difficult, a member of the Children Missing Education Service will work with the child's parents or carers to establish the nature of any previous educational provision and offer advice and the necessary support to effect a timely admission to a school via the co-ordinated admissions scheme which includes Academy, Foundation & Voluntary Aided schools for key stage transitions. For in-year casual admissions the parent must directly apply to the admission authority (this could be the school, academy or the local authority).

Where children and young people have a statutory education health care plan/statement of special educational need, they will be referred to the authority's SEN team who will work with the parent/carer to identify an appropriate educational placement.

Where children and young people are deemed to meet the authority's 'In Year Fair Access' criteria, they will be referred to the Behaviour & Attendance Panel for the locality in which they live so that provision appropriate to their need can be identified. Any additional support that might be necessary, such as re-integration or behaviour support can also be provided through these panels.

Children with provision who are missing, or at risk of missing education.

Maintained schools, academies, free schools, independent schools and other education providers are responsible for monitoring through their (twice) daily register and identifying pupils who are on their rolls and who are missing or at risk of missing education.

Children who are on a school roll may miss education because they:

1. fail to start at a school having accepted a place;
2. fail to attend regularly;
3. be prevented from attending due to poor behaviour (illegal or unlawful exclusion);

4. fail to attend arranged alternative provision & it is not monitored;
5. not able to attend due to mental or physical health need;
6. stop attending altogether; or
7. leave the school without ongoing provision being identified.

All schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils and as part of that duty should investigate any unexplained absence.

1: If a pupil has accepted a place at the school and fails to attend on the agreed date, the school must follow up the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly. Where there is continuing unauthorised absence, or the school have reason to believe that the pupil will not after all be joining the school they should refer the case to the Children Missing Education Service.

2: Schools will have their own procedures for the monitoring of pupil attendance although they are advised to adopt a staged approach to the management of pupils with poor attendance. Where a pupil's attendance is less than 85% they are to be regarded as persistent absentees; schools should have acted early to address patterns of absence by identifying and making efforts to re-engage the pupil in education through contacts or meetings with parents/carers supported by an agreed plan of action.

In their management of pupil attendance, schools must comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and associated guidance. The Children Missing Education Service offers support to schools in developing robust systems to identify and address poor and persistent absence.

All schools must notify the Children Missing Education Service after 10 days continuous unexplained absence unless there are concerns about the pupil's well-being in which case the school must act immediately and refer to Social Care.

3: All schools must have regard for the guide 'exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England'. The decision to exclude a pupil must be lawful, reasonable and fair. Informal or unofficial exclusions, such as sending pupils home to help the school manage pupil behaviour is unlawful, regardless of whether this is with the agreement of parents or carers.

4: Schools should keep the alternative educational placement under frequent review and involve parents. This includes the regular monitoring of attendance; is the off-site provision achieving its objectives and is the pupil benefitting.

5: The local authority must ensure education is provided as soon as it is clear that a pupil with a diagnosed health need will be away from school for 15 consecutive days or more and where no suitable education has been arranged by the school/academy.

6: The pupil must remain on the school roll until all reasonable enquiries are completed even if this means that pupil will amass unauthorised absence. Schools must notify the local authority if a pupil is to be deleted from the admission register and no information is known as to the pupil's forwarding address.

If the pupil is located then it will be usual for a pupil to remain on the school's roll and for the case to be dealt with as one of persistent absence. It may be that a referral to the Behaviour & Attendance Panel will be appropriate if it is felt that the pupil would benefit from additional support or a change of provision.

7: If the pupil is unable to be located the Children Missing Education Service will initiate the

tracking process. School will, on the advice of the Children Missing Education Service, delete the pupil from the school registers and transfer the pupil's details to the Lost Pupil Database via the s2s (School to School) website.

A compulsory aged pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) regulations 2006.

Where schools are notified by parent/carers that a pupil is to leave the school every effort must be made to establish what arrangements are being made for the pupil's continuing education. In the vast majority of cases the pupil will be transferring to another school and often one within the authority. In these cases schools should communicate with the new school to establish the date on which the pupil is to start so that the date for their deletion from the old school roll can be determined. There should not normally be a break in the continuity of a pupil's educational provision. Schools must notify the local authority of the deletion and send a completed Common Transfer Form (CTF) to the s2s site.

Where schools cannot be sure that arrangements are in place for a pupil's ongoing educational provision they must refer the case to the Children Missing Education Service as the child is at risk of missing education. As before pupils should remain on the school roll until either the pupil is located or the Children Missing Education Service advise that they may be deleted from the school registers.

In addition to school's duty to inform the authority, the Children Missing Education Service also monitors removals from school rolls through the authority's ONE Management System on a weekly basis. Where pupils have been removed from a school roll without an indication as to future provision the Service will contact the school to establish the facts and where necessary carry out the tracking process.

Determining an Appropriate Educational Provision

Once the child has been located, their needs should be assessed so as to inform the most appropriate educational provision and to identify whether any additional support is necessary in order for them to access it.

A Children Missing Education Officer will be allocated the case and together with the child and their parent/carer, the referrer and any other agency involved, they will determine the most appropriate means of securing an educational placement. This may be an admission to a mainstream school, a referral to a Behaviour & Attendance Panel and/or a referral to the Special Educational Needs Service.

The Admissions and Transport Team are able to provide information on the availability of places in **mainstream maintained schools** and will support the Children Missing Education Service and parents/carers in securing a school place for the pupil.

Unplaced children & young people, especially the most vulnerable, who meet the criteria outside of the normal school admissions process, must be considered under the Fair Access protocol. The case will be referred to the Pupil Support Manager for inclusion on the agenda of the appropriate Behaviour & Attendance Panel. The panel comprises of head teachers or deputy head teachers and will determine the most appropriate provision and any additional support.

Where a child has a statutory education health care plan or statement of special educational need, the case will be referred to the Special Educational Needs Team.

Monitoring the placements of Children Missing Education

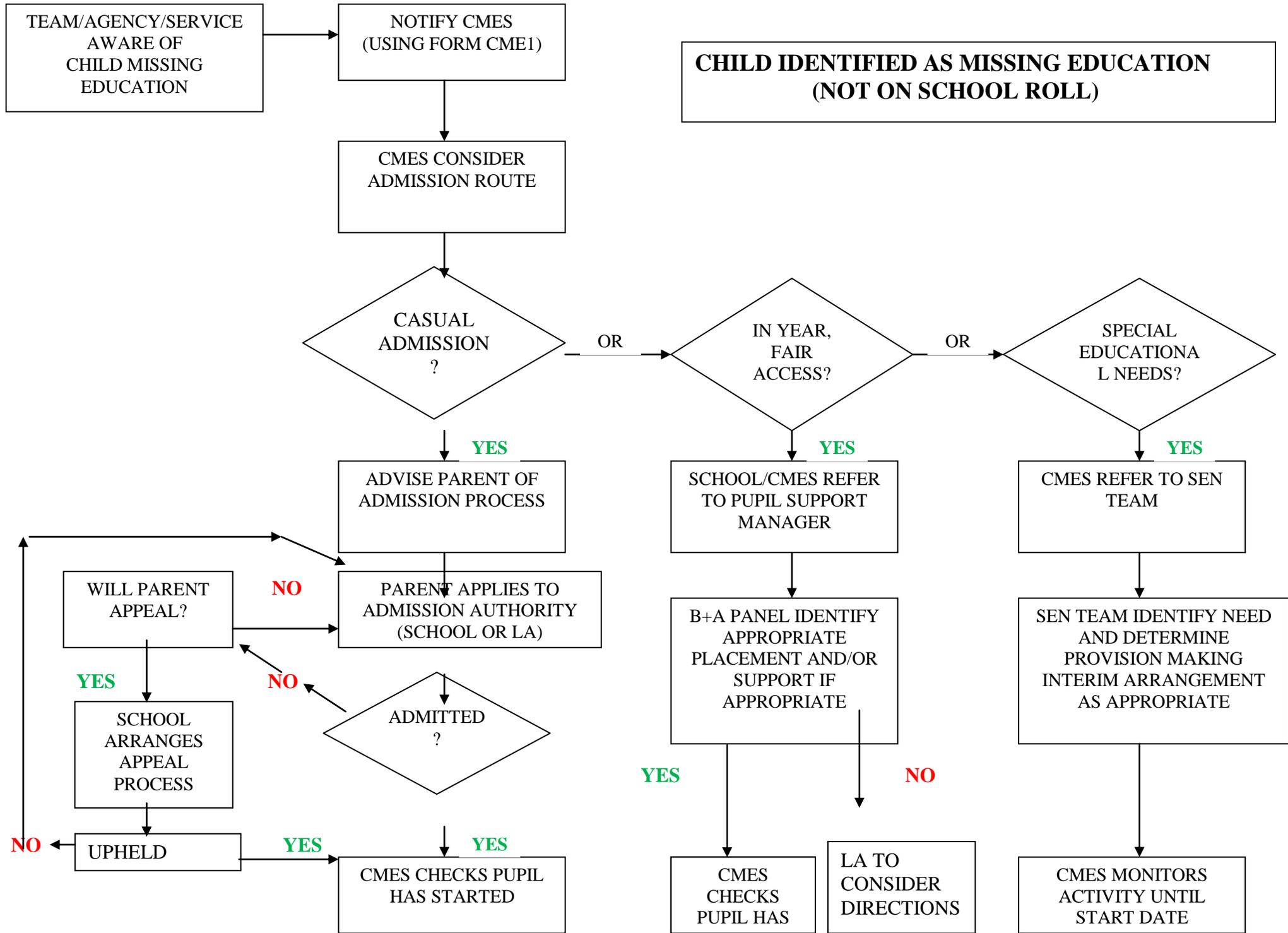
Once the child has been placed in an appropriate educational provision, their attendance should be closely monitored to ensure that they are successfully re-integrated into full time education.

- Where they have been admitted through normal admissions procedures the provider (school/academy) will carry out this monitoring.
- Where the child has been placed in accordance with the Fair Access protocol the placement will be monitored by the provider (school/academy) in conjunction with any additional support identified by the Behaviour & Attendance Panel.
- Where the child has been placed by the Special Educational Needs Team the placement will be monitored through the child's education & health care plan.

In addition to these measures the Children Missing Education Service produces termly attendance reports for all maintained primary schools which in addition to data regarding whole school performance, provides a list of pupils with under 90% attendance and a list of pupils who have had education provision made for them away from the school site. Children Missing Education Officers are able to raise any concern about a child with poor attendance directly with the primary school.

References:

- DfE Children missing education – November 2013
- DfE Working together to safeguard children 2013
- DfE Children who run away or go missing from home or care January 2014
- DfE Keeping children safe in education April 2014
- Ofsted Pupils missing out on education November 2013
- DfE Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs January 2013
- DfE Exclusion from maintained schools, academies & pupil referral units in England September 2012
- DfE Education (Pupil Registration)(England) regulations 2006



Notification of Children Missing Education

Name of person completing this form:				Return to:- Children Missing Education Service Bath and North East Somerset Council Lewis House, Manvers Street, Bath BA1 1JG	
Member of public	Yes	No	Agency:		
Contact No of Referrer					
Child Details – Please complete as many as you can					
Surname:				First Name:	
DOB:				Year Group:	
Gender		Male/Female		Looked After:	
Ethnicity				Yes No	
Address in Bath and North East Somerset:				Telephone No (s):	
New Address if child/family have moved:				GP Details:-	
Parents/Carers Details:					
Last know School and Local Authority					
Reason out of Education:					
Date last on a School Roll					
Other agencies know to be working with child/family:					
Any other relevant details:					
Signature:					Date: