

Operational Children's Services
Children Missing Education Policy

April 2015

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Executive Summary

All professionals working with children can help by being vigilant to children's safety. The law states that every child should be in receipt of education, we are better placed to ensure a child's safety if we know where and how they are receiving education.

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to any child of compulsory school age who is NOT registered at any formally approved education activity e.g school, alternative provision or elective home education AND has been out of educational provision for at least 4 weeks.

CME also included those children and young who are missing ie family whereabouts unknown and are usually children and young people who are registered at a school/alternative provision.

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1. Purpose/Duty of the Local Authority

1.1

Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Part 1, Section 4, Wiltshire Council like all authorities, has a statutory duty to identify children who are not receiving education. Under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, as amended by the Education Act 2002, Wiltshire Council also has a statutory duty to provide promptly, a school place for every child requiring one. As part of this duty it is necessary to ensure that any child or young person of statutory school age is allocated a school place as soon as possible, and in any event, the local authority (LA) will process in- year transfer forms within 10 school days if all relevant information has been provided.

1.2

As a Local Authority, we have duty under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in our area who are of compulsory school age but who are not registered pupils at a school or in receipt of some other form of suitable education. We must therefore identify all children within our area and ensure that they are either registered pupils at a maintained, non – maintained or independent school, academy or receiving education other than at school.

The obligation under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify children and young people who are not receiving a suitable education includes a duty to intervene. Local Authorities also have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people through their educational obligations.

The policy informs Local Authority Officers, schools and other agencies about the policy and procedures to be followed in order to prevent and also identify children who are/or might be missing from education. It should be read in

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conjunction with DFE statutory guidance and Children's Services advice on school attendance, The Wiltshire Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB) Child Protection Procedures, the Wiltshire Children's Trust and the WSCB Multi-agency Safeguarding Thresholds Document and the 'Children Missing from Home and Care Protocol'.

This policy outlines the procedures necessary to establish, wherever possible, the identities of children in Wiltshire that are not receiving a suitable education, and/or are identified as missing.

Current evidence suggests that consistent and regular attendance in education is a protective factor for all children and young people and that it is a key responsibility of the Local Authority and its schools. One way for the Local Authority and its schools to safeguard the welfare of children is to ensure that they are all one on a school roll or registered as Electively Home Educated and that children are not removed from roll inappropriately and become 'missing'.

Reference should also be made to the following national guidance: Revised Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities in England to Identify Children not receiving a suitable Education 2009 (Revised April 2013).

Note should also be taken of the following:

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

[Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2015](#)

The Local Authority's FAIR ACCESS Protocol

(<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/schoolseducationandlearning/schoolsandcolleges/schooladmissions/schooladmissionsformsanddocuments.htm>)

2. Scope

2.1

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This policy details good practice and procedures for everyone in Wiltshire Children's and Young Peoples Workforce, regardless of their discipline or agency. Key partner agencies include Community Health, Schools, Police, Adolescent Mental Health, Voluntary and Community Organisations.

Implementation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

3. Context

3.1

'Missing' children are amongst the most vulnerable in the country. Children either fail to start in appropriate provision or simply become lost from school rolls or fail to re-register at a new school when they move area. It is vital that practitioners in all services work together to identify and re-engage these children back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible.

3.2

Children who remain disengaged from education are potentially exposed to higher degrees of risk, which could include engagement in anti-social or criminal behaviour, social disengagement, sexually risky behaviour, substance misuse (including alcohol) and/or sexual exploitation.

3.3

This policy and procedures should ensure that the Local Authority;

- Meets statutory duties relating to the provision of education and safeguarding the welfare of children missing in education.
- Ensure robust multi-agency systems are in place in Wiltshire to identify and track children missing from education or at risk of doing so
- Ensure that monitoring and reporting of systems are in place in order to identify a lead agency and a key worker for all children missing from education.

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3.4

Children drop out of the education system and are at risk of 'going missing' because they;

- Fail to start appropriate provision and so never enter the system (e.g pre-school to reception/Year 1 or new to area and no application is made to school, cease to attend, due to exclusion (e.g illegal and unofficial exclusion or withdrawal, removal from roll with no named destination)
- Fail to complete transition between school placement providers (particularly for school Year 6/7 transfer or being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new Local Authority within Wiltshire)

3.5

For the purpose of this document a Child Missing Education is defined as:

“Any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity” (e.g school, alternative curriculum, home education)

3.6

Some children who experience certain life events are more at risk of going missing from education. This is not an exhaustive list but may include:

- Young people who have or are committing offences
- Children living in a woman's refuge
- Young runaways
- Children of homeless families, living in temporary accommodation, house of multiple occupancy or bed and breakfast
- Children with long term medical and emotional problems
- Unaccompanied asylum seekers
- Children of refugees and asylum seeking families

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- Children in new immigrant families, who are not yet established in the UK and may not have a fixed abode
- Children in care
- Children from travelling backgrounds or traveller families
- Young Carers (Children who provide care for other children/adults)
- Children from transient families (families who move often from one geographical area to another)
- Parents/guardians with mental health issues
- Teenage mothers
- Children who are permanently excluded from school (especially those excluded illegally) www.dfe/guidance/exclusions
- Children who engage in substance misuse including alcohol
- Young people in forced marriage or under threat of forced marriage
- Those at risk or suffering from Child Sexual Exploitation

This policy does not replace the South West Child Protection Procedures. Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns must be observed at all times.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all children's services practitioners working with a child missing education to thoroughly consider the completion of an holistic assessment such as Early Help CAF or My Support Plan – to clearly identify the issues and needs of the child and inform what broader outcomes need to be achieved to ensure the best possibility of the child returning to education. The completion and registration of such an assessment will build a picture of the most frequent issues/needs for this cohort and allow for more informed service provision.

4.1

Completion of an assessment such as Early Help CAF or My Support Plan will help to clearly identify the needs of the child, and to inform the delivery of broader outcomes to be achieved to ensure the best possibility of the child

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returning to education. The completion and registration of CAF and My Support Plan helps to build a picture of need and informs service provisions for this group.

The Wiltshire Council Education Welfare Service has the responsibility on behalf of the Local Authority to ensure:

- Follow up of all referrals of children and young people reporting as missing from education.
- Liaise with all partner agencies to track children and young people who may be missing education.
- Collate information on all reported cases of CME in Wiltshire maintained schools, academies and alternative provision providers.

4.2

Upon receipt of notification the EWS (Education Welfare Service) will attempt contact with the family by undertaking a visit to the home, continuing telephone calls and writing to the parent/carer. This will be in conjunction with carrying out checks on internal council systems and with other agencies such as Social Care, Police, Housing and other partner agencies. Where a child is not located an entry will be made on the S2S database.

4.3

Wiltshire Council Operational Children's Service Early Help Team has an overview of Education Other Than At School' provision and its staff attend 'Fair Access Panel's' in Wiltshire. Early Help Teams and other parts of the council (e.g SEND/Safeguarding & Assessment/Virtual School staff) offer child centred support to young people identified by schools as being at risk of permanent exclusion and respond in allocating a range of alternative educational provisions within the county through established referral routes, panel arrangements and agreed protocols. There are strong links with colleagues supporting pupils from identified vulnerable group's (e.g Special Educational Needs, Children in Care, Safeguarding and Assessment Social Work Teams.) This team also ensure that the correct procedure is followed and that information in relation to pupils excluded is communicated effectively.

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4.4 Admissions Team

The admissions team have overall responsibility, and accountability for ensuring all children and young people in Wiltshire receive an appropriate offer of placement.

The Admissions Team are the first point of contact for any application, however applications for Voluntary Aided and Academy School are responsible for considering their own applications and forwarding the outcome to the Admissions Team. Named admissions officers will be the lead officer for children not on a school roll and waiting for a school place. The admissions team is responsible for appointing a lead officer responsible for contacting the CME officer when a child known to them has been out of school for 20 days or more.

The admission team will collate information concerning children and young people without a school place and are responsible for ensuring this is recorded.

4.5 Looked after Children – Virtual Schools

The Virtual School monitors carefully the attendance of Wiltshire's Looked after Children to ensure that any absence from school is reduced and accounted for. Welfare call is commissioned to track attendance daily and report all absence of each individual Looked after Child.

4.6 Children Missing Education Procedures

Children missing education procedures should be followed where a child or young person has not taken up an allocated school place as expected and/or has 10 days or more continuous absence from school without an explanation and/or has left school suddenly and the destination is unknown.

Schools should start to complete the Children Missing Education Checklist if a pupil has had a maximum of 5 days of non-school attendance and where the school has been unable to contact the parent/carers.

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Any concern of as Child Missing Education should be reported to the Local Authority through the Education Welfare Service. All schools have an allocated link Education Welfare Officer to whom reports should be made.

Informing the Local Authority of Deletions from the School Register.

The Regulations require schools to notify the Local Authority in the following circumstances as soon as the grounds for deletion are met and in any event before deleting the pupil's name:

- The pupil is moving away from the area and is known to have registered at another school
- The school medical officer has certified that the pupil has a medical condition and is unlikely to return before ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- The pupil is leaving a non-maintained school and is not known to have registered at another school
- The school has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school and the pupil has been permanently excluded

Schools should inform the Education Welfare Service where a child has a statement of Special Educational Needs and Disability immediately;

- They become aware that a deletion may be made
- A pupil is withdrawn by the parent/carers from the school without warning
- They receive a verbal notification of a parents intent to home educate

5. Elective Home Education (EHE)

5.1

If a parent wishes to Electively Home Educate (EHE) his/her child, the school must deregister the child at the point written notification is received from the parent expressing their intention to do so. Deletion from the admissions register should take place as soon as notifications are received.

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Schools are then required to inform the Local Authority by completion of a Safeguarding Form (Appendix 2) attached to the parent's letter, the schools letter of acknowledgment and a registration certificate. Upon receipt of the required documents the Education Welfare Service will make contact with the parents/carers who are then required to provide evidence that the child is in receipt of a 'suitable education'. If the parent/carer fails to provide evidence the Education Welfare Service will pursue the matter and may commence School Attendance Order Proceedings. Education Welfare Officers have a duty to check the quality of EHE on an annual basis unless there are specific safeguarding or welfare concerns; in which case more immediate intervention via the Multi-Agency Threshold Document will be required.

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Mal Munday, Head of Early Help

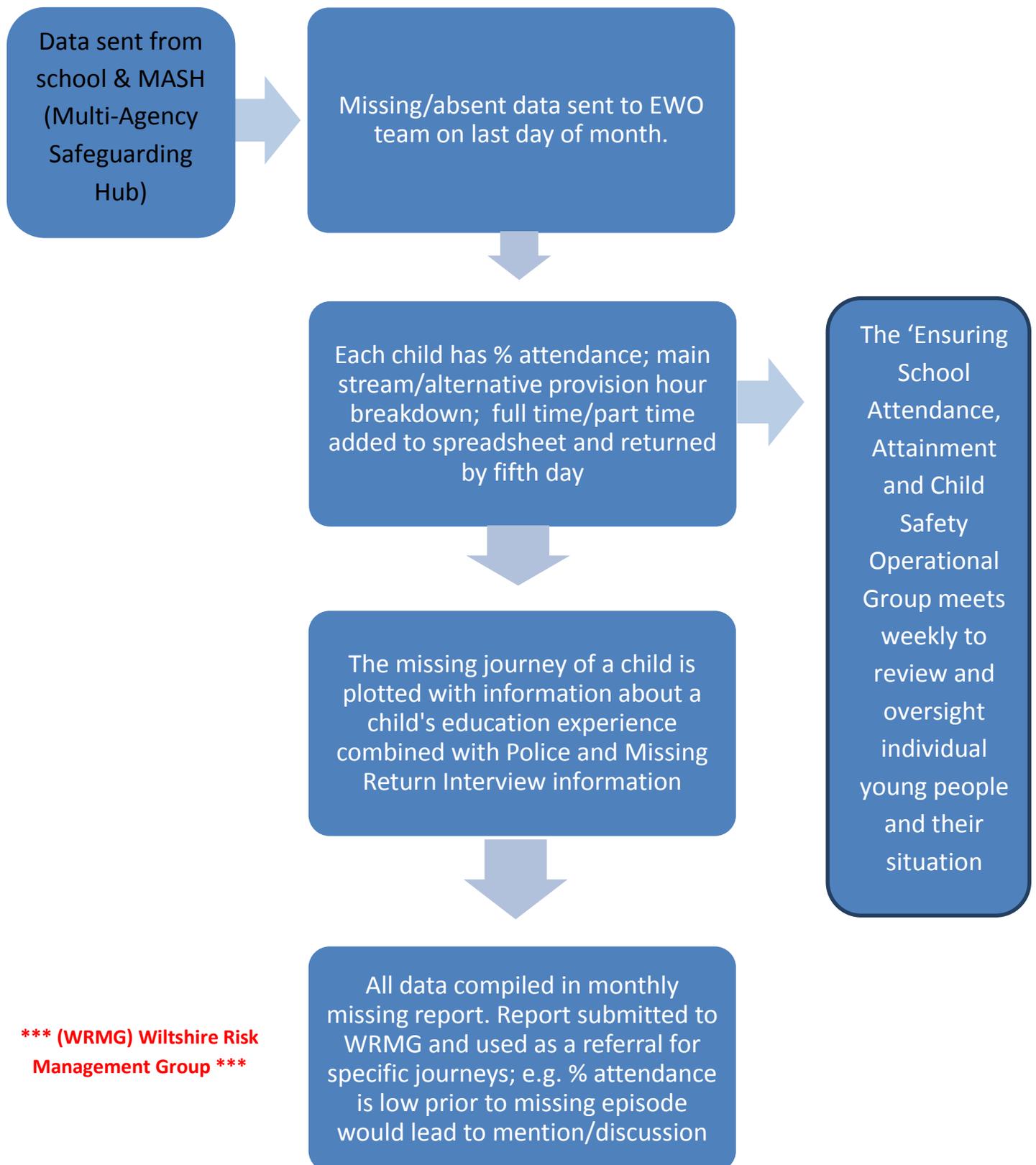
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6. Children Missing Education – Flowchart

The Missing Journey of a child



SCHOOL MISSING PUPIL REFERRAL – CME1

Name of School:		Telephone No:	
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1. Please give details of any known circumstances which might have a bearing on the pupil being missing (e.g. difficulties in school such as bullying or behavioural problems; family issues)

Current attendance rate:	Date last attended:
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2. Pupil Details

Date pupil placed on school's admission register:

First Name(s):		Date of Birth : Year Group:
Last Name(s):		Ethnicity: UPN: CP: Y / N LAC: Y / N
Address: Postcode:		Siblings and Ages where known:
Phone No Home: Mobile:		SEN Support Statement of SEN / EHCP Not on SEN code <i>(Delete as appropriate)</i>

3. Parent/Carer's Details

Mother/Carer:	Title:	First Name(s):	Last Name:	
	Parental Responsibility		Yes	No

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Address:		Phone No
Postcode:		Home:
		Work:
		Mobile:

Father/Carer:	Title:	First Name(s):	Last Name:	
	Parental Responsibility		Yes	No
Address:		Phone No		
Postcode:		Home:		
		Work:		
		Mobile:		

4. Please provide details of any adults living at the same address as the child, where known

Title:	First Name(s):	Surname:

5. Please give details of contacts or attempted contacts made to trace the pupil and to whom (eg pupils, parents, carers, siblings, extended family, school staff, social care, police etc)

<p>Date of most recent letter sent to parent regarding the pupil's absence:</p> <p>Are emergency contact numbers available for use by EWS? Yes / No</p>

PLEASE ATTACH THE LATEST ATTENDANCE REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE - send to designated EWO

Signature and Designation of Referrer:	
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Author: _____ Version: _____ Date: _____ Page No: _____

Print Name:	
Date of Referral:	

Please email to designated EWO.

APPENDIX 2 Safeguarding Form - Elective Home Education

Pupil details as held on school record

School					
Surname/Legal Surname			Forename		
Middle name			Chosen name		
Date of Birth			Gender	<input type="checkbox"/> F	<input type="checkbox"/> M
Address					
Post Code			Admission Date		
				Leaving Date	
Reason for Leaving	Awaiting placement		Bullying		Moved out of county
	Lifestyle		Not known		Other
Please give details: _____					
Is there a safeguarding concern? (If Yes please complete box below)	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES		Are parents aware of your concerns?	<input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES	
Details of any safeguarding or child protection concerns, including dates of any referrals to Children's Social Care					
Parents/Carers contact details as held on school record					
Priority	Name/Relationship	Home Address/Phone/Mobile/Fax		Work Address Phone/Email	
1		Tel		Tel	
		Mobile		Email	

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2		Tel	Tel
		Mobile	Email
Other Agencies involved			
Please indicate with a tick if the following agencies are involved with the student			
Education	Education	Social Care	Youth Offending
Child and Adolescent Mental Health services	SEN	Health	Other
Details of involved Agencies (name and contact telephone numbers)			
Does the student have a Statement?	YES	NO	SEN Start Date
In LA Care?	YES NO	Care Authority	
Has the child been subject to a CAF?	YES	NO	CAF lead
If you are the lead professional who will assume this role when the child starts EHE?			
Contact details of the new lead professional			
Ethnicity	Home Language	Religion	
Data Protection Act 1998: The school is registered under the Data Protection Act for holding personal data. The school has a duty to protect this information and to keep it up to date. The school is required to share some of the data with the Local Authority and with the DfE			
Headteacher's signature		Date	

Please return this form with the [parental letter of instruction and school acknowledgement letter](#) and accompanying [registration certificate](#) to your designated Local Authority Education Welfare Officer

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