

Working Together to
Improve School Attendance



Children Missing Education and Children Missing from Education Policy

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This policy will be reviewed September 2026

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PART ONE – Children Missing Education

1. Introduction

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Local authorities should focus their resources effectively in early intervention in the lives of vulnerable children, to help prevent poor outcomes.

This policy is intended to inform Local Authority staff, schools, head teachers, governing bodies and other agencies about how we minimise and prevent “Children Missing Education (CME)”. It relates to children who are of statutory school age who do not currently have a school place, or their provision is unknown.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- The Education Act 1996
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>
- The Education Act 1996 (section 436A)
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/436A>
- Statutory Guidance for local authorities in England to identify children missing education (DfE 2013)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2024)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- The Local Authority's Fair Access Protocol – See Appendices (Under Review April 2025)
- Ofsted Report Nov 2013 'Children missing out on education'
<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141107025216/http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/pupils-missing-out-education>
- School Admissions Code
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-admissions-code--2>
- Sandwell School Admissions
<https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/schooladmissions>
- Statutory Guidance on the participation of young people in education, employment or training
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/participation-of-young-people-education-employment-and-training>
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/contents/made>
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Revised 2016)
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/regulation/8/made>
- Children Missing Education – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (DfE September 2016)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2024
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

1 Responsibility of Sandwell MBC

- Local authorities have a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to establish the identities of children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise. This duty only relates to children of compulsory school age.
- SMBC has a named Children Missing Education Officer who has responsibility for carrying out the Local Authority duties in accordance with S436A

The CME Officer maintains a list of Children Missing Education.

Sandwell MBC employs officers whose responsibilities include the identification and support of children missing education. These officers include:

Service Manager - Schools Attendance Support Service

CME Officers - Schools Attendance Support Service

Schools Attendance Support Officers - Schools Attendance Support Service

Pupil Tracking Officer – Admissions Service

- Arrangements made under section 436A also play an important role in fulfilling the local authority's wider safeguarding duties. This duty should therefore be viewed alongside these wider duties and local initiatives that aim to promote the safeguarding of children.
- Sandwell MBC will consult the parents of the child when establishing whether the child is receiving suitable education. Those children identified as not receiving suitable education must be returned to full time education either at a school or in alternative provision.
- Sandwell MBC has in place arrangements for joint working and information sharing with other local authorities and agencies.
- The ***Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023*** statutory guidance provides advice on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- Where there is concern for a child's welfare, this will be referred to Sandwell Children's Trust. If there is reason to suspect a crime has been committed, the police will also be involved. Where there is a concern that a child's safety or well-being is at risk, action will be taken without delay.
- Issuing School Attendance Orders (SAOs) to parents who fail to satisfy the local authority that their child is receiving suitable education, if the local authority deems it is appropriate that the child should attend school and prosecuting parents who do not comply with an SAO.

2. Responsibility of Parents

- Parents have a duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education. Some parents may elect to educate their children at home and may withdraw them from school at any time to do so unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order.

5. Responsibility of Schools

- Schools must enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries (See Appendices A, B & C) to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.
- Schools must monitor pupils' attendance through their daily register. Schools should agree with their local authority the intervals at which they will inform local authorities of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have missed ten school days or more without permission. Schools should monitor attendance closely and address poor or irregular attendance. It is important that pupils' poor attendance is referred to the local authority.
- Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

6. Safeguarding

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the welfare of children and to share information appropriately. This principle underpins Sandwell MBC's policy on Children Missing Education, and there is an expectation that all agencies and professionals will work together to ensure that children are participating in education. **See Appendix D Professional Curiosity**

If you are concerned about a child's safety i.e.

- You have a serious concern about the safety of a child
- You think a child is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed
- You are worried that a child is living in circumstances where they are treated badly and not cared for properly.

You MUST contact MASH on: 0121 569 3100

access_team@sandwellchildrenstrust.org

(MASH = multi agency safeguarding hub)

7. Deletions from Admissions Register & Informing the Local Authority

There is statutory guidance governing when schools can delete children from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 9 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2024.

Schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be removed from the admission register at a non-standard transition point under any of the grounds set out in the regulations, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply at standard transition points – where the pupil has completed the school's final year – unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided. [Removal from Roll Notification | Referral Forms | Schools Extranet](#)

8. Providing Information on Standard Transitions

DfE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance 2024, Page 11

Making Reasonable Enquiries

DfE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance 2024 Page 13 and Appendix A, B & C

Sharing Information with Others

DfE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance 2024, Page 17

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

9. Monitoring Arrangements – New Inspection Framework

Statistical data regarding children missing education will be presented to strategic and operational groups for the purpose of operational development and the safeguarding of children missing education. Such groups may include:

- Schools Attendance Support Service and Admissions Service
- School Fair Access Partnerships
- Quality Standards Programme Executive Sandwell Safeguarding Children’s Board, as requested

PART TWO - CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

SECTION ONE

1. Sandwell MBC is committed to the following principles

- All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. Children missing from education (CMfE) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET later in life.
- Sandwell MBC will ensure robust procedures and policies are in place to enable them to meet its duties in relation to these children, including the appointment of a named person to whom schools and other agencies can make referrals.
- Sandwell MBC is committed to supporting / monitoring all children not accessing full-time education in the usual way, including those who are accessing alternative provision full time away from mainstream school, regardless of where they are on roll; and maintain good information about the achievement and safety of any child or young person not accessing education in the usual way.
- All children are entitled to 25 hours education including children accessing alternative provision

2. Ofsted 'Pupils missing out on education (2013) Report

The Local Authority has responded to the recommendations raised in the report:

- The report draws attention to the fact that some local authorities are failing to educate children and young people and may be failing in their statutory duty to take reasonable steps to protect them.
- The main groups of children and young people who are the focus of the Ofsted report are those who:
 - have been permanently excluded
 - have social and behavioural difficulties and have personalised learning plans: this means that, by arrangement, they do not attend their usual school full time
 - have mental health needs and access Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), either as an in-patient or through services provided in the community
 - have medical needs other than mental health needs
 - rarely attend school and have personalised learning plans as part of attempts to reintegrate them into full-time education
 - are pregnant or are young mothers of compulsory school age
 - have complex needs and no suitable school place is available
 - are returning from custody and a school place has not been found for them
 - are new to the country and are awaiting a school place
 - are from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background and alternative provision has been made

Ofsted recommendations

The Local Authority will:

- Establish a central record of all children not accessing full-time education in the usual way, including those who are accessing alternative provision full time away from mainstream school, regardless of where they are on roll. Maintain quality information about the achievement and safety of any child or young person not accessing education in the usual way.
- Share information across local authority boundaries in a timely and appropriate way to minimise interruption to a child or young person's educational provision.
- Ensure that every child is on the roll of a school, regardless of circumstances, unless parents have elected to educate their child at home.

Schools, including academies and free schools, will:

- With immediate effect, stop unlawful exclusions and provide suitable support for children and young people with behavioural difficulties.
- Establish clear accountability for the achievement, safety and personal development of all children and young people who are on the school roll but not accessing school in the usual way, and for the quality and amount of provision made for them.
- Inform the local authority of any part-time education arrangements, regardless of the type of school
- Keep children and young people on the school roll during periods of illness or custody (or for as long as it is relevant), in line with Government policy and guidance.
- Respond quickly to any early signs of children and young people's raised anxiety or dips in their progress, attendance or engagement in learning.
- Give governors sufficient information about children and young people who are not accessing school in the usual way, so that governors can challenge the amount of provision being made and evaluate its effectiveness.

Health services, youth offending services, police, education services and other partners will:

- Agree on joint approaches to sharing information, to be used case by case, so that education provision and safeguarding for any child or young person who does not access education in the usual way is effective.

3. Inspection Implications

As part of Ofsted's Integrated Looked After Children and Safeguarding inspections of local authorities, they will ask for a report on children for whom the local authority is responsible who are of school age and who are not in receipt of full-time school education at the time of the inspection. This report should include for each child:

- The child's unique ID, date of birth, Unique Pupil Number (UPN)
- Type of educational provision being received, including home tuition
- Number of hours provision each week (where the child is receiving more or fewer than 25 hours)
- If the child has been excluded, the type of exclusion
- The date when the alternative provision began

4. Good Practice

- The Director of Children and Education Services within the Local Authority is responsible and held to account for ensuring that the authority knows about all children and young people who are unable to access school in the usual way; and that action is taken to ensure that they have the best possible provision for as much time as possible.
- Accurate data about any child or young person not accessing full-time education is gathered from all schools and services in the local area, regardless of their arrangements for governance, and analysed fully.
- Education Pathways (Multi-Agency) Group meets to discuss strategies for any children not in receipt of full time education, in whatever setting.
- Senior officers provide strong challenge and ensure that provision is flexible rather than simply expecting children and young people to fit into what is already provided.
- A responsible person has an overview of case histories, the nature of and reasons for the allocated provision, the timeline of the programmes and their effectiveness in terms of the academic achievement and personal development of the children and young people.
- Robust systems for working with other agencies, including CAMHS, Police, Youth Justice Service and local voluntary agencies, ensuring all parties share responsibility for providing all children and young people in the locality with the support they need to access full-time education – or as near to full time as their health allows.
- Responsibility for children and young people in a local area is shared and communicated effectively and taken on by all schools and education services, either through multi-agency meetings, locality arrangements or fair access panels linked to behaviour partnerships.
- Multi-professional teams take responsibility for monitoring and acting on the outcomes for children and young people who do not have access to school in the usual way.
- The professionals involved in the local area's multi-professional groups have high aspirations for all children and young people and are strongly committed to ensuring that educational provision contributes significantly to helping children and young people move forward successfully, by aiding treatment and recovery or discouraging reoffending.

3. Children at Particular Risk of being Missing from Education

DfE confirm that there are many circumstances where a child may become missing from education, so it is vital that local authorities make judgements on a case-by-case basis. Although not exhaustive, the list below presents some of the circumstances where children may be missing **from** education, i.e. on a school roll but not attending school regularly:

- **Pupils at risk of harm/neglect (including children who have been subject to a Child Protection plan)**
Children may be missing from education because they are suffering from abuse or neglect. Where this is suspected schools should follow local child protection procedures. However, if a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children's social care (and police if appropriate).
- **Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) families**
Research has shown that many children from these families can become disengaged from education, particularly during the secondary school phase. It is therefore important that schools inform the local authority when a GRT pupil leaves the school without identifying a new destination school, particularly in the transition from primary to secondary so they can attempt to facilitate continuity of the child's education. Although many are settled, some GRT families move regularly and their children can be at increased risk of missing education. The named CME officer within the local authority, can advise schools on the best strategies for ensuring the minimum disruption to GRT pupils' education, for example dual registration with other schools or the provision of electronic or distance learning packages where these are available.

- **Children of Service Personnel**
Families of members of the Armed Forces are likely to move frequently – both in the UK and overseas and often at short notice. Schools and local authorities should contact the MoD Children’s Education Advisory Service (CEAS) on 01980 618244 for advice on making arrangements to ensure continuity of education for those children when the family moves.
- **Missing children**
Children who go missing or run away from home or care may be in danger and are vulnerable to crime, sexual exploitation or abduction as well as missing education.
- **Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System**
Children who have offended or are at risk of doing so are also at risk of disengaging from education. Local authority Youth Justice Teams (YJS) are responsible for supervising those young people (aged 8 to 18). YJS should work with the local authority CME officer to ensure that children are receiving, or return to, appropriate full-time education. Where a young person was registered at a school prior to custody, the school may be able to keep the place open for their return.
- **Children who cease to attend a school**
There are many reasons why a child stops attending a school. It could be because the parent chooses to home educate their child. However, where the reason for a child who has stopped attending a school is not known, the local authority should investigate the case and satisfy itself that the child is receiving suitable education.
- **Children who have experienced domestic abuse or other adverse family circumstances (ACES)**
Children may feel the need to stay at home to protect a parent or are afraid of being asked questions in school.
- **Children at risk of exploitation, both criminal (CCE) and sexual (CSE)**
Children involved in CCE often believe that they can earn money being involved in criminality and therefore school is a waste of time. CSE victims may be prevented from attending school by the perpetrators.

There are also certain points at which children are most at risk of becoming missing from education, and the most common reasons for this include:

- Frequent house moves, periods of homelessness or time spent in refuges.
- Family breakdown.
- Parents “withdrawing” children from school.
- Schools off-rolling pupils without the correct checks and procedures being followed.
- Exclusion (official and unofficial).

Some children who are missing from education can be identified and supported back into education quickly; other children who have experienced more complex problems face tougher obstacles to getting back into suitable education. Local authorities must consider the reasons why children go missing from education and the circumstances that can lead to this happening.

Schools Attendance Support Officers work proactively with parents, internal and external professionals and other relevant bodies to identify those children not in receipt of a suitable education and to identify additional support to assist in securing a suitable education for these children. This may include identifying and securing alternative education provision and/or referrals to:

Early Help services
Horizons
Children's Social Care Services
Connexions
Other local authorities

SECTION TWO

Part-time Timetables

1. Introduction

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In some circumstances their education may be provided partially at school and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Time away from school to receive education in other ways must be recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate codes.

Sandwell MBC remains committed to every child's right to a full-time education and endorses the requirement that a reduced timetable cannot be implemented without the agreement of the parent / carer.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible. A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.

2. Legitimate and Lawful use of Reduced Timetables

- The Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to identify and track any child missing education. Any pupil on a Part-time Timetable (MPTT) is deemed to be at risk of missing education and similarly must be identified and tracked. Reduced timetables must only be used in limited circumstances, for example:
 - Where a pupil has a short-term medical condition that prevents full-time attendance for a time limited period.
 - As part of a staged reintegration following an extended period of absence.

It is important to note that there are **no statutory grounds** to support a reduced timetable. However, in **exceptional circumstances** schools may decide to implement one for a time limited period in order to support a pupil who cannot attend school full time.

- Pupils should be provided with sufficient and appropriately differentiated work to complete during the hours that they are not in school. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the work is marked, assessed and that constructive feedback is given to the pupil with regular frequency in agreement with parents, pupils also have the right to a lunch that should be provided prior to leaving or on arrival at school
- When the reduced timetable is introduced as an intervention for a behavioural difficulty, it will only very rarely be appropriate to repeat the intervention.

- In the event that a reduced timetable has not produced the desired outcomes, different interventions would have to be considered. Reduced timetables must **never** be used as an alternative to exclusion.

3. When might a reduced timetable be used?

- If a pupil has a serious medical condition where recovery is the priority outcome. These arrangements would be part of a “medical plan” agreed between the school and health professionals, this will support the use of a reduced timetable. Medical plans may include physical or mental health conditions. Please refer to “Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs”. (Section 12) for ongoing medical needs a plan should be in place
- In response to an assessment of need including referral to relevant bodies across education, health and care such as Inclusion and attendance, MAST, CAMHS or Educational Psychologists.
- When the child is Looked After or subject to a Child Protection or a Child in Need Plan a reduced timetable should only be used in the **most exceptional circumstances**. This should be agreed at the appropriate Team around the Child/Family meeting and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- The reduced timetable should ordinarily last no longer than one half term. The suggested maximum length of a reduced timetable is 8 weeks, we would refer to this as cycle 1. For reduced timetables that continue beyond 8 weeks the school must notify the Local Authority evidencing the review dates that have taken place, evidence of who is supporting the reduced timetable continuing, and the plan to ensure the child is back in full time education as soon as possible. We would refer to continuing RTT as entering cycles 2 then 3 if appropriate, all second and third cycles must be submitted to the LA.
- Any reduced timetable arrangements should be regularly reviewed every two weeks with appropriate documentation and consent.
- The objectives of the reduced timetable should be clearly understood by all parties from the on-set and parents **MUST** be in agreement.
- Parents/carers must indicate within the Personal Support Plan (PSP) how they will guarantee the pupil’s safeguarding off site and how school work will be supervised.
- Provided a pupil is medically fit, the combination of work completed at home and in school must constitute full-time education.
- Schools are required to complete the correct documents see contract attached. They **Must** inform the Local Authority of the timetable at the start, if further cycles are required and if the contract ends.
- School should ensure that the check list has been completed. (Section 10)

4. A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil’s wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

5. Pupils with an Education, Health & Care Plan

- A part-time timetable should only be used for a pupil with an Education, Health & Care (EHCP) in very limited circumstances. A pupil should not be put on a reduced timetable solely because of their special educational need as this may constitute discrimination. In some instances, a special educational need may also be a disability and therefore constitute a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.
- When a part-time timetable is being considered for a child with an EHCP, the school must secure the agreement of both parents/carers and the SEND officer to ensure that all elements of the specified provision will continue to be met through the reduced timetable arrangement. This means that no reduced timetable can be implemented with immediate effect. If it is required as an emergency measure, the SEN Code of Practice recommends that an annual review must be convened within two weeks of the start date. Ideally it should only be agreed through an annual review and must have a clearly planned end point.

6. Children We Look After

- Children We Look After are some of our most vulnerable pupils and therefore a part-time timetable should only ever be implemented in exceptional circumstances and when all other interventions have been tried.
- A part-time timetable for a Child We Care For should never be implemented without the written agreement and support of the Virtual School. Best practice states that an interim PEP meeting should be called if a reduced timetable is being considered as an intervention.

7. Children subject to a Child Protection or Child in Need Plan

- Children In Need or at Child Protection level may be subject to at greater risk if placed on a part-time timetable. Therefore, any part-time arrangement should only be implemented in the most exceptional circumstances when all other interventions have been tried. A reduced timetable should only be implemented following a multi-agency meeting, where the social worker and parents/carers agree.

8. Marking the attendance register

Where a part-time/reduced timetable has been formally agreed, the sessions the child is not expected to attend must be marked with code C2 unless arrangements for attendance at a supervised alternative provider are made. In that instance code B can be used for absent session but only if they attend the alternative provision on that day. By using code B the school is stating that the education is supervised and that the child is safe. **Code B must not be used for work/online packages the child is expected to do at home without supervision.**

Even if the child does not attend the session they are expected to be in school, Code C must be still used for the sessions it was agreed they did not have to attend.

Code B – Schools are advised that Ofsted view the inappropriate use of code B in these circumstances as ‘gaming’ which could lead to a negative inspection outcome.

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

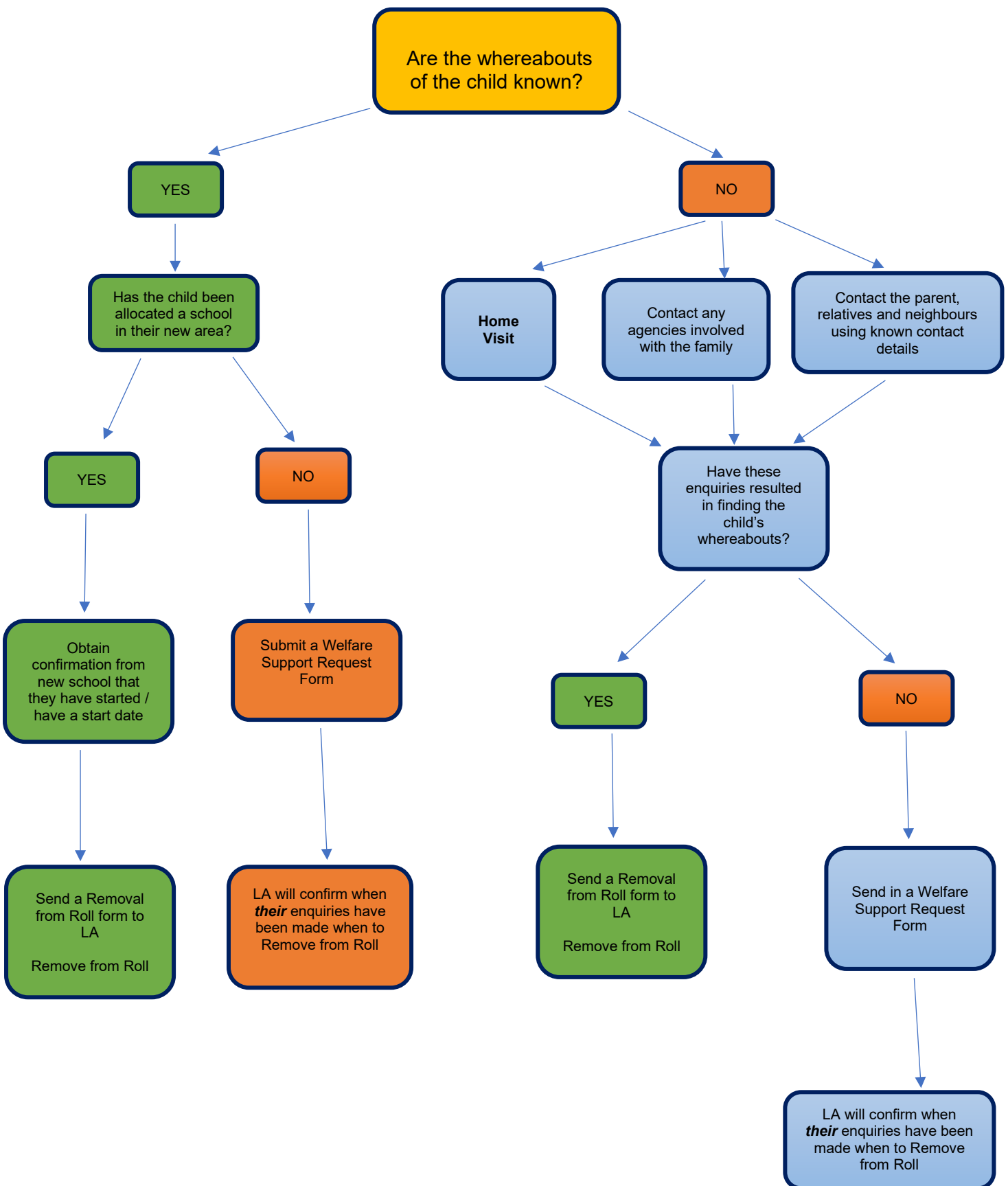
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9. Reporting part-time timetables

- The school must report all reduced timetables to the Local Authority as soon as it becomes operational by completing Section A of the CMfE Return (See Virtual Office https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/extranetforschools/downloads/download/927/cmfe_return)
- Identify and confirm the set review dates to the LA. Reviews should be set every 2 weeks over an 8-week cycle.
- In order to ensure confidentiality, all referral forms must be sent via MOVEIT **T3335595_AS_CMFE** Update all information on the half termly CMfE Return
- It is likely that details of reduced timetables will be requested as part of an inspection.
- Attendance and Inclusion officers will, as part of their attendance reviews with schools discuss all children reported to the LA as being on a PTT, to ensure these are not drifting and support is being offered to increase a child's time in school. Inform the LA, through the pro-forma, any reduced timetables that go beyond 8 weeks, providing details of the review meetings that have taken place, who is supporting the RTT continuing into a second or third cycle, and the plans for the pupil to return to full time asap.

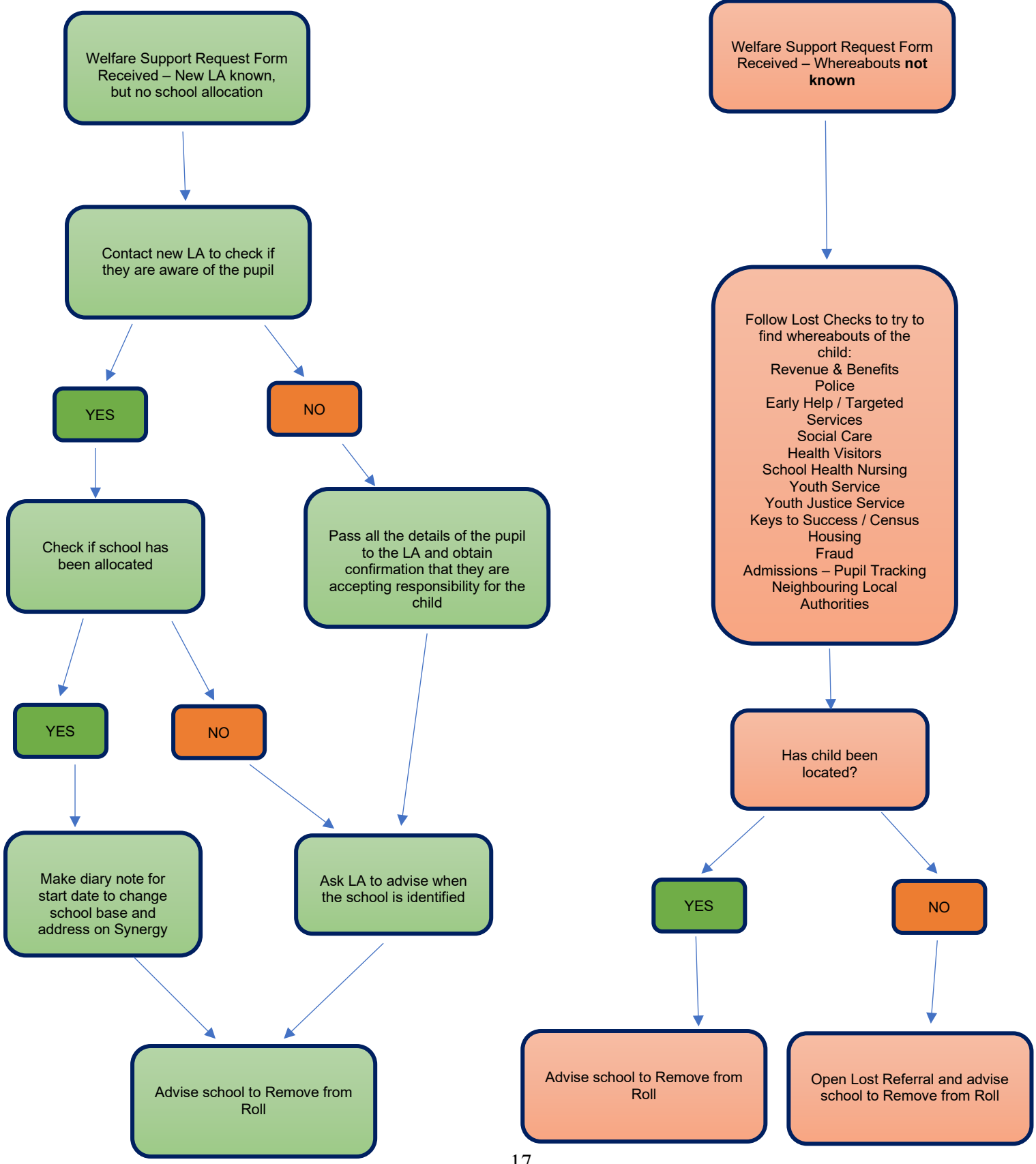
Appendix A

REASONABLE ENQUIRIES - School



Appendix B

REASONABLE ENQUIRIES - LA



Appendix C

- The term 'reasonable enquiries' grants schools and local authorities a degree of flexibility in decision-making, particularly as the steps that need to be taken in a given case will vary. The term 'reasonable' also makes clear that there is a limit to what the school and local authority is expected to do.
- In line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, the expectation is that the school and the local authority will have in place procedures designed to carry out reasonable enquiries. The type of procedures may include the appropriate person checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders who are involved. They should also record that they have completed these procedures. If there is reason to believe a child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care (and the police if appropriate).
- A pupil's name can only be removed from the admission register under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraph (f)(iii) or (h)(iii) if the school and the local authority have failed to establish the pupil's whereabouts after jointly making reasonable enquiries. Local authorities and schools should agree roles and responsibilities locally in relation to making joint enquiries.
- As set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children statutory guidance, the Local Safeguarding Children Board should agree with the local authority and its partners a threshold document, which includes the criteria for when a case should be referred to local authority children's social care for assessment and for statutory services. In addition, local authorities, with their partners, should develop and publish local protocols for assessment, which set out clear arrangements for how cases will be managed once a child is referred into local authority children's social care.
- If there is evidence to suggest the child has moved to a different local authority area, contact should be made with the named person in the new authority using secure communication methods. The local authority should maintain a record of the child's details until they are located or attain school leaving age.
- When the whereabouts of a child is unclear or unknown, it is reasonable to expect that the local authority and the school will complete and record one or more of the following actions:
 - a. make contact with the parent, relatives and neighbours using known contact details.
 - b. check local databases within the local authority.
 - c. check Key to Success or school2school (s2s) systems;
 - d. follow local information sharing arrangements and where possible make enquiries via other local databases and agencies e.g. those of housing providers, school admissions, health services, police, refuge, Youth Justice Services, children's social care, and HMRC;
 - e. check with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and/or the Border Force;
 - f. check with agencies known to be involved with family;
 - g. check with local authority and school from which child moved originally, if known;
 - h. check with any local authority and school to which a child may have moved;
 - i. check with the local authority where the child lives, if different from where the school is;
 - j. in the case of children of Service Personnel, check with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS); and
 - k. home visit(s) made by appropriate team, following local guidance concerning risk assessment and if appropriate make enquiries with neighbour(s) and relatives.
- This list is not exhaustive or prescriptive, and so local authorities and schools should treat each case on its individual merits and use their judgement, ensuring they have taken into account all of the facts of the case. It should be recognised that the type of reasonable enquiries required to try to locate a child will differ from case to case and additional enquiries to those suggested in this section may be necessary.
- Making these enquiries may not always lead to establishing the location of the child but will provide a steer on what action should be taken next, for example, to contact the police, children's social care and, in cases where there may be concerns for the safety of a child who has travelled abroad, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

APPENDIX D March 2023

Professional curiosity can safeguard a child – please ask "Why are you not in school?"

Sandwell Children's Safeguarding Partnership requires us to remind all partners, including colleagues in Sandwell Children's Trust, to:

- be professionally curious - *Professor Eileen Munro, London School of Economics*;
- raise the profile of children missing education (CME) and children missing from education (CMfE), plus elective home education (EHE); and
- remind all local authority (LA) employees, and partner agencies engaged with families, of their shared duty and responsibility to identify and refer CME, CMfE and EHE children and young people.

Definitions:

- *CME (children missing education): children and young people not on a school roll and not in receipt of education at school or otherwise (electively home educated/alternative provision).*
- *CMfE (children missing from education): children and young people on a schoolroll and not in receipt of full-time education (on part-time timetables etc.).*
- *EHE (electively home educated) by parents/carers.*

Department for Education guidance confirms that part-time provision should be temporary only and that there should be a plan of reintegration for the pupil to return to full-time learning as soon as possible (unless medical circumstances prevent this).

All LA services and partners engaged with the public must use any opportunity of family contact to gather information and challenge absence from education.

Examples of services that have opportunities to identify CME/CMfE include: The Early Help services; all partners in the Sandwell Council House one stop shop; MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub); Youth Services and Sandwell Children's Trust etc.

This shared duty relates to all children of statutory school age, including:

- Children We Look After
- Children subject to a Child Protection/Child in Need plan
- Children receiving support from Early Help
- All statutory school age (5-16) new arrivals to the borough not in receipt of education/full-time provision
- All registered pupils categorised as persistent absentees – less than 90% attendance.
- Elective home education (not the same as CME/CMfE)

All LA employees and partners, working with families and the general public, are reminded to routinely confirm education provision and regular attendance, plus **refer where necessary to APS_CME@sandwell.gov.uk - phone 0121 569 81**

DRAFT