

# Children's Services

## Children Missing from Education Guidelines and Procedures

*“Our aim is to ensure that every child and young person has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and no child slips through the net.”*

DfES, “Every Child Matters: Next Steps”, 2004

# Children Missing from Education Guidelines and Procedures

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## Introduction

The Government has placed a duty on local authorities (Education and Inspections Act 2006) to make arrangements to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age and not receiving a suitable education. This duty is supported by the original statutory guidance issued February 2007 and the revised statutory guidance for local authorities in England to identify children not receiving a suitable education issued January 2009.

The purpose of this document is to establish a set of principles which all agencies can subscribe to and is underpinned by Salford's Children and Young People's Plan, to ensure that the Local Authority (LA):

- Is able to fulfil its statutory duty to provide an education for all children of compulsory school age<sup>1</sup>;
- Is able to track children and young people missing from education (CME);
- Identifies those at risk of becoming missing from education and accordingly allocates appropriate staff to intervene;
- Maintains contact with those missing from education and those at risk of becoming so.

The Children Act 2004 places a duty on all agencies to work together to promote the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people and to share information. This principle underpins this policy and there is an expectation that all agencies will work together to ensure that children and young people do not "slip through the net" and become missing as well as ensuring that all children within Salford achieve the five core outcomes:

1. Being Healthy
2. Staying Safe
3. Enjoying & Achieving
4. Making a Positive Contribution
5. Achieving Economic Well-being

These 'missing' children and young people are amongst the most vulnerable in our city and therefore it is vital that practitioners in all services work together to identify and re-engage these children and young people back into appropriate education provision as quickly as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Year 11 pupils are covered by this policy until the last Friday in June of their last year at school.

## Definitions for Child Missing from Education

The **national definition** of a child missing from education is:

“All children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. at home, privately or in alternative provision) and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as four weeks or more)”

The guidance also talks about the need for Local Authorities to monitor groups of pupils who are likely to go missing from education.

For the purpose of this document, **Salford’s definition** of children missing from education or at risk of missing education has been agreed as:

“To include any child who is not accessing appropriate provision”.

This will include the following pupils:

- Pupils who have moved into the area and are not yet on a school roll (including Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Relocated from a UK City, Relocated from outside the UK). In addition to this group of pupils there may be other pupils who are not on a school roll for any other reason than permanent exclusion
- Pupils in receipt of alternative educational provision but not on a school/college roll (including all permanently excluded pupils)
- Pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) awaiting an appropriate placement
- Those pupils offered alternative provision but do not access this provision
- Long-term non-attenders (defined as those who have not attended school for 6 consecutive weeks)
- Those on a limited provision

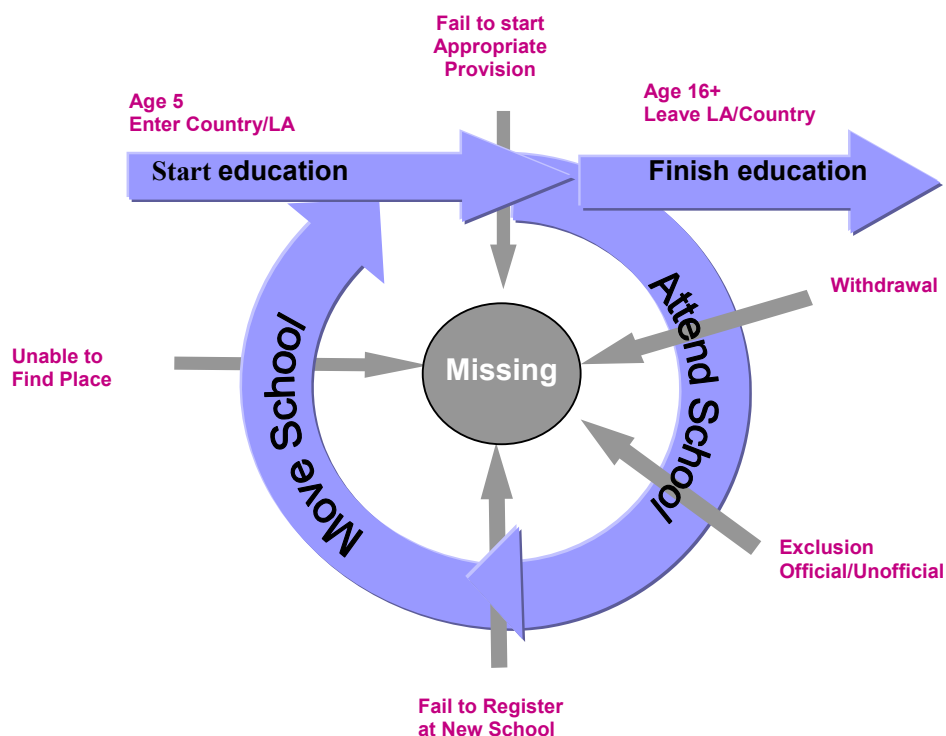
This guidance does not replace any of the Child Protection Procedures. Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns are to be observed at all times.

## How and why do Children go missing from Education?

Children fall out of the education system and are at risk of 'going missing' due to a wide range of reasons and some examples of which are listed below:

- They fail to start appropriate provision and so never enter the system (e.g. pre – school to Yr 1, new to city and no application made to school);
- Cease to attend, due to exclusion (e.g. illegal or unofficial exclusions) or withdrawal; removal from roll with no named destination; or
- Fail to complete a transition between providers (e.g. being unable to find a suitable school place after moving to a new LA or within Salford).

**Diagram 1**



To limit the opportunity for this happening, a series of systematic processes and procedures need to be put in place and links between different agencies on the issue need to be formalised.

## Identification Processes in Salford

In order for the LA (Salford) to take overall responsibility for Children Missing from Education (CME), it is necessary to have an officer, which other teams and organisations can contact regarding CME.

Salford has established a post of **Children Missing from Education (CME) Officer** for CME to receive referrals and to actively seek and identify those children missing through multi-agency work.

The post of **Children Missing from Education Officer** has been established to look at undertaking the developmental work, which is needed in this area of responsibility and part of this role is to take responsibility for:-

- Developing a monitoring and referral system for children out of school, at risk of missing education and those reported missing, destination known or otherwise
- Maintaining and updating the children missing education database and acting as a link officer with schools and other agencies referring or tracking pupils out of school
- Developing systems for the regular reporting of data on children missing education or at risk of going missing from education to Leadership Team and Elected Members
- Working with schools, settings and other agencies to ensure that procedures and practice are in place to minimise the possibility of children and young people going missing from education

## **Notification and Referral Routes**

If you are aware of a child missing from education (in whatever capacity), you should notify the Children Missing from Education Officer by using the referral form on page 9, please email the form to the CME Officer, email address is located on the form.

Alternatively, you can contact the:

**Children Missing from Education Officer – Di Platt on 0161 778 0354.**

All cases of children and young people missing education or at risk of doing so should be reported to the CME Officer to ensure that comprehensive data on the issues is recorded. Even if you will be ensuring that the child or young person moves swiftly into appropriate provision you should still make a referral.

The referral process is identified in the **Referral Process Flowchart** (page 8).

### **Referrals received from other authorities.**

Other Local Authorities and agencies use many different methods to notify Salford of children new to the city, including:-

- Enquiry Form - CME
- Letter/email to the Children Missing from Education Officer
- S2S secure messaging

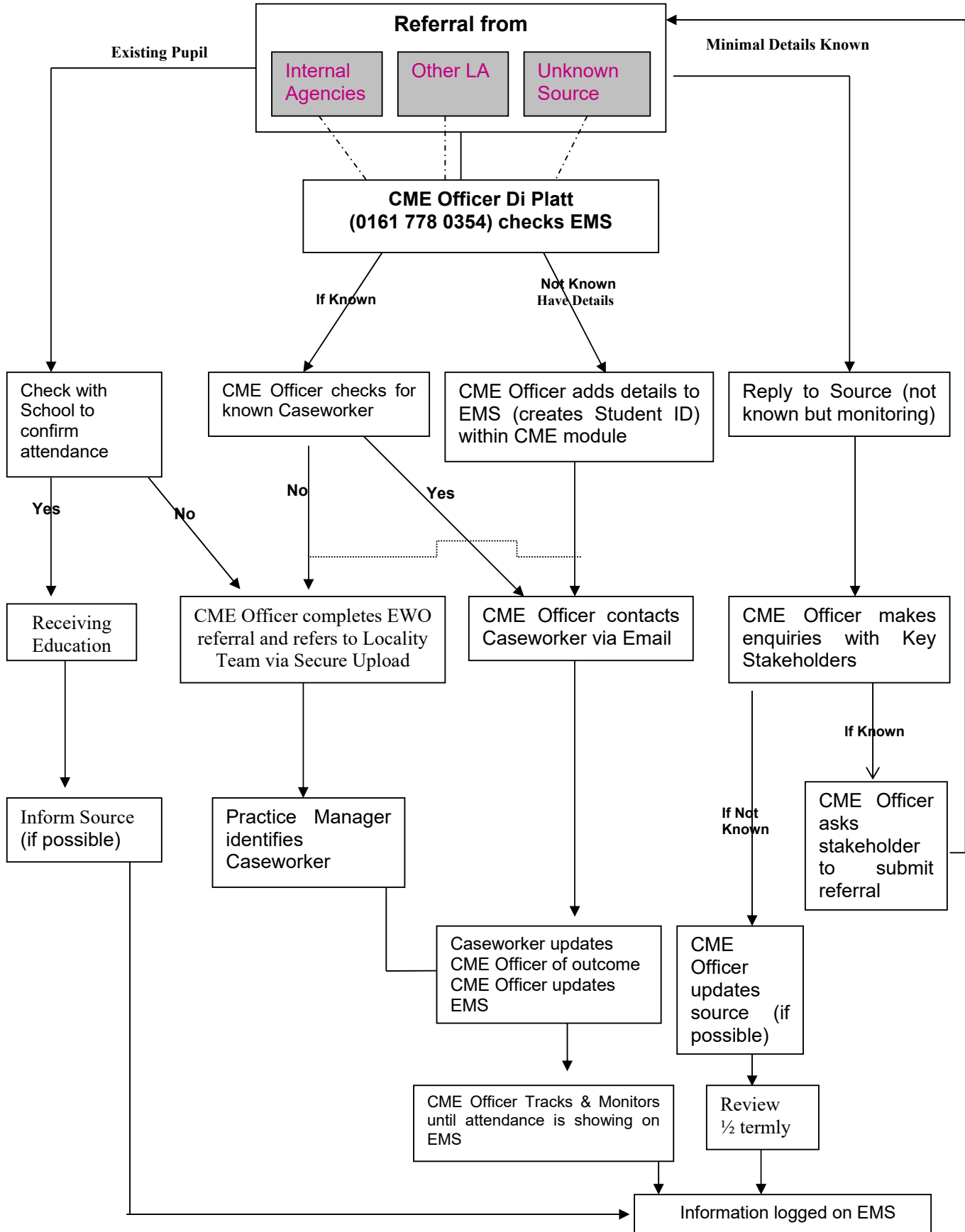
If a search on the EMS System is unproductive the CME Officer will complete a EWO Referral form and refer in via the Secure Upload facility for Practice Managers within the EIP Service to allocate to EWO for further investigation.

Once the child has been located, the needs can be assessed. From the referral form and the details contained within, the CME Officer will decide who is the most appropriate professional to take a lead as key worker for the particular case, based on the individual circumstances of the child or young person.

To ensure joined up integrated working, CME Officer will check the EMS System in order to identify which other professionals are currently or have previously worked with the child.

Whichever officer takes lead responsibility for a particular case they will be advised by the CME Officer which other professionals are involved.

## Children Missing Education (CME) Referral Process Flowchart





**Children Missing from Education Referral Form**

Form to be returned to:-  
 Children Missing from Education (CME) Officer – Di Platt  
 Targeted Services, Children’s Services Directorate  
 Salford City Council  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Unity House  
 Salford Civic Centre, Chorley Road, Swinton, M27 5AW  
 Tel:- 0161 778 0354 Email:- [cme@salford.gov.uk](mailto:cme@salford.gov.uk)

Name of Referrer:	
Position:	
Contact No. of Referrer	

Child Details					
Surname:		First Name:			
DOB:		Year Group:		Category (if applicable) Choose only 1 from table below	
Gender (Male/Female):		Looked After:	Yes		No
Ethnicity:		SEN Stage:			
Address whilst resident in Salford		Telephone No:	GP Details:-		
New Address (if known)		Telephone No:			
Reason out of Provision:					
Last known School and Local Authority (must indicate):					
Date last on a School roll:					
Action Plan with dates:					
Any other relevant details:					
Signature:					Date:

- |                             |   |  |                              |
|-----------------------------|---|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Category Definitions</b> | <b>1</b> No Provision (not SEN pupil)               | <b>4</b> SEN (no provision) but awaiting placement | <b>7</b> Whereabouts unknown |
|                             | <b>2</b> Part-time provision but less than 25 hours | <b>5</b> Offered provision closed                  | <b>8</b> In custody          |
|                             | <b>3</b> Full time provision but not mainstream     | <b>6</b> Long term non-attenders                   | <b>9</b> Other               |

## **Partner agencies and services involved in the referral and monitoring process**

There is a fundamental principle that all officers of the Local Authority and other partners have some level of responsibility around the issue of children missing education. If anybody is aware of any child or young person who does not appear to be accessing education appropriately they should make a referral. This may result in referrals being made for children and young people already known and on a school roll. However, given concerns around the safeguarding and welfare of this group of children, this is more beneficial than not receiving notification

## **Identifying a child missing education or at risk of doing so**

**Schools** have their own procedures regarding contacting children at risk of going missing from education. These procedures are closely tied into Education Welfare procedures and good practice and also the use of the schools to schools (S2S) website and the Lost Pupils Database for the transfer of pupil data. Once a school has completed all the processes, which they are required to follow to “track”, a pupil and are unsuccessful they should notify the CME Officer by completing the CME Referral Form and then inform their Education Welfare Officer, who is based within multi-disciplinary locality teams.

This proactive approach will help to enable us in limiting the opportunity for children and young people to become missing.

The CME Officer will be able to access various reports from the EMS System to highlight specific children and young people who have left one provision and not started at another provision and those at risk of going missing from education.

Links are in place to ensure that all Children and Young People who are **looked after** are notified when missing education or not accessing appropriate provision via the Care and Education Support Team monitoring processes.

**Excluded** pupils are tracked by the Inclusion Officer within Targeted Services, to ensure that they are accessing provision and their whereabouts are known.

It is anticipated that the CME Officer will carry out checks via access to the EMS System on a monthly basis to try to ensure that those children and young people who were **previously on a school roll and are no longer on that roll** have been admitted to another educational provision either inside or outside of Salford.

Pupils with a statement of **Special Educational Needs** (SEN) who are not in a provision will be tracked by the SEN Caseworkers.

Children and Young People who have not attended their allocated provision for a period of six consecutive weeks will be deemed to be **long term non-attenders** and in the absence of any other professionals being involved will be notified to the CME Officer by the appropriate Education Welfare Officer for that provision.

## Information for Schools on ways of locating a “missing child”

Schools should follow the usual procedures for locating a pupil using the good practice guidance – “Working Together – A guide to Improving Attendance in Salford Schools” – Section 26 Missing Pupils which states:-

### ***Missing Pupils***

Under normal circumstances when a child moves school the receiving school must contact the previous school to inform them they have placed the pupil on roll. In response to this, the previous school must complete a Common Transfer Form (CTF) and transfer this file to the new school via the secure data transfer site, referred to as School-to-School (S2S).

The purpose of this nationally used system is to avoid pupil’s going missing.

Where a pupil leaves a school and no notification of a new school has been received within 4 weeks of their leaving their details must be posted on the S2S site in accordance with the Department of Education instructions.

This enables LEA staff on a national basis to see who is missing and provide fresh information where possible.

Any school receiving a pupil for whom they have not been sent a CTF2 and do not know their previous school can contact the Information Manager – Steven Coupe on 0161 778 0347.

### **What should we do if we believe a pupil to be missing?**

If you have reason to believe a pupil has gone missing you must refer to CME and then speak with your EWO.

In Salford we complete a **CME Removed No Trace Checklist** (page 12) to ensure that all avenues of investigation have been covered. If on completion of this form the pupil has not been located and 4 weeks have elapsed the school should remove the child’s name from their roll and complete the ‘lost’ CTF2 form with XXXXXXXX as the destination school.

If the missing child is the subject of a **child protection plan** you should make every attempt to contact them as a matter of urgency. If you are unable to locate them, then you should contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 0161 603 4500

If you have reason to believe that the child or young person is missing due to the circumstance of Forced Marriage, you should consult with MASH as soon as possible on the above number. This should be done before sharing information about the child with any family member or friend of the family.

**CME REMOVED NO TRACE CHECKLIST**

NAME OF CHILD/REN:

DATE REFERRED:

LAST KNOWN ADDRESS:

SCHOOL:

EWO:

		To be Undertaken by:-	Date(s) Times	Action By	Outcome
1	Letter/ phone call	School			
2	Visit to address given by school	School/EWO			
3	Check with neighbours and any known extended family members	School/EWO			
4	Notify CME Officer	School			
5	Check with Housing Dept (Housing Association or Agent)	EWO			
6	Benefits Agency	EWO			
7	Council Tax	EWO/CME			
8	Has school undertaken any further checks	School			
9	Check CareFirst If child is an open case notify social worker immediately	EWO/CME			
10	Other agencies involved with the family EMTAS, RSPCA, ASSFAM, YOS etc.	School/EWO			
11	Completed form to be returned to CME Officer	School			

DATE REMOVED FROM ROLL:

Signed

Headteacher

## **Identifying available provision and places**

When identifying places for children, in order to re-integrate them back into education, staff should contact the Admissions and Exclusions team on 0161 778 0411 who will be aware of available places in local schools.

Placement in Special Schools and within specialist educational provision will be facilitated by the Special Educational Needs Team advice can be obtained on 0161 778 0410.

## **Maintaining Contact**

Once the child has been placed with an educational provider, their attendance will be monitored and the CME Officer will maintain contact with all cases of children and young people to ensure that they are appropriately placed and consequently removed from the database of children missing education or at risk of doing so. This contact should track the placement until new school history is showing on the EMS System and that attendance is coming through. The monitoring of the attendance is to ensure that there is no repetition of the issues that resulted in the child or young person being placed on the database.

## Thresholds of need and response in Salford

The processes detailed in the **Thresholds of need and response in Salford** document aim to provide effective working practices in safeguarding children in Salford. The new bespoke referral form will lead to better and clearer information being collected; this will greatly assist the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in their assessment tasks.

Salford City Council and our partners have established a new Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to screen all contacts concerning the welfare or safety of a child to Children's Services previously dealt with by the referral and initial assessment team (RIAT).

### Who is involved?

- Children's Services Early Intervention and Prevention Services
- Greater Manchester Police
- Environment and community safety
- Health Visiting Service

Other agencies will join at a later date

### Why are we doing this now?

- To be more responsive to contacts
- To ensure your contact is dealt with by the most appropriate service
- To avoid duplication of work by internal and external agencies

The new MASH is based within Unity House and can be contacted by telephone on **0161 603 4500** and enquiries concerning the welfare or safety of a child must go through the MASH via [worriedaboutachild@salford.gov.uk](mailto:worriedaboutachild@salford.gov.uk).

If you are worried about the welfare or safety of a child it is very important that you contact MASH or if a child is in immediate danger of being harmed, or if a child is home alone, the police should be called on 999.

The new structure in the MASH team will lead to a more responsive service in relation to referrals. The single point of entry will ensure that every referral is seen by a duty manager at point of entry and a decision swiftly made. If we receive a referral on the new bespoke form that has the information requested then an initial assessment will be undertaken with the caveat that if it is identified to be at CAF level then it will be returned with a revised plan and the use of a CAF co-ordinator to chair the first meeting.

The CAF forms will be uploaded as before but will arrive at the MASH team where an operational locality manager will discuss any CAF forms that may indicate a higher level of intervention is required. Otherwise the CAF referral system is unchanged. CAF co-ordinators will be on hand to help and support partner agencies to complete CAF forms and to assist in chairing some meetings.

The case transfer between teams and services has been designed to ensure children and families move up and down the continuum of care as seamlessly and safely as possible.

Please note that there is a new referral form for education which has been developed and should be used when there are attendance problems.

For further information relating to Thresholds of need please click following link:-

<http://intranet.salford.gov.uk/documents/thresholds.pdf>

### **The Common Assessment Framework (CAF)**

The process of Common Assessment is a crucial part of the Family Action Model. It enables practitioners, along with the family, to determine whether a child requires additional support, and which services can best assist them. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) tool is a standard approach to conducting a holistic assessment of the needs of a child and deciding how they should be met. In families with multiple children a CAF should be undertaken on each child. The CAF has been developed for use by practitioners in all agencies so that they can communicate and work more effectively together.

### **Where to send the completed CAF**

After completing the online CAF it needs to be sent to the relevant Locality Team via the secure upload. The CAF will be sent to the relevant Locality Team and a page on the internet will come up to say that the CAF has been sent.

Copies of the CAF must be forwarded by the CAF author to any other relevant agency, as agreed by the young person/family and identified in the action plan. It is not the role of the Locality Team to forward the CAF on to any additional services that have been requested.

### **How will I know what has happened to the CAF?**

The CAF Response Form will be returned to you by the receiving agencies that you have sent a copy of the CAF to. This will enable you as the CAF author to know the outcome of the referral.

This should be returned within a week of the CAF being received. If the CAF response form is not returned to you then you should contact the relevant service directly.

## **Sharing of Information**

Checks with other City Council Directorates can be made on the basis of the following legislation:

- Current child protection legislation, which states that any child missing from education is deemed to be a “Child in Need”
- Section 27 of the Children Act 1989 which states that a Local Authority may request help from any Local Education Authority and other agencies in exercising their duty to provide support and services to children in need and that Education staff have a duty to gather information regarding concerns
- The Children Act 2004 which states that all public agencies should work together to exchange and share information for the welfare and protection of children in the area.



## Appendices

### List of Acronyms

CAF	Common Assessment Framework
CME	Children Missing from Education
CTF	Common Transfer File
DfES	Formerly Department for Education and Skills now Department of Education
EMS	Extended Management System
LA	Local Authority
MASH	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
RIAT	Referral and Initial Assessment Team
S2S	School 2 School
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SIMS	Schools Information Management System

**Children Missing Education – Multi-Agency Network (Stakeholders)**

**Multi-Agency Network**

