



# **Wrexham County Borough Council**

## **Children Missing Education**

**2010**

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## 1. OVERVIEW

- 1.1 Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) is committed to improving the quality of life for all in Wrexham and making it a place where children and young people are valued, a place that provides a framework which enables children and young people to have high aspirations and to realise their dreams and a place that ensures that all children and young people have every opportunity to fulfil their potential. Wrexham Children and Young People's Framework Partnership is responsible for improving outcomes for children and young people in line with the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) 7 core aims and the key priorities within the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). The underpinning principles of the CYPP: *all of those in Wrexham working for, and with, children and young people commit to helping them to be healthy and active, be safe from harm, learn and achieve and enjoy, participate and be valued.* Ensuring that children and young people are engaged in suitable education is underpinned by the School Effectiveness Framework (SEF), which focuses on the right of all children and young people to enjoy a high quality learning experience throughout their educational journey and the need to track progress throughout all settings and thus by definition the need to identify any individual missing, or at risk of going missing, from education.
- 1.2 WCBC is concerned about any child missing from education, as it is not just attainment at risk, but also potentially safety and welfare. Children who are not receiving a suitable education are more likely to be vulnerable and at risk of negative outcomes which may have implications on later life chances. They may be from disadvantaged families, travelling communities, immigrant families, looked after children, unaccompanied asylum seekers, or at risk of neglect or abuse. They are also at greater risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) at age 16. Subsequently, a key concept of the Children Missing Education (CME) Policy is to ensure that children missing, or at risk of missing, education are identified, tracked and re-engaged in appropriate full-time education with lasting success, and that children who move out of Wrexham are tracked until they are engaged in education elsewhere, so that no child 'slips through the net'.

## 2. LEGAL CONTEXT

2.1 In summary the procedures in this policy support:

- Section 175 of the *Education Act 2002*, which places a duty on local authorities to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- Section 436A of the *Education Act 1999*, as amended by Section 4 of the *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, places a duty on all local education authorities to make arrangements to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are not registered at a school and are not receiving a suitable education;
- The *Children Act 2004* places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the safeguarding and welfare of children and to share information. Section 10 requires the local authority to make arrangements to promote co-operation between the local authority, partners and other bodies working with children in the local authority area to improve the well-being of children, which includes protection from harm or neglect. Section 11 requires organisations to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions, and services provided on their behalf, are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- *Shared Planning for Better Outcomes* (WAG, 31/07) advises that all children and young people should "engage in full-time education; have any barriers to learning identified early and removed; reach their full potential; continue in personal and informal education training";
- Circular 05/08 *Safeguarding Children in Education*. This identifies vulnerable groups likely to go missing from education and how "every practitioner working with a child has a responsibility to inform the local authority if they know or suspect that a child is not receiving education".
- Circular 18/06 *Educational Records, School Reports and the Common Transfer System - the keeping, disposal, disclosure and transfer of pupil information*.
- Circular 06/10 *Statutory guidance to help prevent children and young people from missing education*.

**A full list of the legislative basis upon which this policy sits is detailed in Appendix 1.**

### **3. PURPOSE**

- 3.1 The purpose of the Children Missing Education (CME) policy is to enable the local authority to fulfil its statutory duty to provide education for all children of compulsory school age. It also outlines the processes in place to identify and track children and young people missing from education, identify those at risk of becoming missing from education and the monitoring systems to ensure that action is taken to re-engage them with 'suitable education'. 'Suitable education' is defined as efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs.
- 3.2 The policy applies to children of compulsory school age who are not on school roll, who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school (e.g. at home, privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time, usually agreed as four weeks or more. In relation to children who are registered at a school and not attending regularly, this would be subject to interventions through the existing attendance strategies and education welfare procedures of the Education Social Work (ESW) Team.
- 3.3 The duty to identify children not receiving an education does not apply to children whose parents have chosen to electively home educate them, as parents have a duty to ensure that their children receive an efficient and suitable full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise (Section 7, Education Act 1996), and they may arrange this outside the state or independent school system.
- 3.4 There is an expectation under the Children Act 2004 that all agencies will work together to promote the safeguarding and welfare of children and to share information so that children and young people do not 'slip through the net' and become missing. Therefore the CME Policy is intended to inform such agencies about their role in assisting to identify children missing education and to make people aware of the notification process that will be widely accessible and user-friendly.
- 3.5 This policy should be read in conjunction with the 'Wrexham School Attendance Policy', 'Parents' & Carers' Guide to Education Services in Wrexham' and the 'Child Protection Policy'. This policy does not replace any of the child protection procedures. Existing safeguarding procedures for reporting and recording child protection concerns must be observed at all times.

### **4. POLICY STATEMENT**

- 4.1 The policy identifies:
- that Wrexham Local Authority accepts its responsibility to locate, assess, monitor and track children missing from education in order for them to reach their full potential;
  - that the responsibility should be carried out through a strategic and multi-agency framework where agencies share information on the identification of children and young people missing from education via a comprehensible notification process;
  - the needs of vulnerable groups of children at of missing education and fulfilling their potential;
  - that a range of measures should be implemented to ensure the reduction of the likelihood of children and young people missing education, such as measures to reduce the likelihood of children falling out of the education system through audits of attendance rates across schools.

### **5. DEFINITION FOR CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

- 5.1 The national definition of a child missing from education is:  
*"children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school (for example, at home, privately, or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time, usually agreed as four weeks or more."*
- 5.2 A number of risk factors have been identified that may negate the engagement and tracking of certain vulnerable groups. Children and young people from these groups often have complex needs due to difficult family dynamics or social or lifestyle factors, all of which may contribute to the withdrawal process and failure to make successful transition. They may have experienced specific life events that make them more at risk of going missing from education and who face tougher obstacles to re-engage. Therefore it is vital that services work together to identify and re-engage these children and young people with appropriate education as quickly as possible.

- 5.3 This list is not exhaustive but could include children and young people who:
- are within the youth justice system;
  - live in women's refuges;
  - are from homeless families perhaps living in temporary accommodation or bed and breakfast;
  - are from families fleeing domestic violence;
  - have long term medical or emotional problems;
  - are young carers;
  - have parents with mental health problems;
  - have parents with learning difficulties;
  - are affected by substance misuse;
  - were previously educated in the Independent sector and have been excluded or withdrawn;
  - have been withdrawn by their parents for elective home education but are not receiving a suitable education;
  - are Looked After by the local authority; are privately fostered; or go missing from care;
  - are unaccompanied asylum seeking children;
  - are on the Child Protection register;
  - have been bullied;
  - are from asylum seeking or refugee families;
  - are from Gypsy, Traveller or Roma background;
  - are from families who may be highly mobile for e.g. have parents in the armed forces;
  - are taken on extended holidays or heritage visits by their families;
  - are young parents and pregnant young women.
- 5.4 There will be instances where the Authority or school is unaware of children with complex issues, but may come to the attention of other agencies e.g. community organisations, and include children:
- at risk of forced marriage and honour-based violence;
  - at risk of sexual exploitation, including children who have been trafficked to or within the UK;
  - involved with their families in the witness protection programme and may be required to relocate without explanation or trace;
  - from families who are involved in fraud, social difficulties, crime and anti-social behaviour;
  - young runaways;
  - are from migrant worker families who may not be familiar with the education system;
  - are newly arrived immigrant families;
  - are from families who disappear without trace when asylum has not been granted or if accommodation has not been allocated in their preferred location;
- 5.5 These children can only be identified via multi-agency involvement, thus requiring strong partnership working and clear referral procedures.

## 6. HOW AND WHY DO CHILDREN GO MISSING FROM EDUCATION?

- 6.1 Children fail to engage in, or go missing from, education for a variety of reasons, including:
- They may simply move and their families do not tell either the new or old authorities;
  - They may move area and do not register with a school, or depending on their circumstances may not see re-enrolment at school as a matter of urgency even if previously their children had been good attendees, or if children are nearing school leaving age the family may not see the relevance of returning to education;
  - They may be unable to attend their preferred school as no places are available and do not take up the offer of an alternative place;
  - They may never enter the education system because they fail to start appropriate provision at the start of compulsory school age (there is no requirement for parents to inform local authorities that they intend to educate at home if the child has never attended school);
  - They may be withdrawn by their parents who elect to educate at home and both parents and the school fail to notify the local authority;
  - They may cease to attend school due to disputes, parental dissatisfaction, unofficial exclusion or removal from school roll;
  - They may fail to complete a transition between providers, for example from primary to secondary school or from a school to alternative provision;

- They may enter the country and do not register with a school;
- They may move into or out of the Looked after Children (LAC) system or the secure estate without prior notice or planning;
- They may be excluded or withdrawn from independent schools;
- They may not wish to be found and may change names and move quickly from place to place.

6.2 To avoid the opportunity of this happening, a series of systematic processes and procedures must be in place and links between agencies must be strengthened and formalised.

**The Wrexham procedures for locating a missing pupil are detailed in Appendix 2.**

## 7. REDUCING THE RISK

- 7.1 A number of processes are in place to reduce the risk of children going missing from education:
- Measures to reduce the likelihood that children fall out of education e.g. monitor attendance;
  - Measures to identify and locate children missing from education e.g. Truancy Sweeps, termly nil attendance reports produced by the Management Information Systems (MIS) Team and forwarded to the ESW Team to pursue, CME database maintained by Education Inclusion;
  - Measures to re-engage children missing from education e.g. referrals to the ESW Team.

## 8. IDENTIFICATION AND NOTIFICATION PROCESSES

8.1 Wrexham County Borough Council has a named Children Missing from Education (CME) Officer to lead the children missing education agenda in Wrexham, develop a coordinated approach to policy and procedures and to ensure a point of contact for all agencies with regard to children missing from education. The CME Officer is also the Head of Service for Education Inclusion and works closely with other departments and agencies to support a multi-disciplinary approach to identifying children missing from, or at risk of missing, education.

- 8.2 To raise awareness of the CME policy and referral procedures, the CME Officer will:
- Attend strategic and operational meetings to raise awareness of correct referral routes;
  - Support schools, settings and agencies to ensure that procedures are in place to minimise the possibility of children going missing from education;
  - Contact senior managers in all agencies if changes in personnel / procedure occur;
  - Oversee the audit of school compliance with legislation relating to the maintenance of registers;
  - Disseminate the policy and procedures via the WCBC internet and intranet, schools' intranet, LSCB and CYPFWPB website, Careers Wales, circulation to AVOW (to disseminate to voluntary organisations) and to schools annually and presentations at the Primary Heads Federation and Wrexham Association of Secondary Head teachers' (WASH) meetings.

8.3 The CME policy differentiates the role of stakeholders (who may become aware of a child missing or at risk of missing education) from agencies who provide support services to vulnerable groups.

### 8.4 Receiving Notification - Pupils Not on School Roll - the role of Partner Agencies

8.4.1 There is a fundamental principle that all officers of Wrexham Local Authority and Partners have some level of responsibility around the issue of children missing from education, in terms of ensuring that children are identified and tracked, referred appropriately, their needs assessed and coordinated interventions put in place. Therefore, as notification can be received from within the local authority, external agencies, the public, schools, children and young people and other local authorities, it is vital that all agencies understand and use the referral route consistently. Although this level of multi-agency involvement may result in referrals being made for children and young people already known and on school roll, given the concerns around the safeguarding and welfare of these vulnerable children, it is more beneficial than not receiving notification.

8.4.2 The named CME Officer **must** be notified of any child or young person thought to be missing from education using the referral form that is available on WCBC website: [http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/education/education\\_docs.htm](http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/education/education_docs.htm)

**CME Lead Officer:** Tel: 01978 298723 / Fax: 01978 298704 / [graham.edwards@wrexham.gov.uk](mailto:graham.edwards@wrexham.gov.uk) / Address: Head of Service Education Inclusion, Wrexham County Borough Council, 16 Lord Street, Wrexham. LL11 1LG.

- 8.4.5 Referrals can be made via the following methods:
- **CME referral form** to CME Officer (referrer to keep a copy and acknowledgement sent out);
  - Analysis of school attendance registers signalling concern;
  - Termly nil attendance reports produced by the MIS Team and sent to the ESW Team;
  - S2S Lost Pupil Database;
  - Contacting the ESW Team Manager (to ensure the monitoring of referrals) and CME Officer.
- 8.3.6 Referral from and to other local authorities / agencies can be made via the following methods:
- **CME referral form** to CME Officer (referrer to keep a copy and acknowledgement sent out);
  - S2S secure messaging;
  - Contacting the ESW Team Manager (to ensure the monitoring of referrals) and CME Officer.
- 8.3.7 The CME Officer works closely with the ESW Team Manager and once a referral is received the child's name is added to the CME database that is managed by the Education Inclusion Service. Details are then checked against the Authority's pupil information system (ONE) and relevant departments and agencies are contacted to locate the child and support them back into education. Where necessary, the child's details are referred to another authority's CME Officer or Education Welfare Service (EWS)/Education Social Work (ESW) Team to track and support the child. The database is regularly updated to take account of any changes to the status of the child e.g. where education provision has been made.

**The Wrexham Referral Form can be found in *Appendix 4*.**

## **8.5 Receiving notification - pupils on roll at a school - The role of parents and the school**

- 8.5.1 A school registered pupil is deemed to be at risk of missing education when the pupil:
- fails to attend school without explanation;
  - is expected to start at the school and does not arrive;
  - fails to return from a planned holiday;
  - moves out of the authority and the school is informed that they will not attend anymore.

### **Role of the Parent**

Parents have a duty to seek to register their child at school as soon as they reach school age or move into an area. Parents must inform school should they wish to remove a child and provide details of the new school, the new area, or if they elect to undertake home education. Parents have a duty to ensure that their child attends school at all times unless they have a legitimate reason and the school must be informed of the reason for non-attendance on the first day of absence.

### **Role of Schools**

Children missing education is a safeguarding issue, but primarily the responsibility of the Head teacher and Governing Body. Schools therefore have a vital role to play in the prevention of children missing from education, and especially in terms of monitoring, control and management of attendance and locations. Schools should follow the procedures for absence in accordance with the Wrexham Attendance Policy and Policy for Extended Holidays. Further details of processes are found in the CME Checklist for Schools and the Unexplained Absence Procedures in Appendix 4.

### **What must schools do on the first day of non-attendance?**

Schools undertake daily monitoring of attendance and alert parents **immediately** if a pupil fails to attend and undertake checks to determine the reason why. If the school cannot ascertain a reason for non-attendance, the school Child Protection Coordinator must be informed, a referral form sent to the CME Officer and the ESW contacted within **10 school days** of non-attendance. However, if the pupil is a Looked after Child (LAC), or on the Child Protection register and disappears without warning, the school must **immediately** notify the Safeguarding and Support Department directly and the ESW Team and CME Officer on the **first day of absence**. If a pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN), the Statutory Assessment Team should also be notified.

### **What if the school is informed that a family is moving but a new school is NOT identified?**

In the event of a parent informing school that they are moving to another local authority without identifying a new school, the school should upload the pupil information after 20 school days using a Common Transfer File (CTF) onto the secure School 2 School (S2S) website using the code XXXXXXX (destination unknown). The school must also inform the ESW Team who will inform the CME Officer and Admissions Team in the current local authority and also make contact with the Education Welfare Service in the receiving local authority.

### What if the school is informed that a family is moving and a new school IS identified?

In the event of a pupil moving to a known school, the name of the school and leaving date should be recorded in the releasing schools' MIS system and a CTF of the pupil's records should be created and sent to the new school within 15 days via S2S.

### What if the school is informed that a parent is going to undertake elective home education?

In the event of parents informing the school in writing that they are removing the child to educate him/her at home, the head teacher should inform the Chief Officer for Learning and Achievement, the ESW Team and the Senior School Improvement Officer (responsible for EOTAS) within 10 days of a pupil being deleted from the register and record the date and reason for removal. The ESW will arrange to meet with the parent to provide an information pack and forms for the parent to complete to secure support from Local Authority Officers. Although pupils with Statements of SEN can be home educated, the Local Authority is responsible for ensuring that the education received is suitable in liaison with the Principal Statementing Officer and annual reviews. The statement must stay in force and the local authority must ensure that parents can meet the special educational needs described in the Statement. Please see the Wrexham policy '*EOTAS: Guidance for Parents*'.

### What should the school do once a child has been referred?

When a school refers a child to the Local Authority via the CME referral form and notifying the ESW Team, the school should keep the child on roll for a further 20 days pending investigation by the local authority (via the ESW Team). The outcome may be that the child is located and remains on roll, started a new school or is not located, referred to appropriate agencies and still 'missing'. Even if the investigation amasses 20 days, schools should never remove a pupil from school roll until all avenues have been exhausted and the local authority (via the ESW Team) has advised in writing that it is appropriate to do so. If the ESW Team has not been able to locate a child and the ESW has advised the school to remove the child's name from the register, the discharging school must ensure that the CTF Transfer File is coded XXXXXXXX (destination unknown) and uploaded onto S2S. The records are stored in a secure area of S2S known as the 'Lost Pupil Database'. Schools should not submit the CTF to the Lost Pupil Database without the agreement of the ESW Team.

## **8.6 Identifying a Child as Missing from Education – Role of Local Authority Departments**

### **8.6.1 Education Social Work (ESW) Team**

The ESW Team works with other departments and agencies to fulfil the local authority's statutory responsibility in relation to school attendance. The ESW Team carries out investigations where pupils are missing from school or have left school with no following address and makes reasonable efforts to identify a child's whereabouts. This includes:

- Inspecting school registers to ensure they are kept in accordance with regulations, including termly investigations into nil attendances and regular monitoring of pupils who have been removed from roll to ensure that legislation is followed;
- Checking the Council databases (Admissions, MIS and Safeguarding and Support);
- Checking the elective home education register;
- Undertaking home visits within 5 working days of a referral to make enquiries;
- Contacting other departments and agencies involved with the family;
- Recording and updating the child's details on the CME database;
- Maintaining the child's details on the CME database when a child has disappeared without a known destination and monitoring this as the child may re-appear in the county or elsewhere;
- Liaising with Admissions re. S2S and referring cases to Safeguarding and Support and Police.

If the child is located the ESW Team will notify the CME Officer and will:

- Inform the school of the action to be taken;
- Make contact with ESW Team in the new authority when a forwarding address is identified;
- Update the CME database regularly as the child's status changes;
- Close the referral once the child is located and tracked into provision.

### 8.6.2 The Admissions Team

The County Borough Council, as Local Authority, is responsible for determining the criteria and procedure for admissions and for the admission of all pupils to community, primary, secondary, special and voluntary controlled schools. The governing bodies of aided and foundation schools are responsible for determining the criteria and procedure arrangements for admission and for the admission of pupils to their schools. The Admissions Team is responsible for carrying out this statutory function within the Learning and Achievement and Prevention and Inclusion Departments. Children may not be on school roll where a parent has not accepted a place at phase transfer. For example, if a parent of a Year 6 pupil has not applied for secondary education, or a parent of a nursery pupil has not applied for a reception place, the Admissions Team would attempt to contact the parent. If this is not successful the Admissions Team would contact the school to pursue and would contact the ESW where necessary. However, if a place is offered and a parent has not accepted, the Admissions Team would follow this up with a reminder letter to parents, followed by a telephone call and finally by contacting the school to investigate further. The Admissions Team also receives requests for places where families move to Wrexham as a mid-term transfer. The Team works to admit a child wherever possible to their preferred school. To ensure continuity of transfer, the previous school uploads the CTF onto S2S and the receiving school downloads the file which includes the Unique Pupil Number so that the child remains in the system and tracked.

### 8.6.3 The Management Information Systems Team (MIS Team)

The MIS Team is responsible for the management and system administration of the Education Management Software and is responsible for the provision of management information within the Learning and Achievement and Prevention and Inclusion Departments. Data is transferred from schools to the Local Education Authority on a daily basis. Schools are responsible for the maintenance of school level data in their Sims.Net software under MIS guidance. They also receive training and guidance on the use of the S2S system. Data is transferred daily into ONE using the Business to Business (B2B) software. Therefore, centrally MIS can collate all education data within the Children and Young People Service and on request can provide reports to support departments with their role to prevent children missing or at risk of going missing from education. For example, the MIS Team currently routinely provide the following:

- termly attendance reports for all secondary schools and termly reports on children with 15 or more days unauthorised absence sent to the ESW Team manager to discuss in Team meetings and forward to relevant departments for further investigation to locate the child;
- termly reports to LAC Coordinator and Traveller Education Coordinator on attendance patterns.

### 8.6.4 Senior School Improvement Officer (responsible for 'Education Other Than at School' - EOTAS)

The Senior School Improvement Officer within Learning and Achievement is responsible for EOTAS and monitoring the education of children receiving home education. Home visits are undertaken where there is concern about the decision of parents to de-register their child and there is a duty to inform the ESW Team if the provision of education by the parent is found to be unsatisfactory so that the Team can issue a School Attendance Order under Section 437 powers of the Education Act 1996. Pupils receiving education at home are monitored annually and in Wrexham we encourage joint visits by School Improvement staff and ESWs. Parents do not have to allow access to either officer, nor is there a requirement to speak to the child directly. Parents are able to provide a written or verbal update of their child's progress in order to satisfy the statutory obligations. However, in Wrexham, in order to promote the safeguarding agenda, we are encouraging parents to allow contact between education officers and the parent and child. Education Social Workers are also requested to be present in order that a welfare check can be carried out at the same time.

### 8.6.5 The Statutory Assessment Team (Special Educational Needs)

Where a child has a statement of Special Educational Need (SEN), the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that the child receives the provision and the monitoring arrangements as set out in the statement. Schools are required to alert and discuss all pupils whose level of attendance or lack of attendance is a cause for concern with their ESW. Where such children have a Statement of SEN, the school/ESW would also alert the Statutory Assessment Team. Officers would attend any multi-agency meetings convened to ensure that the provision is meeting the child's needs and ascertain if a change in support is required. Schools are also required to include the annual percentage attendance for each pupil on the Annual Review documentation sent to the LEA; the attendance of all statemented pupils is therefore monitored in this way.

## 8.7 Identifying a Child at Risk of Missing Education - Role of Departments

In addition to schools' own practice of regularly screening registers and making referrals, and the ESW Team receiving termly nil attendance reports to identify and monitor children at risk of missing education, specific procedures have been formalised pertaining to each group of 'at risk' children.

Many of the vulnerable groups of children will be identified as missing by the school, thus schools will follow the CME Checklist for Schools and Unexplained Absence Procedures, which involve schools contacting parents/carers on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation, including cases where the pupil skips lessons after registration. This ensures that parents/carers are aware that the child is not in school and enables them to take steps to establish that the child is safe. If there is no answer, or the person who answered was not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or known to be safe, or the parent/carer answered but the child is not with them, the school should consider (with the school Child Protection Coordinator and using the LEA procedures), the degree of vulnerability of the child and make a referral to the ESW Team, Police and Safeguarding and Support Department (CAFAT). However, if the pupil is a Looked after Child (LAC), or on the Child Protection register and disappears without warning, the school must immediately notify the Safeguarding and Support Department (CAFAT) directly and the ESW Team and CME Officer on the first day of absence. In the case of a Looked after Child, the Safeguarding and Support Department will instigate all actions required in the *Children Missing from Care Policy*.

**The CME Checklist for Schools and Unexplained Absence Procedures can be found in full in Appendix 3.**

**Child and Family Assessment Team (CAFAT) Duty Officer:** 01978 292039 / 0845 0533 116

**ESW Team Manager :** 01978 298850 / **CME Officer :** 01978 298723

**Children and Young People Service:** [education@wrexham.gov.uk](mailto:education@wrexham.gov.uk) / 01978 297505

**Contact details for the lead department for vulnerable groups listed below are in Appendix 5.**

### Children who may be victims of crime – unexplained absence

There are circumstances when a pupil is absent without explanation and although most cases are minor and the child returns quickly or believed not to be in danger, there are serious or complex cases, including those where a child may be a victim of crime, such as being abducted by a parent/stranger. Schools should follow the Unexplained Absence Procedures if a child is thought to be a victim of crime and in liaison with the school Child Protection Coordinator, assess the vulnerability and make a referral to the ESW Team, Safeguarding and Support (CAFAT) and/or Police.

### Young runaways

Where a child or young person goes missing, they are vulnerable to not just missing education, but also in relation to both safeguarding and criminal justice issues. Whatever the reasons for running away, it is often a sign that something is wrong in the child or young person's life and a response must be made quickly. It is also vital to recognise that another trigger for going missing might be that the child or young person is being subjected to abuse, and in these instances the local child protection arrangements would be instigated. Schools, because of their daily registration, have a key role to play in identifying when a child is missing from school and would follow the CME Checklist for Schools and Unexplained Absence Procedures and make a referral to the ESW Team, Safeguarding and Support (CAFAT) and Police. A first day response would be made to Safeguarding and Support and ESW Team for children missing from care, looked after, subject to a Child Protection Plan or known to a statutory agency due to developing concerns for their safety.

### Asylum seeking or refugee families

The EAL Service is initially informed of a refugee and asylum-seeking family with children and young people arriving in Wrexham County Borough by the Admissions Team or sometimes the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), part of UK Border Agency (UKBA). The EAL Service works with the Admissions Team to assign a school place and support the integration of refugee and asylum seeking families into school. The EAL service works in partnership with schools to raise the attainment of pupils whose first language is neither English nor Welsh by directly supporting pupils and providing resources and training. The Service also provides interpreters and bilingual support, where possible, to aid communication, to gather information about the family, to help children access the curriculum and to support schools when liaising with parents or carers.

## **Children of migrant workers**

In Wrexham, the EAL Service is informed of children of migrant workers in Wrexham schools by the Admissions Team. Education information for parents/carers on admissions, attendance, punctuality and absence is provided in a range of languages to support families in accessing information. The EAL Service supports the integration of the children of migrant workers into school and provides interpreters, where possible, to aid communication and to gather information about the family. It works in partnership with schools to raise the attainment of pupils whose first language is neither English nor Welsh by directly supporting pupils and providing resources and training. The Service also provides bilingual support, where possible, to help children access the curriculum and to support schools when liaising with parents or carers.

## **Children with a Gypsy, Traveller or Roma background or from transient families**

The Traveller Education Service liaises with the ESW Team to ensure that children gain access to their legal entitlement to an education that meets their needs. The Traveller Education Service promotes the inclusion and achievement of Irish Traveller, Gypsy, Fairground and Circus children at all stages. It seeks to encourage children and families to become independent users of the education system. Wrexham TES supports schools in the academic attainment of Traveller children and provides important liaison between home and school. Wrexham TES will notify other authorities if families are moving to their area. Wrexham TES are also notified of new Gypsy and Traveller families arriving via a range of agencies, such as Health Visitors, Youth Workers, Police and Traveller Education Services in other Local Authorities. Well established links with Circus Traveller families mean that local schools are contacted prior to arriving in Wrexham so that provision can be made in liaison with Admissions.

## **Young carers**

Currently young carers' services in Wrexham are commissioned from Action for Children, which has its own processes in place to work closely with schools to prevent this group of vulnerable children from missing education. If future commissioning arrangements were made with other organisations, the contracts would include similar processes to prevent this group of at risk children from going missing from education. Action for Children contacts schools annually in October to inform them of young carers in the school. If Action for Children become concerned that a child is missing, or at risk of missing education they discuss the situation with the child and contact the school. The local authority is notified if the school requires support in ensuring that the child returns to education.

## **Children who have been excluded**

### *Fixed Period Exclusions:*

Schools are required to inform the ESW Team Manager on a termly basis of all fixed period exclusions, yet schools are also asked to inform the ESW Team Manager as soon as possible of a fixed period exclusion. This information is logged on the SIMS system with information on exclusions of five days and fewer and six days and more. This is collated for the Welsh Assembly on a termly basis and a copy is retained centrally and also provided to the ESW Team. The Governors' Disciplinary Committee meets to consider exclusions over 15 days, or over 15 days in aggregate over a term, or if a parent requests representation to the Governors, the ESW Team Manager represents the LEA to provide advice. Pastoral Support Plans are initiated if a child has fixed period exclusions and is in danger of permanent exclusion. Schools follow LEA procedures.

### *Permanent Exclusions:*

Head teachers contact the ESW Team Manager when considering permanent exclusions in order to explore the possibility of managed transfers instead of permanent exclusion. However, parents are given the option of exclusion and their rights of representation and appeal are explained. The ESW Team Manager undertakes home visits within 3 days of notification of exclusion to advise parents on the processes, procedures and options and to provide support. The ESW Team Manager also attends all Governors' meetings on permanent exclusions and Independent Appeals Panels to provide advice on processes, procedures and norms across the authority. Access to education for vulnerable children unable to attend mainstream school is provided by the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) which aims to support attendance and reintegration into mainstream education and provide support to vulnerable children to reach their potential. Where possible, mainstream places are identified and services allocated to the child in school. Schools follow LEA procedures.

### **Children who are taken on extended holidays or heritage visits by their family**

There will be some pupils whose families have work and family commitments abroad that can lead to the situation where visits are made overseas for extended periods of more than two weeks. In these circumstances, schools should follow their own policies on extended absence, as well as LEA guidance '*Additional Guidance for Schools on Extended Visits Overseas*', regulations and WAG guidance. Schools should make all parents aware of the importance of informing the school of any planned extended holidays or events and agreeing with the school the period of extended leave, including the date of return, and that if parents go on an extended visit without notifying the school in advance then the child's name may be removed from the register. Where possible schools should seek to obtain contact details for the visit and details of a relative/friend who could be contacted in the UK if required. If the child does not return after the agreed date, this should prompt welfare concerns and the school should follow normal procedures for investigating absence (phone calls, letters). If no satisfactory explanation is received the school should make a referral within 10 days and contact the ESW Team for investigation. If there are additional concerns, particularly if a school is concerned that an older pupil is taken out of the country against their will, and forced marriage may be a risk, or that there may be another Child Protection issue associated with extended leave, concerns should immediately be referred to the Safeguarding and Support Department.

### **Children within the criminal justice system and those at risk of becoming involved in crime**

Occasionally a young person subject to an Order of the Court is found not to be receiving education when assessed by the Youth Justice Service. Often they are Looked after Children (LAC) placed by other authorities in private care homes. In these cases the Youth Justice Service Education Officer would contact the placing authority to clarify the situation and inform Wrexham's LAC Education Coordinator and Admissions Team. In other cases the Youth Justice Service Education Officer is responsible for making a referral and informing the ESW Team and Admissions Team to ensure that the young person is placed. If they are Gypsy Travellers their details are also forwarded to the Traveller Education Service. The referrals are recorded on the 'contacts' section of the Youth Justice Service Careworks information system and also to the CME database once a referral is received by the CME Officer. A young person who is given a Detention and Training Order of less than four months duration or remanded in custody awaiting sentence should be kept on the school register and recorded as an Approved Educational Activity (see WAG Attendance Codes, p7). When the period of custody is longer than four months and it is expected that the young person will return to school, it is good practice to keep them on the register.

### **Children at risk of sexual exploitation, including children trafficked to, or within, the UK**

The Child and Family Assessment Team (CAFAT) follows the All Wales Protocol: *Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children who are at Risk of Abuse through Sexual Exploitation* and WAG guidance (2008) *Safeguarding Children Who May Have Been Trafficked*. Where there are concerns about the welfare of the child and concerns of sexual exploitation and trafficking, schools and agencies should make immediate referrals to the Safeguarding and Support Department. Contact would then be made with the ESW Team, UK Human Trafficking Centre and the National Referral Mechanism to exchange information. The Audit Sub Group linked to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) review cases on the Child Protection Register and highlight any patterns or concerns via their quarterly reports to the LSCB Development Group. Information is also often acquired via the Community Cohesion Group, where there is Safeguarding and Support representation. To increase knowledge and understanding of sexual exploitation and child trafficking, the Safeguarding and Support annual training plan now include these issues.

### **Children from families fleeing domestic violence and those living in women's refuges**

Wrexham follows the All Wales Practice Draft Guidance: *Safeguarding Children and Young People Affected by Domestic Abuse*. Where there are concerns about the welfare of the child and concerns about domestic abuse, schools and agencies should make immediate referrals to the Safeguarding and Support Department who will work in liaison with the ESW Team. However, when following up missing children from education where it is known that there may be issues around domestic abuse; the ESW Team should not make contact with family members as this could inadvertently compromise the child's safety. The Safeguarding and Support Department undertakes an assessment of the child's emotional and physical needs and will liaise with the ESW Team as part of the initial assessment and signpost the family to other organisations for further support e.g. Women's Aid, BAWSO, Mother's Freedom, Butterflies.

### **Children who are on the Child Protection Register**

The Child Protection Department follows the *All Wales Child Protection Procedures* and Recommendation 24 of the Climbé report which states that during the course of an assessment, if Social Services establish that a school age child is not attending school, they must alert the education authorities and ensure that in the interim the child is subject to adequate day-care and supervision arrangements (paragraph 4.143). Education professionals attend Core Group meetings on a regular basis to contribute on a multi-agency basis to Child Protection Plans and under the Child Protection Procedures (2008) if a strategy meeting relating is convened, the Learning and Achievement department are notified and invited. The ESW Team should always be alerted if at any time Safeguarding and Support staff establish that a child is not attending school. However, all agencies have a responsibility for children subject to a Child Protection Plan and if a child goes missing, or there are concerns about the welfare of a child, the Education Lead Officer for Safeguarding (Child Protection Coordinator) and the key worker within Safeguarding and Support must be informed immediately by the agency that raised the concern. Schools also have clear and specific School Child Protection Procedures to follow and receive advice, training and support to meet their responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

### **Looked after children (LAC) and unaccompanied asylum seekers**

Stability of schooling is essential for children who are looked after by local authorities. The LAC Education Coordinator monitors the educational placements of all LAC, coordinates the personal education plans and addresses educational needs. All schools have a designated member of staff for LAC who assist in identifying children at risk of going missing from education. Schools follow a system of first day absence referral to the Safeguarding and Support Department and ESW Team and the LAC Coordinator monitors attendance of LAC on a regular basis. Social Workers should notify the ESW Team of any children received into care or where there are issues that may result in a breakdown in educational placement. Where children go missing from their care placement, they are rarely absent for long. It is vital that their school place is kept open until there is agreement between the school and authority responsible for their care that this place is no longer necessary. Where a change of care placement necessitates a change of school, Learning and Achievement and Safeguarding and Support should work closely to identify education provision simultaneously, as there is a duty to ensure that LAC are re-engaged with education within 20 days. When a child ceases to be Looked After and is returned to parents (particularly from out of county placements), the ESW Team is informed to ensure that the child and parents are supported to re-engage with education. However, at all times when it is established that a Looked after Child is missing, the Safeguarding and Support Department must adhere to the *Children Missing from Care Policy*.

The responsibility for the provision of support and basic services to unaccompanied children assessed to be under age 18 who do not have a relative or guardian in the UK remains with the local authority in whose geographical area they reside and invariably they are afforded looked after status. In Wrexham, multi-agency working across departments and agencies ensures that support is provided to enable children to engage effectively in education, with close links between the EAL and ESW Teams to ensure that children are monitored. To increase knowledge and understanding of asylum seeking families, the Safeguarding and Support annual training plan includes this area.

### **Children who are privately fostered**

The Child and Family Assessment Team (CAFAT) within Wrexham Safeguarding and Support Department follows the *Wrexham Private Fostering Policies and Procedures*. All adults (unless they are family members as defined by the Children Act 1989) who are caring for children from abroad are required by law to notify the local authority of a private fostering arrangement (at least 6 weeks before, otherwise immediately, certainly within 48 hours of the child arriving) and must be subject to a private fostering assessment (which considers the possibility of child trafficking) to ensure that they are suitable and safe carers. Notification to Safeguarding and Support also applies to a child under age 16 (or 18 if disabled) being placed for 28 days or more in the care of someone who is not the child's guardian, or close relative, by a private arrangement. Private fostering can potentially mask child trafficking, when traffickers use the arrangement to formalise having a trafficked child in their home as a 'fostered' child. It is therefore imperative that the possibility of child trafficking be considered when making an assessment of a private fostering arrangement. These procedures are essential to safeguard children who are vulnerable because they are without the care and protection of their parents or legal guardian. The ESW Team must be informed at all stages to ensure that children are tracked into suitable provision and monitored regularly.

### **Children who are at risk of forced marriage**

The definition of forced marriage accepted by HM Government and other statutory agencies is “a marriage conducted without valid consent of one or both parties where duress is a factor”. Forced marriage is contrary to UK law (Matrimonial Causes Act 1973). If there are concerns that a child is in danger of a forced marriage, local agencies and professionals should follow Child Protection procedures and contact the Safeguarding and Support Department (CAFAT) and Police and seek advice from the Forced Marriage Unit. Under no circumstances should local authorities approach family members about forced marriage, as they may agree with what is being done and may be involved in taking the young person abroad to marry. Approaching them could thus jeopardise a young person’s safety and put them in danger of physical violence. Front line professionals including teachers, Social Care, Health Care, Police, Housing, should refer to the HM Government’s *‘Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling Cases of Forced Marriage’* to better identify and protect children and young people at risk of forced marriage. To increase knowledge and understanding of forced marriage, the Safeguarding and Support annual training plan now includes this topic area.

### **Children of homeless families in temporary accommodation, houses, multiple occupancy or B&B**

Living in temporary accommodation can have impact significantly on the well-being of children. Placement in temporary accommodation, often at a distance from previous support networks or involving frequent moves, can lead to children falling through the net and becoming disengaged from education, health, social care and welfare support systems. Children may experience disruption to schooling and may cease to attend due to transport issues, cost and physical distance involved in staying in their original school. They may also experience delays in being admitted to school if moving to a new area or put off applying while waiting for more permanent accommodation which may be in a different catchment area. In Wrexham a protocol exists with Housing to ensure that vulnerable children are identified and supported, and advice is provided to parents regarding admissions procedures and any transport issues as appropriate. The Housing Department notifies CAFAT of any children who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless in order for CAFAT to undertake an initial assessment and signpost to other services as required. Other departments within the Children and Young People Service are contacted as part of this assessment to gain information about the child's circumstances and agree the support required. 6-weekly meetings take place between the Head of Service for Family Support, the Housing Operations Manager and Principal Housing Services Officer to discuss and attempt to resolve issues on cases to ensure that statutory joint responsibilities are met. These meetings provide an opportunity to raise concerns about children of tenants missing education which, if appropriate, are referred to the ESW Team.

### **Children with long-term medical or emotional problems**

Most pupils will at some time have medical conditions that may affect school attendance, with some pupils having medical conditions which, if not properly addressed, could limit their access to education. Such pupils are regarded as having medical needs. Most pupils with medical needs are able to attend school and with additional support can fully access the National Curriculum and other school activities. However depending on the nature of the pupils’ needs, schools may need to take extra care in supervising activities to ensure that pupils and others are not put at risk which may make attendance problematic. In such cases schools should draw on the individual procedures in the form of health care plans to ensure ongoing attendance at school. Pupils with ongoing medical conditions who are absent from school for long periods may suffer discontinuity of education and difficulties reintegrating into school. There is a risk of pupils getting lost in the system, especially when they are discharged from hospital to a provision in another authority. In such cases effective communication is vital between hospital and home Local Education Authorities. Agencies in Wrexham follow the Wrexham Reintegration Protocol which provides specific guidance. Under Section 19 of the Education Act 196, the LEA has the responsibility to provide education for children who are unable to attend school due to medical reasons, and to minimise, as far as possible, the disruption to mainstream schooling by providing continuity in education, taking into account the medical needs of the child. There is a need to pay particular attention to ensuring that there is adequate provision for pupils suffering from mental illness, such as anxieties, depressions, school phobia, including separation anxiety and school refusal associated with depression, as these difficulties may be preventing some children from attending mainstream school. In these cases, links with Partners enables support to be provided from mental health practitioners (CAMHS), school nurses, educational psychologists and ESWs.

### **Young parents and pregnant pupils**

Wrexham Local Authority, in line with WAG guidelines, does not consider pregnancy or parenthood a bar to education. It is expected that all pregnant or parenting pupils will continue to access the level of education that is appropriate given the ability of the pupil. The young parent will be permitted a short period of authorised absence to allow for the delivery of her baby and will not be excluded from school as a result of her pregnancy / parenting role. The Authority expects that any pupil finding herself pregnant will not absent herself from education on the grounds of pregnancy, provided she has no significant medical complications. The Authority expects the pupil to return to as close to full-time education as can be reasonably offered as soon as she is medically fit and to continue until the end of her normal period of compulsory education. Cyfle, a specialist, dedicated educational service with free childcare facilities, is provided to ensure a safe and supportive environment for pupils and their babies. Pupils are encouraged to transfer to Cyfle from between the 28th and 34th week of pregnancy until they are ready to return to mainstream or until the end of compulsory education; whichever is most appropriate. Cyfle keeps a register, monitors attendance and follows the absence procedures for mainstream schools. Pupils who refuse to attend education purely because of pregnancy or parenthood are followed up by the ESW Team as with other pupils missing education with the view to quickly re-engaging them. In the case of young fathers, any pupil who finds that he is to become a father is permitted authorised absence to attend parenting classes and routine scans etc. He is also permitted a reasonable period of 'paternity leave' to cover the birth and the immediate period thereafter. Unless the baby is seriously ill, the father will negotiate with the mother that only one parent misses school to attend routine health checks etc.

Cyfle's whole remit is to support pupils to remain in education and progress to further education and employment. Cyfle staff work closely with the pupil and family, the feeder school, ESW and midwife and health visitor as appropriate. If a female is already missing from education and becomes pregnant, Cyfle will pick her up through the midwifery service and support her back into education, or will forward her details to the ESW Team if she refuses to accept Cyfle support.

### **Children previously educated within the independent sector who are excluded or withdrawn**

Independent schools adhere to regulatory standards in order to remain registered and operate lawfully and the Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2003 prescribe seven groups of standards, with standard 3 relating to the welfare, health and safety of pupils. Wrexham County Borough does not have any independent schools, yet Wrexham pupils may attend independent schools in neighbouring authorities which will have their own admission and exclusion policies. Children from independent schools in neighbouring authorities are easier to identify as part of the annual admission round, but not so easy if they transfer mid-term and the school does not inform the Admissions Team. Schools should upload CTFs of such pupils on to the Lost Pupil Database using the MMMMMM code. Guidelines are issued to schools by the MIS team and there is also a paragraph in the new School Admissions Code. If a pupil transfers into a Wrexham school mid-term from an out of county independent school, the request is dealt with in the same way as other mid-term transfers. If the pupil previously attended an English or Welsh school, their CTF may have been posted to the Lost Pupil Database and could be retrieved by the local authority and forwarded to the receiving school. Or, a new Unique Pupil Number would be issued by the school if the pupil had never attended a community or aided/foundation school previously. Any exclusion would be dealt with according to the exclusion procedures of the Wrexham ESW Team Manager.

### **Truancy Patrol**

The ESW Team and North Wales Police run the Wrexham Truancy Patrol to reduce truancy and unauthorised absence and to locate children and young people outside or missing from the education system. Patrols normally take place twice a week and involve a member of the ESW Team and a Police Officer and are linked to CCTV. Protocols and procedures are in place to govern the patrol effectively. The Truancy Patrol Coordinator supplies information to the Patrol, such as excluded pupils, pupils educated otherwise than at school (EOTAS) and dates of holidays and training days. The Coordinator has a direct link to the Education Inclusion Department to check all systems for information about pupils. Follow up procedures include the local authority notifying the school, parent/carer and ESW of the pupil picked up by the Truancy Patrol, forwarding copies of data collected via Truancy Patrol forms to the Youth Justice Service and Police and sending annual statistics to the Crime and Disorder Panel. In most cases, children who are picked up on their own are returned to their base school by the Patrol.

## 9. LOCATING A CHILD, DETERMINING NEEDS AND IDENTIFYING PROVISION

- 9.1 Children who are developing poor attendance levels are identified through schools' own practice of screening registers and making referrals to the ESW Team, as well as via the termly nil attendance reports produced for investigation by the ESW Team and the use of S2S and Lost Pupil Database.
- 9.2 Schools must contact parents/carers on the first day of absence to locate the child and once the school has completed the processes to locate the pupil listed in the CME Checklist for Schools, they should refer the case to the ESW Team Manager within 10 days. If the child is LAC or on the Child Protection register, the case must be immediately referred to Safeguarding and Support. All referrals are recorded on a CME database which records the education status of children missing from education and details the progress made to access education.
- 9.3 The database is updated regularly by the Education Inclusion Department to take account of any changes, as all steps to locate a child should be recorded contemporaneously and kept confidential, as full records would be required if a child is reported missing to the police, a victim of crime, or if a Serious Case Review (SCR) is carried out. Details recorded on the CME database will include:
- Child's personal details and date referred to the CME Officer;
  - Date left education without known destination or date identified and referred if new to the area;
  - Last known educational placement;
  - Date it was considered that home education provision was not suitable;
  - Date of assessment if required;
  - Date and form of provision determined and date moved into provision.

**The CME Checklist for Schools and Unexplained Absence Procedures can be found in Appendix 3.**

- 9.4 Schools should regularly inform parents of the importance of notifying the school or any planned family moves or events and providing a forwarding address if they are made aware that a child is moving. However, if a family does leave without notice, the following procedures are taken:
- The Admissions Team has a system of contacting local authorities to search for a child;
  - All Education Social Work Teams have an informal arrangement where a 'search letter' is sent to the local authority where it is thought that the family may now be residing;
  - The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 Regulation 9(1)(g) states that *where a pupil has been continuously absent for four or more weeks, his name may not be deleted from the admissions register until both the school and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil.* In Wrexham the LEA would be the ESW Team.
- 9.5 Procedures for admissions, transfers and transitions are outlined in the '*Parents Guide to Education Services in Wrexham*'. In terms of registrations and transitions, the Admissions Team sends application information to all schools to disseminate to parents/carers of children due to commence full-time education and follows up those who fail to complete an application. The '*Parents Guide to Education Services in Wrexham*' is also available at Contact Wrexham and on the WCBC internet for parents/carers to access. The Admissions Team also tracks transitions by sending application information to parents/carers of all Year 6 pupils via schools and again follows up cases of non-submission in liaison with the primary school to ensure that parents/carers apply for secondary education. In the main admissions round and in the case of in-year admissions, where a place is offered and the child does not attend, the school contacts the ESW Team to investigate further.
- 9.6 If a school knows which school a pupil is moving to they must send the Common Transfer File (CTF) to the receiving school via School 2 School (S2S) no later than 15 school days after the pupil ceases to be registered at the previous school. The new school may then apply for the full school record. An automated email will inform receiving schools that a CTF is available for collection. If the new school is unknown and all 'reasonable efforts' to locate the child have been unsuccessful, after 4 weeks the ESW team may agree for the child to be removed from roll and a lost pupil CTF to be created and coded XXXXXXXX (destination unknown) or MMMMMMMM (moved to Independent Sector or out of country). This will be uploaded onto S2S and stored in the Lost Pupil Database. If a new pupil is admitted and the CTF is not available, the Lost Pupil Database can be searched by the Local Authority and if found can be forwarded to the school. This process is detailed in Circular 18/2006 *Education Records, School Reports and the Common Transfer System* and advice about S2S and the CTF system can be obtained from Wrexham MIS Team.

The Admissions Officer runs reports during the allocation process at all entry levels to identify 'unallocated students' and track those who have yet to submit applications for places during the annual admission round. Schools are also contacted at the beginning of the academic year to check that all allocated pupils attend.

- 9.7 Identifying children missing from education is only part of the task; placement in appropriate provision is vital. Once children have been identified and contact established with the family, they are referred to the appropriate service. In many cases parents require advice and support to access placements, thus the Admissions Team assist parents in this process and liaise with other departments and services to support the child into an appropriate setting where their needs will be met. Details of progress made to access education are recorded in the CME database.
- 9.8 Information about children not in suitable education, awaiting placement, permanently excluded, educated otherwise or in custody is provided to Careers Wales annually and if not known by Careers Wales should be followed up as part of the Careers Wales annual 'Destinations' survey.

### 10. MONITORING ATTENDANCE

- 10.1 All schools and alternative providers are required to have systems in place for monitoring attendance. Consistent with the duty to safeguard the welfare of children, all schools, settings and local authority services should have robust procedures for tracking the whereabouts of children.
- 10.2 Every school should refer continuous pupil absences of more than 10 school days to the ESW Team for investigation where the reason for the absence is unknown. School should only delete a child's name from the register in liaison with the ESW Team. Schools should keep evidence that supports the reason and date that a pupil was removed from roll and retain written documentation for all pupils moving to other schools to demonstrate their whereabouts and justify their removal from roll. Prior to any school removing a pupil from school roll (other than for permanent exclusion or the normal transfer process), the school must inform the ESW Team.
- 10.3 Children are tracked into provision via the Admissions Team processes until attendance is confirmed and details of the school recorded against the child. Good practice suggests that attendance is monitored for one term to ensure that there is no repetition of the issues that resulted in the child previously going 'missing'. However, where a child is due to start or transfer school and does not arrive, the school should make contact with the parent/carer. If the school receives no response within a week, they should contact the ESW for assistance. Where Child Protection concerns exist or a social worker is involved, the school must contact Safeguarding and Support immediately.

### 11. TRACKING AND CROSS BOUNDARY ARRANGEMENTS

- 11.1 If a child goes missing from a Wrexham school but lives in another authority and the school fails to locate the child after contacting the parent and following the processes in the CME Checklist for Schools, the school would contact the ESW Team to contact the counterparts in the home authority. If Child Protection concerns exist, the school must contact Safeguarding and Support immediately. If a child is permanently excluded from a Wrexham school but lives in another authority, the host authority is responsible for providing education for the child until the permanent exclusion is ratified.

### 12. INFORMATION AND DATA SHARING

- 12.1 Sharing information is vital for early intervention to ensure that children receive the services that they require, to protect them from harm from abuse or neglect, and to prevent them from offending. Agencies and professionals have an individual and collective responsibility to provide a duty of care which includes the duty to share and exchange information, particularly in terms of Child Protection. In these circumstances there should be no barriers to the sharing and exchanging of information so that a proper assessment can be made to identify vulnerability, needs and most importantly risks, so as to inform an appropriate course of action. Information sharing also falls under the Fair Processing Notice (Privacy Notice) and Education (Pupil Information) (Wales) Regulations 2004 as amended in 2007, and secure systems are used to share personal information and if further information needs to be sent across authorities S2S would be used.

**A list of the legislative basis upon which information sharing sits is detailed in *Appendix 1*.**

**13. CONCLUSION**

- 13.1 This policy supports the collaboration between stakeholders to support children missing from education, as it is vital that clear processes are in place to identify, refer, track and monitor children missing, or at risk of missing education, as safeguarding children in everybody's business.

## Appendices

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## Appendix 1 – Legislation and Statutory Functions

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996** provides that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- **Section 8 of the Education Act 1996** provides that compulsory school age starts on the relevant day on or after a child's fifth birthday and ends on the specified day of the school in which the child's sixteenth birthday falls. Regulations provide that the relevant days are the 31 August, 31 December and that the specified day is the last Friday of June.
- **Section 14(1) of the Education Act 1996** provides that a local education authority must make sure there are sufficient schools for providing education in their area. For these purposes, the schools must be sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide all pupils with the opportunity of appropriate education (s.14(2)). "Appropriate education" means, broadly, education which is desirable in view of the pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes and the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school (s.14(3)).
- **Section 19 (1) of the Education Act 1996** requires every local education authority to make arrangements for the provision of suitable education at school or otherwise than at school for those children of compulsory school age who by reason of illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not for any period receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them. For these purposes, "suitable" education is defined as "efficient education suitable to the age, ability, aptitude and to any special educational needs the child (or young person) may have." (s.19(6)).
- **Section 19(4A) of the Education Act 1996** provides: "In determining what arrangements to make under subsection (1) in the case of any child or pupil, a local education authority shall have regard to guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State."
- **Section 436A of the Education Act 1996** requires local authorities to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are not receiving suitable education.
- **Section 437 (1) of the Education Act 1996** provides that if it appears to a local education authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they must serve a notice in writing on the parent (a school attendance order) requiring him to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such.
- **Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995** under regulation 9(1)(c): The name of the child can only be deleted from the admissions register of the school under certain conditions.
- **Section 175 of the Education Act 2002** (which came into force on June 1 2004) imposes a duty upon LEAs and governing bodies to exercise their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. For these purposes, "functions" includes the powers and duties of LEAs and governing bodies.
- **The Children Act 2004** includes various provisions relating to safeguarding and promotion of welfare of children in Wales (section 25 – 29) including: a duty upon each Children's Services authority to promote co-operation between it and various other bodies to improve the well-being of children so far as relating to (amongst other things) education and training a duty upon various bodies including Children's Services authorities to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of Children provision for the Secretary of State to put into place information databases for the purposes of arrangements under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 or (a) and (b) above, and a framework for the sharing of information contained in such data bases for such purposes.
- **Section 52 Children Act 2004** Duty on the local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked after by them, includes in particular a duty to promote a child's educational achievement.

- **The Children Act 1989** includes the following provisions: Section 17, defines a child ‘in need if s/he is unlikely to achieve or maintain (or have the opportunity to) a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him/her of services; or his/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him/her of such services; or s/he is disabled. Section 47, Children Act 1989 places a duty on local authorities to make enquiries into the circumstances of children considered to be at risk of ‘significant harm’ and, where these enquiries indicate the need, to undertake a full investigation into the child’s circumstances. Section 47(1) provides ‘where as a result of any such enquiries, it appears that there are matters connected with the child’s education which should be investigated, they shall consult the relevant local education authority’. (Section 31 states that ‘harm’ means, ill treatment of health or development. ‘Development’ means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development).
- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** Legislation and practice in child protection are underpinned by principles derived from Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by the UK Government in 1991. These principles are:- each child has a right to be treated as an individual; each child who can form a view on matters affecting him or her has the right to express those views if he or she so wishes; parents should normally be responsible for the upbringing of their children and should share that responsibility; each child has the right to protection from all forms of abuse, neglect or exploitation; so far as is consistent with safeguarding and promoting the child’s welfare, public authorities should promote the upbringing of children by their families; and any intervention by a public authority in the life of a child must be properly justified and should be supported by services from all relevant agencies working in collaboration.
- **The European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR) /The Human Rights Act 1998** Missing person enquiries are conducted within the legal parameters specified by common law in terms of a duty to provide care and protection and within a mixture of legal conventions, case law, internal law in terms of ECHR and domestic laws, for example the Human Rights Act 1998. The rights and freedoms of the Convention that may be particularly relevant to the investigation of missing persons include:-

  - **Article 2 Right to Life** - This places a positive responsibility on the police service to respond effectively to all reports of missing persons so as to identify those cases that require more attention to minimise the number of cases that end in loss of life or harm to individuals;
  - **Article 2 Protocol 1** of the European Convention on Human Rights provides that: “No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions.” The general right to education comprises four separate rights:
    - I. A right of access to such educational establishments as exist;
    - II. A right to an effective (but not the most effective possible) education;
    - III. A right to official recognition of academic qualifications.
    - IV. As regards the right to an effective education, for the right to education to be
    - V. meaningful the quality of the education must reach a minimum standard.
  - **Article 8 Right to Respect for Private and Family Life** When investigating the circumstances of any disappearance or appointing an Investigating Officer/Family Liaison Officer, cognisance must be taken of the intrusion involved into the private life of that individual or family. Of particular note are those situations where an individual disappears deliberately; the right to do so should be respected but it must be balanced with the rights of the child, young person, family and the wider community. In general terms these rights should only be interfered with where the action is prescribed by law and it is necessary in a democratic society for reasons of:-
    - Public safety;
    - Preventing disorder and crime;
    - Protecting health and morals;
    - Protecting the rights and freedoms of others.
- **The Data Protection Act 1998** All those involved with children are likely to hold personal information about them, including sensitive personal information. The Act covers how personal information about living, identifiable people is to be protected. All organisations that hold or process personal data must comply. The Act requires that data is gathered and processed fairly, is held securely and is used solely for the purpose for which it was collated.

- **School Standards and Framework Act 1998** Sections 86 and 86A of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 require admission authorities to make arrangements enabling the parents of children in their area, to express a preference for a school and to give reasons for that preference. Where a parent expresses preference according to those arrangements sections 86 and 86B place a specific duty on admission authorities to comply with that preference, subject to certain exceptions. If parent's preferences are not met there is a statutory right of appeal provided for by section 94 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.
- **Forced Marriage (Civil Protection ) Act 2008**
- **Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009** places a duty on the United Kingdom Borders Agency (UKBA) to safeguard the welfare of children. This is similar to the duty of safeguarding under section 28 of the Children Act 2004 which applies to local authorities and their partners. Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 repeals section 21 of the UK Borders Act 2007.

### Related Guidance and Information

- Welsh Assembly Government's **Inclusion and Pupil Support** - Circular No: 47/200
- Welsh Assembly Government's **Exclusion from Schools and Pupil Referral Units** - Circular No 1/2004
- Welsh Assembly Government's **Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children's Act 2004** Circular No. 12/2007
- Circular No. 005/2008: **Safeguarding Children in Education**: The role of local authorities and governing bodies under the Education Act 2002
- **All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008** - Produced on behalf of all Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Wales - <http://www.awcpp.org.uk/9547.html?diablo.lang=eng> Behaving and Attending: Action Plan Responding to the National Behaviour and Attendance Review - <http://new.wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/learningproviders/schools/nbaractionplan/?jsessionid=0mCwKf1QJYhVvMchWcw0kQnnttx3xpd1T1vb1vnLVrpDw9nK0Rp!-30296548?lang=en>
- **School Admissions Code and Appeals Code : Statutory code Document No:002/2009 and No:003/2009** These Codes impose requirements and offer guidance relating to the discharge of school admissions functions and contain specific guidance in relation to vulnerable children <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/schooladmission/?lang=en>
- Section 5 (Children Missing Education and the Lost Pupil Database) – **Educational Records, School Reports and the Common Transfer System** – the keeping, disposal, disclosure and transfer of pupil information. Guidance May 2006.
- **Section 164 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006** amends the Education Act 1996 (provision of information about individual pupil), by inserting a new section after 537A. This new section 537B relates to the provision of information about children receiving funded education outside of school and in January 210 will introduce an individual level data collection on children educated otherwise than at school (EOTAS). The collection will focus on children educated otherwise than at school as defined in Section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 i.e. those children of compulsory school age who, by reason of illness, exclusion or otherwise may not for any period receive suitable education.
- Welsh Assembly Government's guidance on **'The learning journey for young people placed by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) in Secure Children's Homes (SCHs) in Wales'** Circular No:020/2009
- **All Wales Youth Offending Strategy: Delivery Plan 2009-2011.** This has identified 6 priority areas including increasing engagement in education and training
- **Extending Entitlement:** Support for 11 to 25 Year Olds in Wales, 2002
- **Extending Entitlement:** Making It Real, 2004
- **All Wales Attendance Framework** – Sept 2009
- **Multi-agency practice guidelines: Handling cases of Forced Marriage** – July 2009
- **Towards a Stable Life and a Brighter Future** - Regulations and guidance to strengthen arrangements for the placement, health, education and wellbeing of looked after children – WAG, 2007.

### Statutory Functions Relating to Information Sharing

- The Children's Act 1989 states that all public agencies should work together to exchange and share information for the welfare and protection of children in the area.
- The Children Act 2004 imposes a specific duty to co-operate to improve children's well-being (s.25) and implies a duty to share information for strategic planning, and to put in place arrangements to facilitate sharing information about individual children to improve well-being.
- Section 28 of the 2004 Act also contains a duty to safeguard and promote the well being of children (also included in the Education Act 2002).
- Section 27 of the Children Act 1989 states that a local authority may request help from any local authority and other agencies in exercising their duty to provide support and services to children in need and Education staff have a duty to gather information regarding concerns.
- Sections 25 and 28 of the Children Act 2004 and 2006 Education and Inspections Act require the Authority and agencies to work together to improve the well-being of children and to safeguard and promote the welfare and wellbeing of all children. Children who are missing in education are at risk of social exclusion and are unlikely to be able to achieve in the future without having consistent educational provision.
- Section 2, Local Government Act 2000 places a responsibility on local authorities to promote the economic, social or environmental well being of children and families in the area. This includes the elimination or reduction of risk factors.
- Section 115, The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 authorises relevant authorities to disclose information where it is 'necessary or expedient' for the purposes of prevention or reduction of crime and identification and apprehension of offenders or suspected offenders.
- In order to ensure that the Human Rights Act is also complied with, and particularly Article 8 of the European Convention, any information sharing would need to be necessary, proportionate and in accordance with one of the legitimate aims set out in the Article, e.g., protecting the rights of others. So far as the common law of confidentiality is concerned, in the absence of consent, there would need to be an overriding public interest to justify disclosure – this would for example ordinarily include situations where there is a risk to the protection or well-being of the child without the information being shared.
- Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act 2004 provides guidance on information sharing in respect of children and young people. It covers all services, including health; education; early years and childcare; social care; youth offending; police; advisory and support services and leisure.

**Appendix 2 – Summary of Procedures for Locating a Missing Pupil**

Wrexham is committed to ensuring that pupils missing from education are quickly located and other authorities are supported in locating their missing pupils. We can achieve this effectively if our procedures:

- are underpinned by the legal requirements in relation to missing pupils;
- are interconnected with the School 2 School (S2S) Lost Pupil Database;
- are consistent with and support local Child Protection procedures.

The CME Officer is responsible for making all Wrexham schools fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to missing pupils and supporting them in meeting these responsibilities. The CME Officer will also monitor the operation of the CME procedures to ensure best practice with regard to Child Protection.

**Procedures in Wrexham**

If a child is missing from a Wrexham school and there are no Child Protection issues but the child:

- leaves without the school being advised by the parent which new school the child is to attend;
- fails to return from a holiday or an extended holiday after ten days of the expected date of return;
- fails to attend the new school following a transfer of phases;
- fails to turn up at school and there is no apparent reason;

the school should promptly take reasonable steps to contact the parent/carer and friends and relatives to locate the child. If after **10 days** of non-attendance and after the school has exhausted all processes within the CME Checklist and Unexplained Absence Procedures and still not located the child, the school should make a referral to the CME Officer and Education Social Work (ESW) Team (**Appendix 4**).

**The CME Checklist for Schools and Unexplained Absence Procedures can be found in Appendix 3.**

**If a child is on the Child Protection Register or the school has Child Protection concerns about a child, the school should immediately notify the Safeguarding and Support Department.**

All referrals made to the CME Officer will be recorded in the CME database within the Education Inclusion Department and updated regularly. The CME Officer will liaise with the ESW Team Manager to make reasonable efforts to identify the child's whereabouts. This will include:

- Checking internal school records, with members of staff and friends, siblings and relatives;
- Telephone calls / letters sent;
- A home visit to make enquiries at home (or known contacts) and with neighbours as appropriate and will take place immediately where there are Child Protection or welfare concerns;
- Checks made via Council databases (ONE, Admissions and Safeguarding and Support);
- Contact with other agencies known to be involved with the family;
- Enquiries made with the Housing Department, where appropriate;
- Enquiries made with LA Revenues e.g. Housing Benefit, Council Tax, Electoral Register.
- In cases where Domestic Abuse is known enquiries will be made with Women's Aid and Women's Safety Unit.

If at any time during the checking process the child is located, the ESW Team will:

- Inform the school of action to be taken and update the CME database;
- Work with other departments to identify a suitable provision and support re-engagement;
- Where an actual forwarding address is identified contact will be made with the Education Social Work Team or Education Welfare Service in the new Local Authority and a record made of this action.

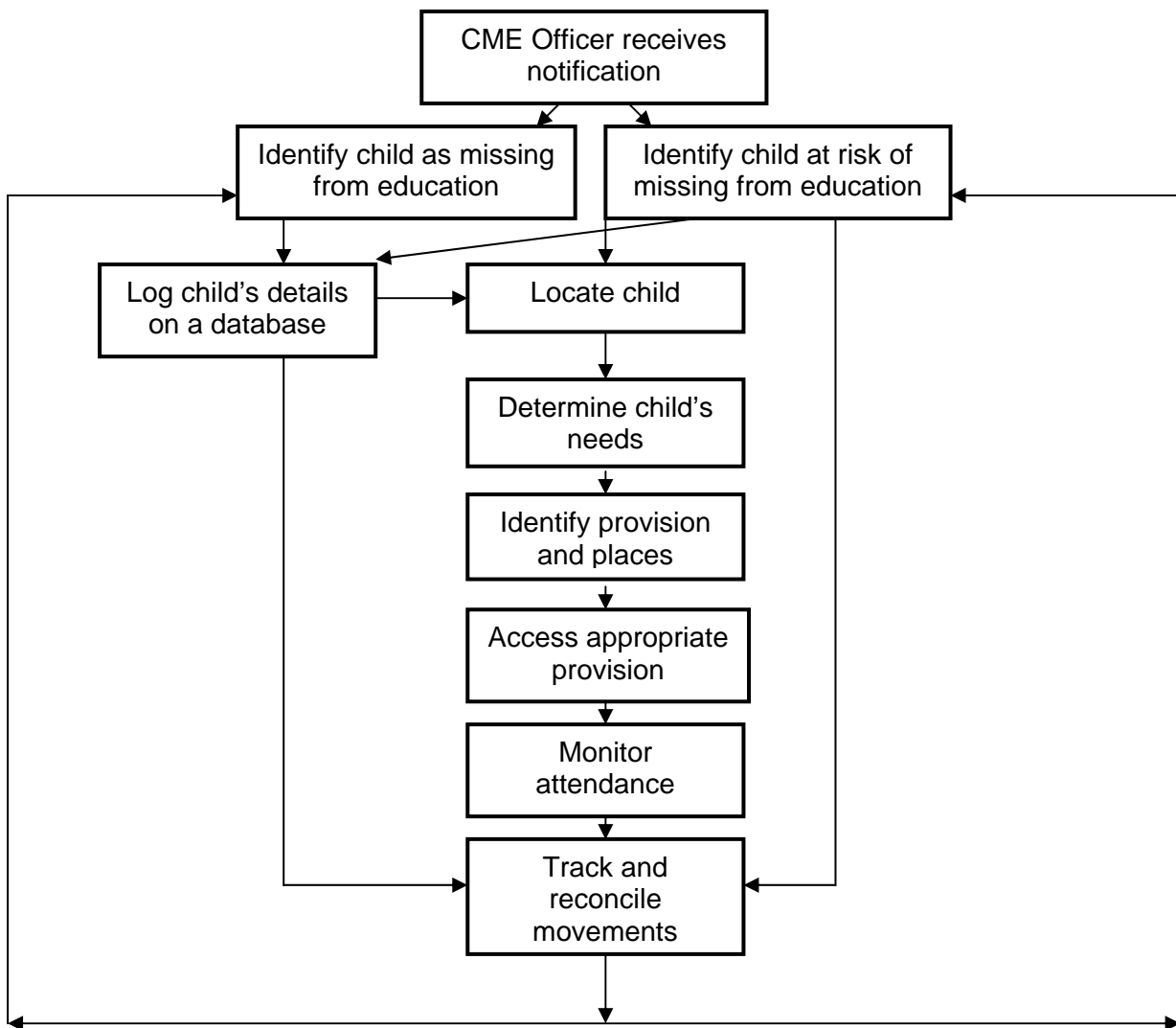
Following reasonable inquiries and the child is still missing, the ESW Team Manager will advise the Education Social Worker of the next steps to take in terms of the agencies to forward the details on to.

When a pupil has not attended for at least four weeks and all attempts by the ESW and schools to locate them have failed, the ESW will inform the school to remove the child from roll. The school should create a 'lost pupil' CTF with XXXXXXXX as the destination and upload onto the S2S site where it will be held in the Lost Pupil Database. The school should also keep a record of all actions taken and reasons why.

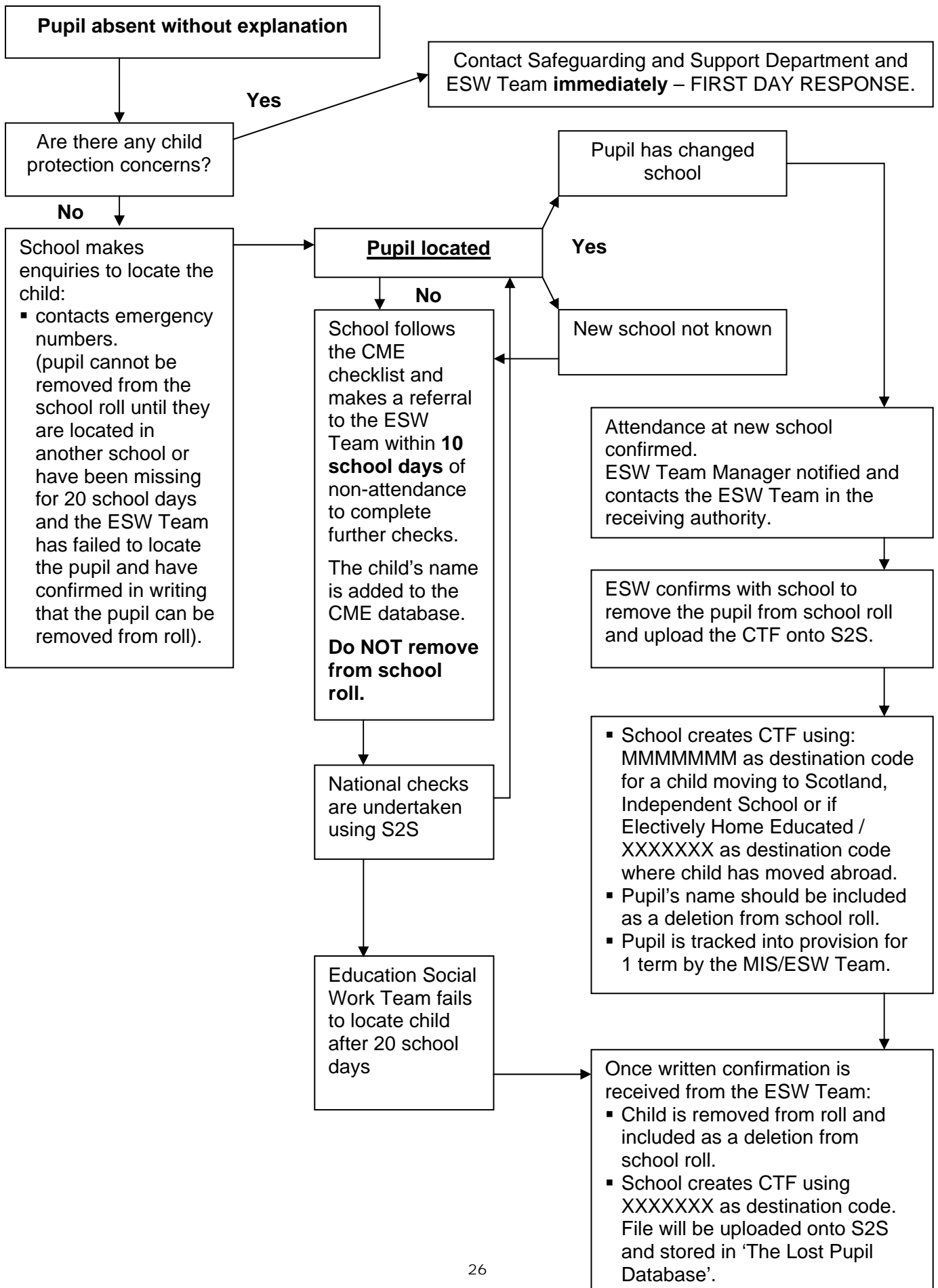
*The procedures will only function effectively if all schools are committed to adhering to the principle that:*

**Whenever a child joins or leaves a school a CTF MUST accompany that child to the new school**

**Process Steps**



**School Process Steps**  
**(read in conjunction with the CME Checklist for Schools and Unexplained Absence Procedures - Appendix 4)**



**Appendix 3 - Children Missing from Education (CME) Checklist for Schools**  
**(Read in conjunction with the Unexplained Absence Procedures)**

**Actions to be taken by SCHOOLS to locate the pupil (s)**

Full name of child:

Date of birth of child:  Gender:  Year group:

Name of parents/guardian (inc relationship to child)

Address in Wrexham (including telephone no):

**SCHOOL ACTIONS** - Has the school done the following? Attach checklist & evidence.

**If the school has any Child Protection concerns, the matter must be immediately referred to the Safeguarding and Support Department.**

**You must still proceed with the referral to the CME Officer and ESW Officer even if a Child Protection referral has been made.**

		Action Taken	Who & When	Outcome
<b>Wk 1</b>	<b>Day 1</b>	Check with school community - staff, SENCO, Learning Mentor, friends, siblings, relatives.		
		Carry out first day calling.		
		Assess vulnerability as detailed in the Unexplained Absence Procedures - Appendix 4.		
		Carry out telephone contact with all emergency numbers.		
		Write to last known address and emergency contacts if known.		
	Speak to appropriate agencies i.e. Careers Wales, youth workers, school nurse.			
<b>Wk 2/3</b>	<b>Day 10</b>	Referral made to CME Officer and ESW Team within 10 days using the referral form with the checklist and evidence attached.		
	<b>Day 11-19</b>	Continue to make efforts within school and assist the ESW Team and agencies in the search.		
	<b>Day 20</b>	If, after all enquiries the whereabouts of the pupil is unknown, DO NOT remove the pupil from roll until the ESW has concluded investigations and confirmation is received, even if more than 20 days of unauthorised absence will be accrued. Once it has been confirmed that the pupil can be deleted from roll the school must upload the CTF to S2S with XXXXXXX as the destination and record details. Removal from roll must comply with regulations and the local authority's procedure.		

A copy should accompany the referral form sent to the CME Officer: [Graham.edwards@wrexham.gov.uk](mailto:Graham.edwards@wrexham.gov.uk)

Date referred to CME Officer:  Name of School:

Position of referrer:  Contact number of referrer:

Signature of CME Officer.....Date referral received .....

### **Unexplained Absence Procedures** **(Read in conjunction with the CME Checklist for Schools)**

These procedures are followed when children are absent without explanation and include the following:

- Children who may be a victim of crime
- Asylum seeking/refugee families
- Children at risk of forced marriage
- Children of migrant workers
- Children with a Gypsy or Traveller background
- Children on extended holidays (see also 'Additional Guidance for Schools on Extended Visits Overseas').

There are some circumstances when a pupil is absent without explanation. Most cases are relatively minor whereby the child returns home quickly or is not believed to be in any serious danger. However, there are more serious or complex cases, including those where a child may become a victim of crime, such as being abducted by his/her parent or stranger, where a child may be at risk of forced marriage, where a child is from an asylum seeking/refugee family, where a child is from migrant worker family or where a child has a Gypsy or Traveller Background.

With all of the groups identified above, schools should contact parents on any day a pupil is absent without explanation (i.e. first day calling), including in cases where the pupil skips lessons after registration. By contacting them the school also ensures that they are aware that the child is not in school, thus enabling any parent/carer to take steps, where necessary, to establish that the child is safe.

If there is no answer, or the person who answered was not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or known to be safe, or the parent/carer answered but the child is not with them and they are unconcerned, the school should consider, with the school's designated member of staff for Child Protection, the degree of vulnerability of the child, to ascertain whether it is appropriate to make a referral to the Safeguarding and Support Department (CAFAT) and the police. Assessing vulnerability requires a combination of professional knowledge and experience of child welfare issues, issues surrounding the groups identified above and knowledge of local procedures.

#### **The following 'Assessing Vulnerability Form' includes questions that may assist in making the decision to refer to Children's Social Services (Safeguarding and Support).**

Schools should ask families for a forwarding address if they are made aware that a child is moving, yet if a family does leave without notice, the following procedures are taken:

- The Local Education Authority Admissions Department has a national system of contacting local authorities to search for the family;
- All Education Social Work Teams / Education Welfare Services have an informal arrangement in place where a 'search letter' is sent to the local authority where it is thought that the family may now be residing (see Appendix 2);
- The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 Regulation 9(1)(g) states that *where a pupil has been continuously absent for four or more weeks, his name may not be deleted from the admissions register until both the school and the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to locate the pupil.* In practice in Wrexham the Local Education Authority would be the Education Social Work Team.

### Assessing Vulnerability - part of the referral process

**The level of vulnerability must be re-assessed regularly as it may increase depending on new information or lack of information and the passage of time may lead to increased concern.**

**If through registration, the school identifies that a child is not in school, the school should:**

- 1) Contact the parent/carer by phone to seek the reason for the child's absence.
- 2) If the parent/carer answers the call and the child is not with them or known to be safe and they are concerned, they should be advised to contact all the people to whom the child is known in the locality, or places known that the child visits.
- 3) If there is no answer, or the person who answered was not the parent/carer and the school is not reassured that the child is at home or known to be safe, or the parent/carer answered but the child is not with them and they are unconcerned, the school should consider, with the school's designated member of staff for Child Protection, the degree of vulnerability of the child, to ascertain whether it is appropriate to make a referral to the ESW, Safeguarding and Support and/or Police.

### **Higher Priority**

**The following issues and questions should be considered when assessing the vulnerability of the child in question:**

- Is this very sudden and unexpected behaviour?
- Has the child/young person gone missing with their family?
- Has the child/young person gone missing without their family?
- Is there any reason related to the health, ethnicity or culture to believe the child/young person is at risk of harm? (e.g. forced marriages, female genital mutilation)
- Is there any reason related to the ethnicity or culture to believe the child/young person has gone missing due to family circumstances? (e.g. asylum seeking/refugee families, children of migrant workers, children with Gypsy or Traveller background)
- Have there been suspicions in the past concerning this child and family which together with the sudden disappearance are worrying?

Where there is genuine concern that a child or young person's safety and/or well-being is at risk, it is essential to take action quickly as delays can see problems escalate and also hamper an effective investigation of the circumstances in which the child is living.

**If the answers are 'yes' then refer to Safeguarding and Support (CAFAT) and/or Police and Local Authority Designated Officer for Child Protection in line with local LSCB procedures and Local Procedures for Schools ratified by the LSCB.**

- Is the child/young person subject to a child protection plan (on the Child Protection Register) or has there been past involvement with Children's Social Care Services about matters of child protection concern?
- Are they looked after by the Local Authority?

**If the answers are 'yes' then inform the allocated Social Worker (or Duty Social Worker if not allocated) and the Education Social Worker or Education Social Work Team.**

**The following may also may also assist judgement in making a referral:**

- Is there current Social Care involvement?
- Have there been recent life events within the family, which in light of this sudden disappearance may be significant? (for e.g. changes in the household, births or deaths, divorce, redundancy, Asylum seeking/refugee family, children of migrant workers, children at risk of forced marriage, children with a Gypsy or Traveller background);
- How old is the child? (younger children are more at risk)
- Has the child been a victim of bullying or had disputes with staff?
- Have there been suspicions in the past, which together with the sudden disappearance are worrying?
- Have there been any concerns about the child associating with significantly older young people or adults?
- Are there health reasons to believe the child is at risk? e.g. essential medication
- Have there been concerns in the past about the child and family, e.g. drug/alcohol use, domestic violence, possible risks of forced marriage?

**If the answers are 'yes' the school must exercise judgement to decide action, speed of response and the use of LSCB procedures. The school must inform the allocated Social Worker (or Duty Social Worker if not allocated) and the Education Social Work Team.**

### **Lower Priority**

**The following may indicate the family may be avoiding contact and therefore the quicker the response the more likely they will be traced. Delay may lead to longer periods of interrupted education for the child/young person:**

- Has there been Safeguarding and Support involvement in the past?
- Is there a history of mobility?
- Are there immigration issues?
- Is there a history of poor attendance?
- Are there issues raised by the child/young person or by the family's immigration or asylum status?
- Has there been school or local authority intervention in relation to attendance e.g. visits by the Education Social Work Team, parenting contracts and Fixed Penalty Notices in relation to attendance?
- Is the child in the process of Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs (SEN)?
- Is the child of a Gypsy and Traveller background?

**If the answers are 'yes' the school must refer to the Education Social Work Team and Statutory Assessment Team where the child has a Statement of SEN. The Education Social Work Team will then refer the case on to the most appropriate department or service. E.g. If the child of concern is from an Asylum seeking/refugee or migrant worker family then the school should provide this information to the Education Social Work Team, who would then make contact with the English as and Additional Language (EAL) Service to gather information on the family to ascertain the whereabouts of the child and to provide translators to support where appropriate.**

Appendix 4 - Referral Form

**Children Missing from Education (CME) Referral Form**



**Child's details**

Full name of child:

Date of birth of child/age:  Ethnicity:

Gender of child:  Refugee/Asylum Seeker?  Yes / No

Is the child on the Child Protection register?  Yes / No In Public Care?  Yes / No

Name of parents/guardian (inc relationship to child):

Previous address (if new to the area):

Wrexham address (including telephone no):

Last known school or local authority:  Date last on school roll:

**Reason for referral (tick as appropriate)**

Child not registered at a school:  Unknown if child is registered at a school:

How did this child come to your attention? State the date that the child became known to you as missing education.

Other agencies involved with the child concerned?

Other details:

**Your Details**

Name of referrer:  Position:

Address:  Telephone number:

Email address:

Please return your form to: [graham.edwards@wrexham.gov.uk](mailto:graham.edwards@wrexham.gov.uk)

## Children and Young People Service

### Appendix 5 – Contact Details

Officer and Department	Telephone	Email Address
<b>CME Officer</b> (HoS: Education Inclusion)	01978 298723	<a href="mailto:Graham.edwards@Wrexham.gov.uk">Graham.edwards@Wrexham.gov.uk</a>
<b><u>Children with medical needs</u></b> (HoS: Education Inclusion)	01978 297505	<a href="mailto:education@wrexham.gov.uk">education@wrexham.gov.uk</a>
<b><u>Children victims of crime, exclusions</u></b> (ESW Team Manager and Child Protection Lead Officer for Schools)	01978 298850	<a href="mailto:Gerwyn.matthews@Wrexham.gov.uk">Gerwyn.matthews@Wrexham.gov.uk</a>
<b><u>Children and Young People Service (CYPS)</u></b>	01978 297505	<a href="mailto:education@wrexham.gov.uk">education@wrexham.gov.uk</a>
<b><u>Children in the independent sector who are excluded or withdrawn</u></b> (Admission Team Manager)	01978 297505	<a href="mailto:a&amp;t@wrexham.gov.uk">a&amp;t@wrexham.gov.uk</a>
<b><u>Management Information Systems (MIS) Team</u></b> (MIS Team Support)	01978 297505	<a href="mailto:education@wrexham.gov.uk">education@wrexham.gov.uk</a>
<b><u>Children and young people who are taken on extended holidays or heritage visits and children educated other than at school</u></b> (Senior School Improvement Officer responsible for EOTAS and Extended Holidays)	01978 297505	<a href="mailto:education@wrexham.gov.uk">education@wrexham.gov.uk</a>
<b><u>Young Runaways, sexual exploitation, fleeing domestic abuse and living in refuges, Child Protection, LAC, privately fostered, at risk of forced marriage</u></b> Duty Officer - Child and Family Assessment Team (CAFAT) - Safeguarding and Support	01978 292039 (0845 0533 116 outside office hours)	
<b><u>Children in the criminal justice system</u></b> (Youth Justice Service)	01978 297505	<a href="mailto:education@wrexham.gov.uk">education@wrexham.gov.uk</a>
<b><u>Asylum seeking or refugee, children of migrant workers, Gypsy, Roma, Traveller or transient families</u></b> (English as an Additional Language and Traveller Education Service)	01978 297505	<a href="mailto:education@wrexham.gov.uk">education@wrexham.gov.uk</a>
<b><u>Looked after Children (LAC)</u></b> (LAC Education Coordinator)	01978 297505	<a href="mailto:education@wrexham.gov.uk">education@wrexham.gov.uk</a>
<b><u>Forced Marriage Unit</u></b>	020 7008 0151	<a href="mailto:fm@fco.gov.uk">fm@fco.gov.uk</a> Out of hours: 020 7008 1500
<b><u>Young carers, children of homeless families</u></b> (Family Support Manager)	01978 297505	<a href="mailto:education@wrexham.gov.uk">education@wrexham.gov.uk</a>
<b><u>Young carers</u></b> Action for Children	01978 264040	<a href="mailto:louise.bayliss-chapman@actionforchildren.org.uk">louise.bayliss-chapman@actionforchildren.org.uk</a>
<b><u>Young parents and pregnant pupils</u></b> (Cyfle)	01978 297505	<a href="mailto:education@wrexham.gov.uk">education@wrexham.gov.uk</a>
<b><u>Special Educational Needs</u></b> Statutory Assessment Team - (Primary and Secondary)	01978 297505	<a href="mailto:education@wrexham.gov.uk">education@wrexham.gov.uk</a>

## Appendix 6 - Glossary

- CME** - Children Missing from Education
- CTF** - Common Transfer File - used to transfer pupil data between schools via S2S when pupils move schools. The same type of file is also used to transfer pupils to the Lost Pupil Database, using destination code XXXXXXXX
- CYPP** - Children and Young People's Partnerships
- EAL** - English as an Additional Language
- ESW** - Education Social Worker
- EOTAS** - Education Other Than At School
- HoS** - Head of Service
- LAC** - Looked After Child
- LA** - Local Authority
- LEA** - Local Education Authority
- LSCB** - Local Safeguarding Children's Boards
- NEET** - Not in Education, Employment or Training
- ONE** - The LEA's main pupil database system, formerly called EMS.
- SEN** - Special Educational Needs
- S2S** - School 2 School secure transfer system.
- TES** - Traveller Education Service
- UPN** - Unique Pupil Number - identifies each pupil in England and Wales and is allocated to each pupil according to a nationally specified formula on first entry to school (or perhaps in some cases earlier) and is intended to remain with the pupil throughout their school career regardless of any change in school or Local Authority.