

Children Missing from Education (CME) Procedure

This procedure should be read in conjunction with the council's Attendance at School: Policy and Operational Procedures, the guidance from CME (Scotland) Services as well as guidance relating to School to School (S2S) Transfer System.

Responses to Non-Attendance

When a child does not attend school, the school must respond in every case.

The response will depend on the circumstances of the absence, as follows:-

- Unexplained absence – 'Safe Arrival' procedure – Attendance at School: Policy and Operational Procedures (Appendix 1A and 1B)
- Persistent non-attendance/lateness/truancy – Attendance at School: Policy and Operational Procedures (Appendix 1C, 2 and 3)
- Child ceases to attend school but no evidence of alternative enrolment or home education – 'Children Missing From Education' procedure

Children Missing From Education Procedure

Action by School

When a child does not attend school, the school will follow the 'Safe Arrival' procedure outlined in Appendix 1 of Attendance at School: Policy and Operational Procedures.

If a child does not attend school for a period of 4 weeks (or considerably less for a vulnerable child) ***and*** no contact can be made with the child or family ***and*** there is no evidence of alternative enrolment or home education the child should be considered as 'missing from education'.

If a parent/carer informs the school that a child is being removed from the school ***and*** there is no evidence of alternative enrolment or home education within 4 weeks (or considerably less for a vulnerable child) the child should be considered as 'missing from education.'

All schools will follow appropriate procedures for the transfer of pupils and their records to alternative schools. Evidence of alternative enrolment will

normally be contact with another school to arrange for transfer of the pupil progress record. The School to School (S2S) Transfer System will assist in this process.

The school will decide whether a child is vulnerable based on their knowledge of the child and family and information available from partner and other agencies. A child will be considered vulnerable if he or she is on the child protection register, if there is a current or recent child protection investigation into the child or another member of the family or if the child is on supervision. This list is not exhaustive and other factors may give the school cause to consider a child vulnerable.

Before declaring a child 'missing from education' and informing the authority's Child Protection Officer (who is the CME co-ordinator), the school's Designated Member of Staff (DMS) should ensure that the following school level checks in relation to the absence have been undertaken:-

- Telephone call/letter home
- Home visit by social policy and/or health visitor
- Check with council services and partner agencies i.e. social policy and health for information on move or change of address where appropriate.
- Check with Pupil Placement for information on alternative enrolment within West Lothian.
- Check with link education officer if the child is now being educated at home.

When a school has identified a child as 'missing from education' and has undertaken the school level checks, the authority Child Protection Officer should be informed. The authority Child Protection Officer should be informed no later than 4 weeks after the child ceased to attend school (considerably less for a vulnerable child).

When a child is suspected of being 'missing from education' but the school term will end before a 4 week period of absence is completed, the authority Child Protection Officer should be informed before the end of the school term.

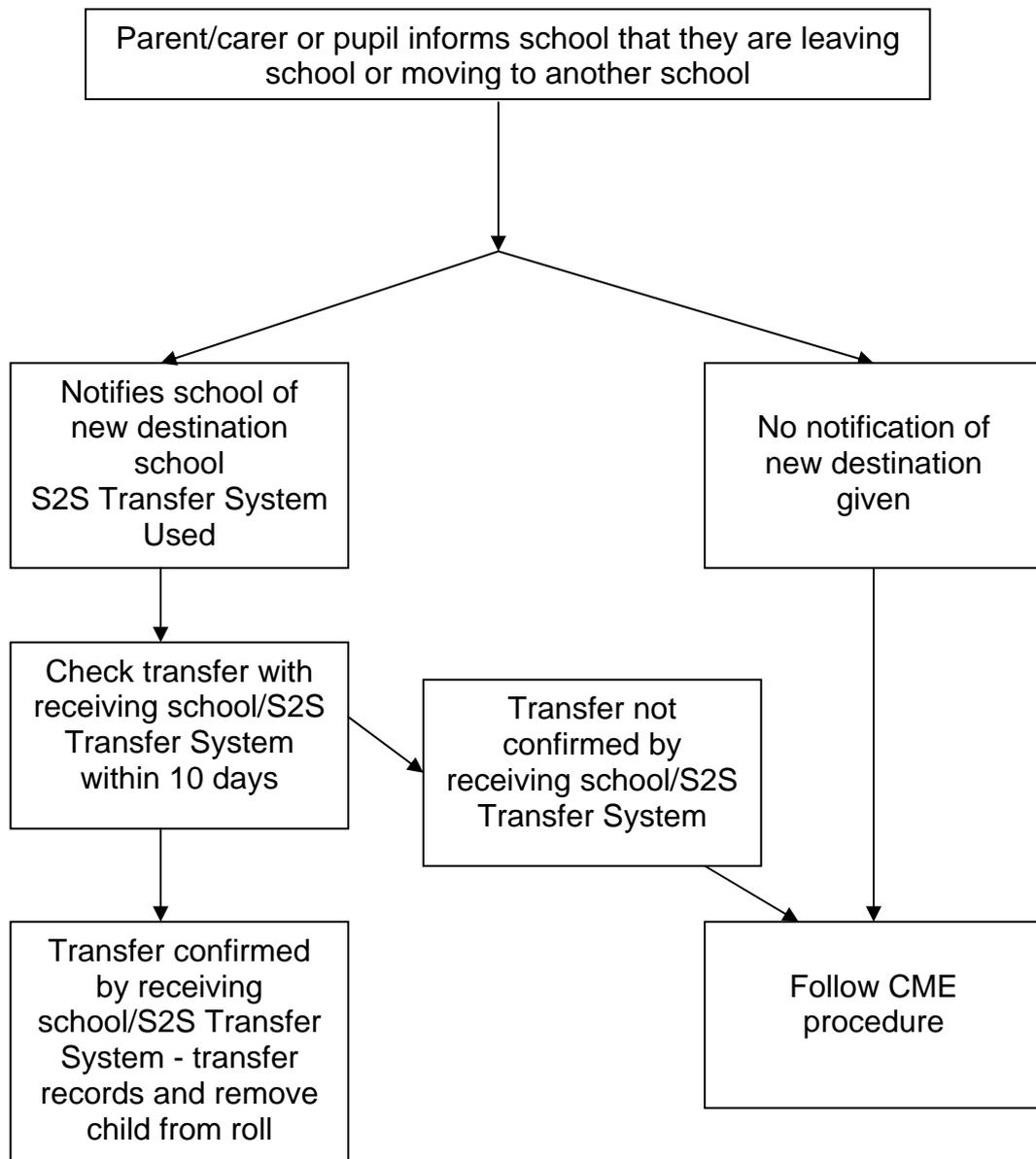
Action by Authority

The authority Child Protection Officer will undertake the following authority level checks:-

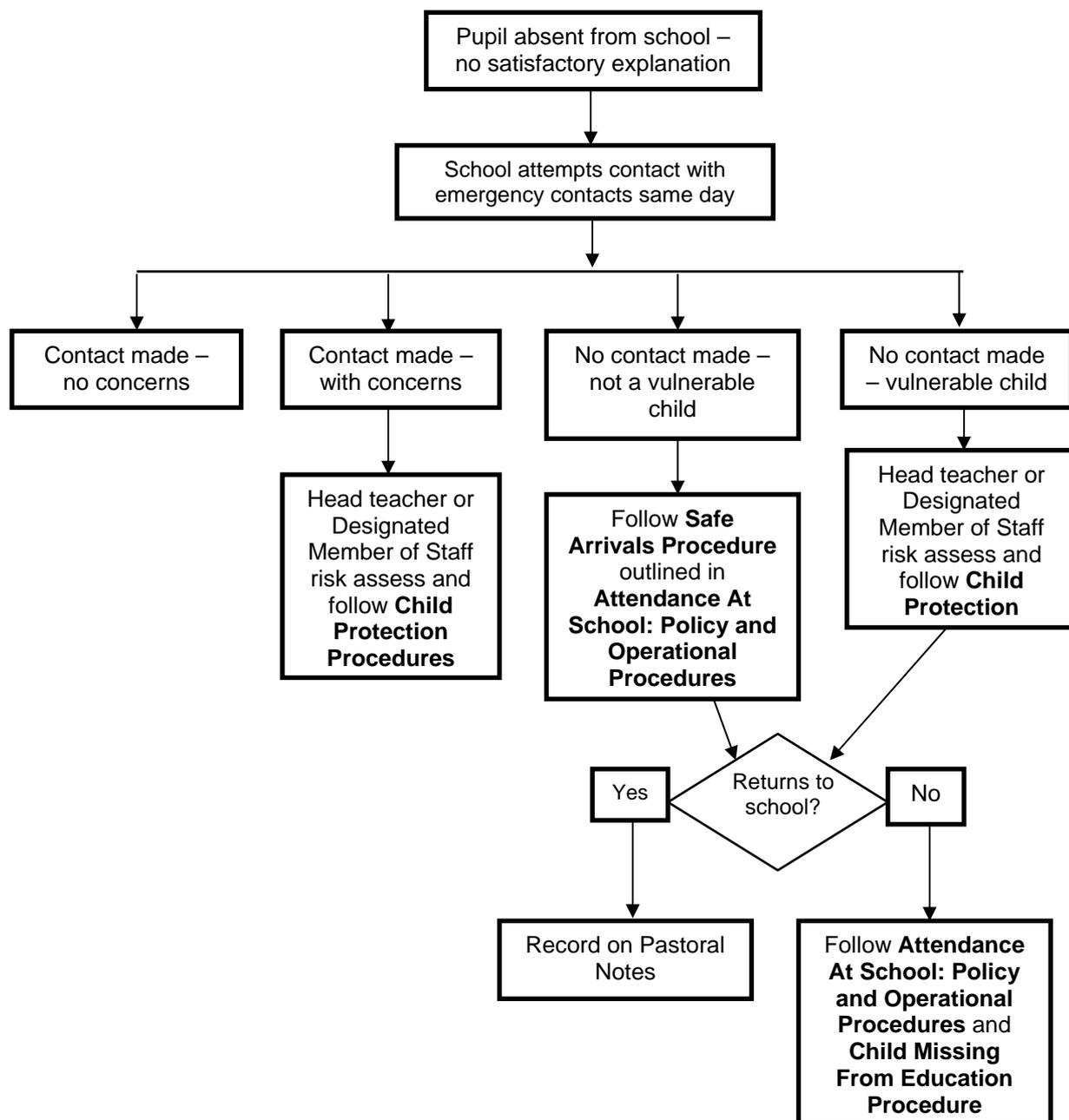
- Follow up checks with other services and partner agencies (i.e. social policy, housing, health and police) as appropriate.
- Contact any other local authorities' CME co-ordinators if there is an indication of a child's whereabouts

When the authority level checks have been undertaken the authority Child Protection Officer will refer the case to CME Scotland.

GUIDANCE ON TRANSFER OF PUPILS TO ANOTHER SCHOOL



GUIDANCE ON WHEN TO IMPLEMENT CHILD MISSING IN EDUCATION PROCEDURE



A Vulnerable Child:

- is on the child protection register (Notify Social Work Duty Manager for CP immediately)
- is the subject of a child protection investigation
- is a Looked After Child or Accommodated Child (Notify Social Work Duty Manager immediately)
- has or is in the process of being referred to the Children’s Panel
- has significant additional support needs
- has medical issues including mental health issues
- has a history of substance misuse personally and/or within the family
- has cultural issues
- is at the centre of a custody dispute.

Important points to note:

1. If at any time during the process the school or any other agency believes the child may be at risk, CP procedures must be implemented immediately.
2. If the child is on the Child Protection Register then the Social Work Duty Manager for Child Protection should be notified immediately.
3. Records should be kept of all actions taken, decisions reached and outcomes.