Children who are absent from education policy

(CWAFE)

Overley Hall School

Approved by:	Headteacher	Date: 14th of April 2026
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Aims

The Education Act of 1996 states that all children of compulsory school age, 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.

Overley Hall School is an independent school supporting learners between the ages of 8 and 19 years with complex learning needs. Attached to Overley Hall School is Wellingtonia Children's Home where the majority of our learners live on 38 to 52 week placements. The absence rate at Overley Hall School is incredibly low (on most days is 0%).

Overley Hall School is committed to ensuring that every child and young person in the school community can grow, achieve and is motivated and happy to attend school.
We are concerned about any child missing education not only in the way that it may impact on the individual's potential achievement but also in relation to their safety and welfare.

The purpose of this CWAFE policy (previously CME policy) is to ensure that 'no child slips through the net' during a placement or during a placement change either before or after their time at Overley Hall School and should be read in conjunction with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Please see our Attendance Policy for further information on absence during placement.

This Policy has been updated so that procedures followed at Overley Hall School are in line with Telford and Wrekin's Policy & Procedure for Children who are absent from education (2024).

Legislation

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance – DfE May 2022
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, September 2025)
- Children Missing Education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools – DfE, September 2025
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Parental Responsibility Measures for School Attendance and Behaviour, - DfE Guidance - January 2015
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions DfE Guidance - Dec 2015
- Section 436A of the Education Act 1996

- Ofsted School Inspection Handbook (current version)

Definitions (please see Appendix 1 for further information)

- **Children Missing Education (CME)** this national definition includes: children who are of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving education.
- **Children Who Are Absent From Education (CWAFE)** This definition is referenced in Keeping Children Safe in Education and includes all pupils who are on a school roll, but who are missing education for a number of reasons, including but not limited to, persistent absence or severe absence, children who receive a modified timetable and children who have not attended school for a period of time. This includes both authorised and unauthorised absences that indicate barriers to engagement.
- **Compulsory school age** A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach 16.

Legal Framework

The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Article 2 of the protocol No 1 state: 'No person shall be denied the right to education.'

School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, place a duty on schools and LAs to jointly carry out reasonable enquiries to try to locate pupils absent from school whose whereabouts are unknown.

This policy also takes into consideration:

- School Attendance Guidance
- Children Missing Education
- Full-time-Enrolment of 14 to 16 year olds in Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges
- Missing Children and Adults Strategy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2023)
- SEND Code of Practice (DfE, 2015)
- Local Authority guidance from Telford & Wrekin

Safeguarding

Overley Hall School in line with our Child Protection and Safeguarding duties have a responsibility to investigate any unexplained absences of our learners. When these absences occur we act without delay as the welfare of our learners is paramount.

This guidance **does not** replace any Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures. Existing Safeguarding procedures are fundamental and should be observed at all times.

Delay is unacceptable and the welfare of the learner is paramount. If there is good reason to suspect that a learner's absence may be the result of them being a victim of a crime a referral to the police will be made by phoning 101.

If we suspect that a learner maybe "missing" (other than missing education) or believe that they are at significant risk of harm, we will contact Family Connect on 01952 385385 or email: familyconnect@telford.gov.uk.

Overley Hall's commitment.

We strive to:

- Prevent avoidable absence through early identification and tailored support
- Ensure a joined-up, person-centred approach to supporting learners at risk of disengagement
- Maintain open communication with families and professionals
- Safeguard learners by promptly responding to emerging concerns linked to absence

Referring Pupils who are CME, CWAFE (CNRE or COOS)

Overley Hall School will use a simplified CNRE/CME referral form (See Appendix 2) which encompasses these categories. We will supply additional information as requested. Once the referral form is completed we will submit it to: childrenmissingeducation@telford.gov.uk.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Children may be 'missing' education for a number of reasons. These are children who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving education.

CME also includes Electively Home Educated (EHE) pupils where that education is deemed unsuitable. Once deemed unsuitable these children are closed to the EHE team and should be classed as CME Appendix A gives examples of those seen as CME and not CME.

If we have a learner that we believe has moved out of the area (if day learner) or abroad and we do not have a new address or new school details we will use CME referral form immediately. We will NOT remove this learner from our school role without the agreement of the CME tracking officer.

Once we have removed the pupil from roll, CME pupils are tracked and monitored by the LAs Pupil Tracking Officer.

Children Out of School - COOS

COOS are learners who are registered on our school roll but have not attended for between 10 and 20 consecutive school days and their absence is unauthorised. Overley Hall School have a statutory responsibility to notify the LA of such children. The learner remains the responsibility of the school and the school will complete the CNRE/CME referral form and send it to childrenmissingeducation@telford.gov.uk.

It is acknowledged that the majority of these learner's will return to school within a short time frame. Some of these however may become learners who are not receiving education for a longer period of time and some may have disappeared and their whereabouts are not known. Appendix A contains examples of learner's are classed as COOS.

If we believe that a pupil as a COOS the school will:

- Refer to the flow chart, Schools Flow Chart A 'Schools use for pupils not attending 10 + days' (See Appendix 3) and Schools Flow Chart B 'Pupil moving out of the borough or abroad' (See Appendix 4)

- Complete the CNRE/CME referral form and Email it to: childrenmissingeducation@telford.gov.uk
- Consider the schools own Early Help offer or alternatively whether an Early Help assessment is appropriate.
- Consider a referral to Family Connect if the learner is considered to be at risk of significant harm.
- Follow any advice or guidance from the LA to resolve the situation.
- Be aware of preparing for legal intervention after liaison with AST for non-school
    - attendance.

Children Not Receiving Education (CNRE)

These are learners who are registered at a school but have not attended for over 20 days (See Appendix A).

These learners remain the responsibility of the school and should be referred as CNRE (not CME) and monitored by the LA. For all CNRE learner's, school are responsible and remain the lead but should keep the LA updated on the child's progress.

Upon receipt of the referral form the Local Authority will:

- Record the learners' details on a centrally held monitoring spreadsheet.
- Update the information on the VLS workspace of Protocol.
- Record the learners' details on the CWAFE tracking and monitoring sheet
- Monitor the length of absence, when a learner has been absent for more than 20 days they will be classed as a Child Not Receiving Education (CNRE)
- Where appropriate CNRE learners are considered for inclusion at the LA internal educational multi agency meeting 'Ensuring Access to Education for All' (EAEA) where cases are regularly reviewed, tracked and monitored for pupils who are not in receipt of education.
- Ensure all cases of CWAFE, (COOS, CNRE,) CME and unsuitable EHE and unplaced Admissions are monitored and discussed at the bi-weekly 'Cross Case Management Meeting' and appropriate advice is offered to schools.
- Cross reference names against the MTT spreadsheet, information from schools referring to any new admissions & deletions.
- Track learners expected return to school dates, ensure they have resumed educational provision before closing the case.

- Report the data relating to CNRE & CME to SLT on a monthly basis.

Role & responsibilities

Headteacher (Senior Attendance Champion), Attendance Officer and DSL/DDSLs

The Headteacher acts as the school's Senior Attendance Champion and has strategic oversight of attendance, including persistent absence, severe absence, children who are absent from education (CWAFE), and children at risk of becoming Children Missing Education (CME). The Headteacher ensures that attendance is prioritised as a safeguarding matter and that appropriate support, intervention and multi-agency working are implemented where attendance concerns arise.

Including actions above we are committed to ensuring that:

- We ensure robust monitoring systems for attendance.
- We oversee multi-agency responses where absence becomes a concern
- We ensure that learners are never removed from education without due process
- We employ a range of individualised strategies to encourage attendance at school and return to school as quickly as possible following from an absence
- Learners are entered onto the admission register at the beginning of the first day of their placement.
- Admission registers are kept up to date and are accurate.
- Parents are encouraged to keep school updated in regard to any changes that need to be made to the admissions register
- If the learner does not attend on the first day we will undertake reasonable enquires to establish the child's whereabouts and contact the placing Local Authority if we have any concerns. See attendance policy for full list of actions, this will include eyes on the learner after 3 days of absence. This could be through a video call to the home setting to see the young person and/or talk to them, SW or case worker. If parents/cares are unwilling or unable to allow this we will report to education welfare and/or family connect for further guidance
- Poor attendance is followed up by the class teacher/tutor, Pastoral Head and/ or Head Teacher and reasons for this investigated.
- The placing Local Authority are contacted if a learner fails regularly to attend or has missed more than ten days or more without permission.

- When a learner leaves Overley Hall School a planned transition takes place so that the learner is familiar with their next environment and that Overley Hall staff can support the transfer.
- Overley Hall School will notify the learners placement Local Authority when a learner has left not at standard transition point and will provide the required information to the Local Authority.

The school's designated safeguarding person for Child Protection will immediately contact the learners placing authority (see Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy for LA information), Telford & Wrekin's Family Connect and/or the Police if any of the below apply to a child who may become missing:

- has a Child Protection Plan
- is subject to serious concerns about their health, safety or welfare
- is living in a family where there are concerns about domestic abuse,
- substance abuse, mental health problems or learning difficulties
- may be in contact with a person who poses a risk of harm to children and young people
- may be at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation
- is subject to a Care Order
- is looked after by the local authority
- may be the victim of or involved in a crime
- may be taken out of the country illegally (e.g. abducted)
- may be taken out of the country for an illegal act (e.g. forced marriage, female genital mutilation, child trafficking)
- is privately fostered
- Will not remove a learner missing education from the admissions register until they have been continuously absent for at least 20 school days **and** the school, Family Connect and the placing LA have made joint reasonable enquiries to locate them.
- If the learner is moving to a school in another country we will aim to obtain the forwarding address for the child and the name and address of the learner's new school.

Although enforcement powers sit with the Local Authority, the school has statutory safeguarding and notification duties.

Teacher's/ tutors are expected to:

- Maintain positive daily contact with learners and families
- Recognise and report early signs of anxiety, school avoidance, or disengagement
- Adjust learning and routines to support re-engagement

Parents/ carers responsibilities

Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education.

Parents/ carers are expected to:

- Inform the school of any absence promptly
- Work collaboratively to identify and resolve barriers to attendance
- Attend meetings and planning reviews related to their child's attendance and welfare

Procedures for addressing absence:

Daily Monitoring

Attendance is recorded twice daily. Any unexplained absence triggers a same-day follow-up by the class teacher/tutor.

Early Support for Emerging Issues

- Absence due to anxiety, sensory distress, or other related challenges is addressed sensitively.
- Bespoke timetables, therapeutic support, or remote learning may be implemented temporarily. These are short term, planned, and monitored.

Persistent Absence (Below 90%)

- Reviewed regularly by the DSL and SENDCo.
- Attendance plans developed in collaboration with families and other agencies.

Prolonged Absence (10+ Days Unexplained)

- Risk assessment initiated.
- Contact made with the Local Authority and social care if necessary.
- Plan for reintegration, medical support, or EHCP review is developed.

Supporting re-engagement

We use flexible, inclusive strategies to support re-engagement:

- Part-time timetables with clear reintegration plans and review points
- Sensory-friendly and low-demand environments
- Key adult mentoring and emotional regulation support
- Multi-disciplinary planning meetings

Multi-Agency Working

We work closely with:

- Telford & Wrekin Local Authority Attendance and SEND teams
- CAMHS and mental health providers
- Social workers and safeguarding professionals
- Virtual School and Educational Psychologists

Removal from Roll

Learners will only be removed from the school roll in line with legal and safeguarding requirements, and never without:

- Written confirmation of Elective Home Education
- Notification from another school or setting
- Authorisation from the Local Authority SEND service (where the pupil has an EHCP)

Staff Training

Staff receive annual and ongoing training in:

- Trauma-informed and autism-friendly strategies
- Safeguarding linked to absence from education

Monitoring

The Headteacher and DSL monitor attendance weekly, including for trends among learners. This policy is reviewed annually or in response to significant changes in law or guidance.

Links with other policies.

Attendance

Child Protection and Safeguarding

Appendix 1- Definitions - Children Who are Absent From Education

Children who are not accessing education fall into two distinct statutory safeguarding categories:

1. Children Missing Education (CME) – children not on a school roll and not receiving suitable education.

2. Children Who Absent From Education (CWAFE) – children on a school roll who are not attending or are persistently/severely absent.

The determining factor is whether the child is registered on a school admission register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 .

1. Children Missing Education (CME)

Statutory Definition

Children Missing Education are defined by the Department for Education as:

'Children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.'

"Suitable education" has the meaning given in section 7 of the Education Act 1996: efficient, full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have .

CME Includes Children Who:

The following categories are consistent with the DfE statutory guidance and local authority duties under section 436A of the Education Act 1996:

- Are in the process of applying for a school place, including during the initial application period
- Have been offered or allocated a school place but have not yet started and are not receiving interim suitable education
- Are permanently excluded and have not yet been placed in suitable alternative provision
- Are receiving Elective Home Education (EHE) which has been assessed by the local authority as unsuitable
- Have been missing from education for an extended period and whose whereabouts are unknown or unclear
- Have moved into the area from another local authority or from overseas and are not yet on roll or receiving suitable education
- Are awaiting the outcome of an admission appeal or direction to a school and have not yet started

- Are challenging a School Attendance Order and are not receiving suitable education in the interim
- Are believed to have moved out of the local authority area or overseas and this has not been verified
- Are not registered at a school but are receiving limited or interim tuition that does not meet the threshold of suitable full-time education.

Local coding practices (e.g. CME/Admission, CME/PEX Unplaced, CME/Unsuitable EHE) may continue to be used for operational purposes only, provided they do not obscure the statutory CME definition.

CME Does Not Include Children Who:

In line with statutory guidance, children are not CME if they:

- Are registered on a school roll, even if they are persistently or severely absent
- Are receiving suitable education otherwise than at school (including suitable EHE or commissioned alternative provision)
- Are EHE and the local authority has not yet assessed the suitability of that education
- Are confirmed as no longer resident in the local authority area
- Are below or above compulsory school age (although authorities may track these children as part of wider safeguarding arrangements).

2. Children Who are Absent From Education (CWAFE)

Statutory Safeguarding Definition

Children Absent From Education are referenced in Keeping Children Safe in Education as a key safeguarding indicator:

'Children who are on a school roll but are not attending education regularly, or at all, for a range of reasons including persistent or severe absence.'

Unexplained, persistent or severe absence is explicitly recognised as a potential safeguarding risk within KCSIE .

CWAFE remains the legal responsibility of the school while the child is registered.

2(a). Children Out of School (COOS)

Note: COOS is not a statutory category but may be used locally for monitoring and early intervention.

Definition

Children who:

- Are registered on a school roll; and
- Have 10–20 consecutive school days of unauthorised absence.

Schools have a **statutory duty to inform the local authority** where absence is prolonged or where a pupil may be at risk of becoming CME, in accordance with attendance guidance and safeguarding duties .

These pupils:

- Remain the responsibility of the school;
- Must be actively monitored, risk-assessed and safeguarded.

Common Circumstances (Non-Exhaustive)

Children in this group may:

- Have physical or mental health needs;
- Be absent due to unauthorised holiday or family non-compliance;
- Be experiencing informal or unlawful exclusion;
- Be school refusers;
- Have caring responsibilities (including young carers);
- Be at risk of child criminal or sexual exploitation;
- Be awaiting transfer between schools;
- Have housing instability, domestic abuse, or temporary homelessness;
- Be Children in Care experiencing placement changes;
- Be Gypsy, Roma or Traveller children who are mobile;
- Be missing from home.

All such absence must be treated through a safeguarding lens .

2(b). Children Not Receiving Education (CNRE)

Note: CNRE is not a statutory term but may be used locally for escalation and tracking.

Definition

Children who:

- Are registered on a school roll; and
- Have not attended for more than 20 school days, regardless of reason.

This includes:

- Pupils on long-term or inappropriate part-time/modified timetables that do not meet statutory expectations
- Pupils who have ceased attending one school and have not yet started another, within or outside the local authority area.

In accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024:

- Pupils must normally remain on roll during the first 20 school days;
- If suitable education is not in place, escalation to CME consideration is required .

Safeguarding Emphasis

Persistent, severe, unexplained or unmanageable absence from education:

- Is recognised nationally as a safeguarding warning sign;
- Requires prompt multi-agency response;
- Must be recorded, monitored and escalated appropriately.

All professionals must act in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, and local safeguarding procedures .

This appendix should be reviewed annually or sooner in response to legislative change.

Appendix 2

Children Missing Education (CME) Referral Form

Section 1: Learner Details

- Full Name:
- Date of Birth:
- Gender:
- Ethnicity:
- Current/Last Known Address:
- Postcode:
- Unique Pupil Number (UPN):
- NHS Number (if known):
- Does the learner have an EHCP?

Section 2: Parent/Carer Details

- Name(s):
- Relationship to Learner:
- Parental Responsibility: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Contact Number(s):
- Email Address:
- Last Known Address (if different):

Section 3: School Details

- School Name:
- School Address:
- Type of Provision:
- Current Year Group:
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):
- Headteacher:
- Contact Number:
- Email Address:

Section 4: Attendance & CME Trigger

- Last Date Attended:
- Date First Noted Missing:
- Number of Continuous Days Absent:
- Current Attendance % (this academic year):

Reason for CME Referral (tick all that apply):

- ☐ 10+ days continuous unexplained absence
- ☐ Removed from roll (reason):
- ☐ Family moved – no forwarding address
- ☐ Failed to start at new school
- ☐ Elective Home Education (concerns)
- ☐ Traveller / transient family
- ☐ Other (please specify):

Section 5: Actions Taken by School (Statutory Checks)

(In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education & CME guidance)

- ☐ Phone calls made (dates/outcomes):
- ☐ Emails/letters sent (attach copies):
- ☐ Home visit(s) completed (dates/outcomes):
- ☐ Contact with emergency contacts:
- ☐ Checks with siblings' schools:
- ☐ Enquiries with known professionals/agencies:
- ☐ Check with Local Authority admissions:
- ☐ Police welfare check requested (if applicable):

Summary of Actions Taken:

Section 6: Safeguarding Information

- Is the learner subject to a Child Protection Plan? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is the learner a Child in Need? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is the learner Looked After (CLA)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Is the learner previously known to Social Care? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Known Vulnerabilities (tick all that apply):

- ☐ Risk of exploitation (CSE/CCE)
- ☐ Domestic abuse
- ☐ Neglect
- ☐ Mental health concerns
- ☐ Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- ☐ Young carer
- ☐ Substance misuse in family

- ☐ Other (please specify):

Details of Safeguarding Concerns:

Section 7: Multi-Agency Involvement

- Social Worker Name & Contact:
- Early Help Worker:
- Youth Offending Team (if applicable):
- Other Agencies Involved:

Section 8: Additional Information

(Include any relevant background, risks, family context, or professional concerns)

Section 9: Declaration

I confirm that all reasonable steps have been taken to locate this learner and that this referral meets the criteria for Children Missing Education.

- Name:
- Role:
- Signature:
- Date:

Local Authority Use Only

- Date Received:
- CME Criteria Met: ☐ Yes ☐ No
- Case Reference Number:
- Actions Taken:
- Allocated Officer:

Guidance Notes:
This form should be completed when a learner meets CME criteria, including 10 consecutive days of unexplained absence or where the school has been unable to establish the learner's whereabouts despite reasonable enquiries. Schools must not

remove a pupil from roll without following statutory guidance and notifying the Local Authority.

Data Protection and Information Sharing

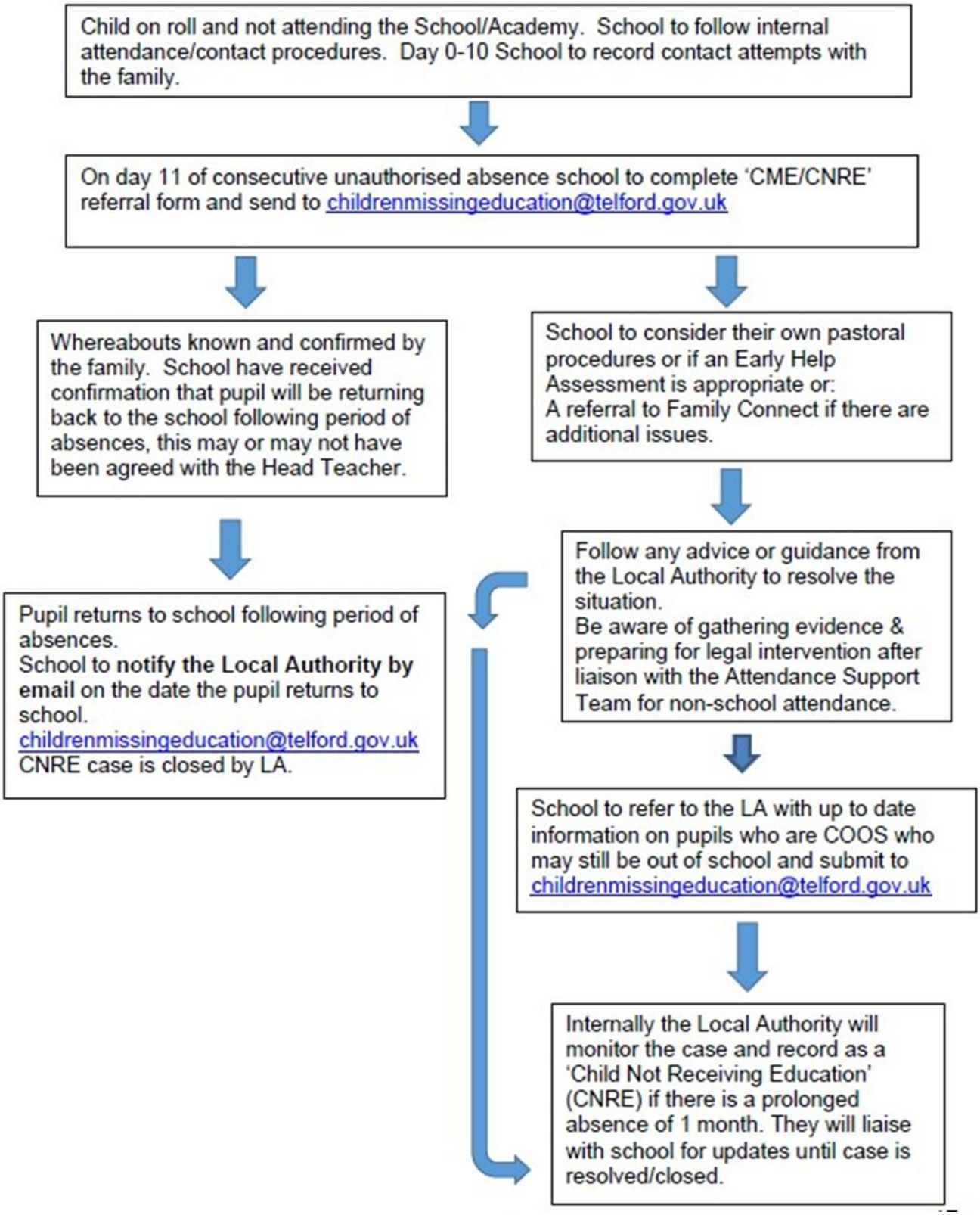
The personal data collected through this referral form will be processed in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Information is shared lawfully and securely for the purposes of safeguarding children, fulfilling statutory duties in relation to Children Missing Education, and ensuring learners receive suitable education and support.

Processing is necessary for compliance with legal obligations placed on the school and the Local Authority, and for the performance of tasks carried out in the public interest. Information may be shared with relevant professionals and agencies where this is necessary to safeguard the welfare of the learner.

Personal data will be handled sensitively, stored securely, and retained in line with statutory and local authority retention schedules.

School Flow Chart A – Schools use for Pupils Not Attending 10+ Days.



School Flow Chart B – 'Children Not Receiving Education'. Appendix 4

Child on roll and not attending their School/Academy. School to follow internal attendance/contact procedures and record all attempted contact with the family.

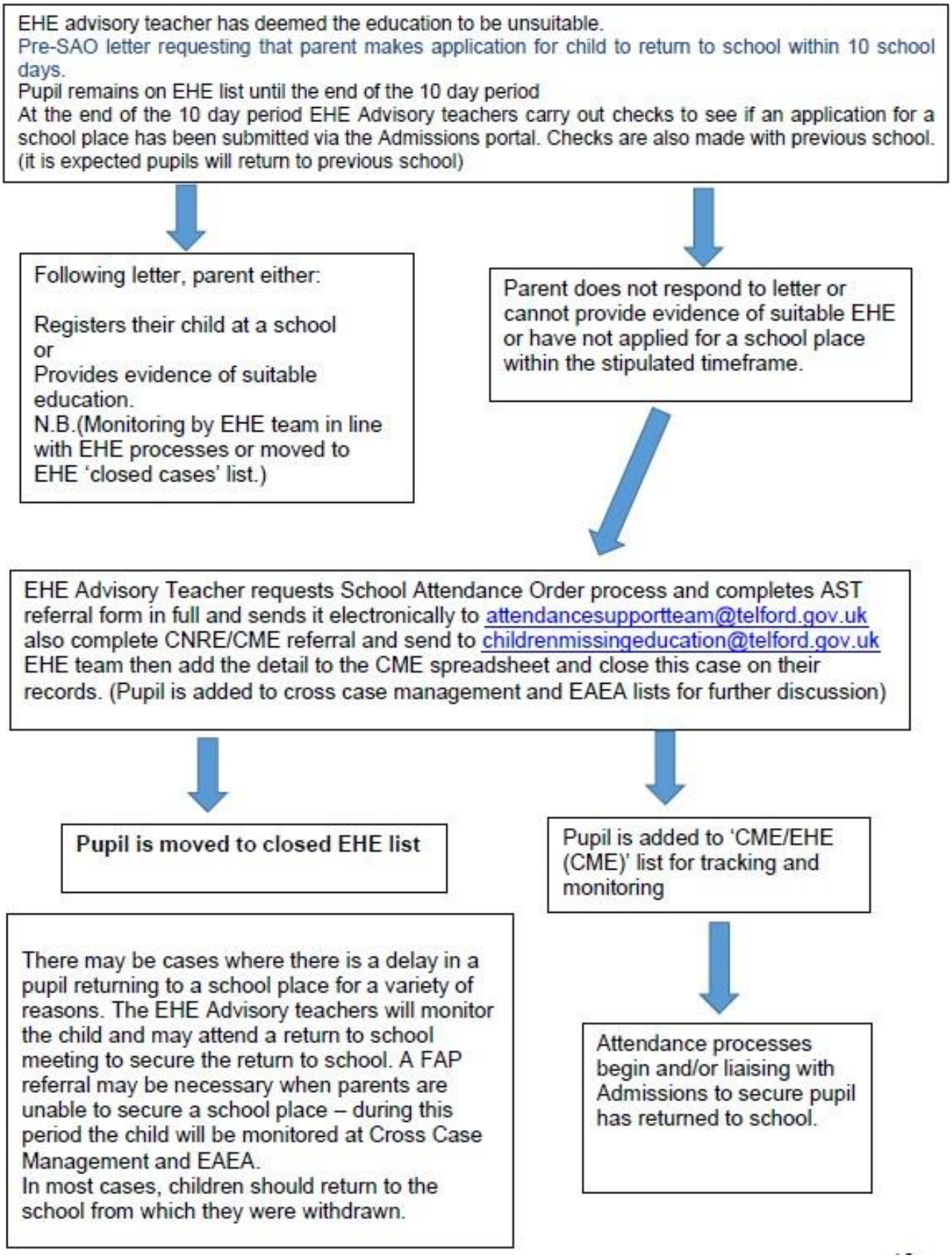
Whereabouts unknown and reasonable efforts have been made to locate the family, including home visits, visits to neighbouring properties and contact made with all persons on the pupil records.
If pupil is believed to be 'missing' or moved out of the area, the school **should not** delay in notifying the Local Authority immediately. Do not wait until the 10th day of absence.
Submit the 'CME/CNRE' referral form and send to childrenmissingeducation@telford.gov.uk
Do not remove pupil from the school roll.

Schools update the LA with any new information on pupils who are CME who may still be on roll and missing from education and send to childrenmissingeducation@telford.gov.uk (the previously used MRF was replaced with the SAM portal which feeds into the Admissions MIS – schools have been notified – N.B. this system is not to be used for deletions from roll)

If after 20 school days the child has not returned, the school are to contact the CME Pupil Tracking Officer before removing from the school roll, do not remove until the LA confirm it is OK to do so.

Once confirmed by the LA the child can be removed from roll, school have a statutory duty to inform the LA and to do so must complete D1 form within 5 school days to inform the Local Authority of the deletion from the school roll and send to admissions@telford.gov.uk
N.B. Officers recording details from D1 forms must forward the D1 form to childrenmissingeducation@telford.gov.uk if the child whereabouts is unknown.

Attendance Support Team referrals for unsuitable EHE Appendix 5



Admission or Deletions to / from a school roll Appendix 6

N.B This process only applies to Admissions or Deletions outside of whole school cohorts at transition.
Following an appeal for own admission authority schools. It is the clerk to the appeal panel who informs the school that the child is to be admitted.
For other in year applications – The Admission Team allocate a school a place to a pupil.

Admission Team or Appeal clerk write/email school and the parent to inform them a place has been allocated (depending on it being agreed at either in year application stage, appeal or allocated at FAP). Parent should receive contact from school to arrange admission date.

Admission date agreed – Child is added to school roll - school have a statutory duty to inform LA they have admitted a child within 5 days and must complete the entry via the SAM portal (as notified by Admissions Team).

Admission Team to contact school to ensure child is on roll and has attended.
If child is not on roll at allocated school after five days, Admission team to request school contact parents to find out what the delay is in child starting school and complete CNRE referral and submit to childrenmissingeducation@telford.gov.uk

For any deletions from roll (N.B. not for whole school cohort during transition periods)

Child is to be removed from roll e.g. transfers to another school, EHE arrangements agreed, or LA notifies school that child can be removed from roll.

School to remove child from roll – under Regulation 8 of the Pupil registration Regulations 2006.

N.B Under no other circumstances can a child be removed from a school roll as this will be an illegal deletion.

School have a statutory duty to inform the LA within 5 days they have deleted a child from roll and must complete the D1 form and submit to admissions@telford.gov.uk (as notified by Admissions Team).