



Absconding Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out clearly, for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a pupil abscond from school.

To abscond is to 'leave without permission'.

Under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 and in Common Law, schools and other education settings owe a duty of care towards their pupils. This duty of care requires that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that pupils are safe and remain within the care of the school at all times throughout the school day and during school led activities.

If a pupil attempts to abscond from the school premises, the response will be based on a dynamic risk assessment. This will include consideration of the pupil's age, maturity, SEND needs, emotional state, medical needs, known vulnerabilities, previous absconding history and the level of immediate risk presented.

Pupils who abscond from direct staff supervision are putting themselves at risk, any action taken by staff must always be in the best interests of the pupil and the school environment.

If a pupil is seen to be absconding from the school grounds/premises, the following procedures should be followed:

- If in close proximity, verbally encourage the pupil to come back to school
- Notify a member of the SLT/on-call that a pupil has absconded and give as much information as possible
- Where safe and operationally possible, two staff should maintain visual contact with the pupil and use calm verbal encouragement to support their return. Staff must not place themselves, the pupil, other pupils or members of the public at additional risk. Staff must be extra vigilant of the local area, including risks of roads/traffic and members of the public.
- The member of SLT leading the incident will complete an ongoing dynamic risk assessment, taking account of the pupil's individual needs, vulnerabilities and current level of risk.
- Staff must not run or be confrontational as they may increase the risk to the safety of the pupil
- Staff leaving site must have a mobile phone/radios to ensure communication is possible between staff and back to school
- The SLT may direct additional staff to support in a vehicle, where deemed necessary
- If staff lose sight of the pupil, they are to inform the SLT immediately
- If, after 5 minutes, the pupil is not found, the SLT will notify parents/carers
- If the pupil is considered to be at immediate or significant risk of harm, the police will be contacted without delay. In all other circumstances, if the pupil has not been located after 10 minutes, the SLT will contact the police following a dynamic risk assessment.
- Where there is an immediate danger to life or serious risk of harm, 999 should be called. In other circumstances, contact should be made via 101 unless advised otherwise.



If a pupil, marked in the register, is not found in school and was not seen leaving, the following procedures should be followed:

- Notify a member of the SLT/on-call
- The SLT to coordinate a search/sweep of the building
- If the pupil is not found, widen the search/sweep to the outside perimeter of the school grounds
- If the pupil is not found, staff directed by the SLT will search the local area where safe and appropriate. Staff must maintain communication with school throughout. Staff must have a mobile phone/radio to ensure they can communicate with each other and back to school
- If, after 5 minutes, the pupil is not found, the SLT will notify parents/carers
- If the pupil is considered to be at immediate or significant risk, the police will be contacted immediately. In all other circumstances, if the pupil has not been located after 10 minutes, the SLT will contact the police.

Incident Leadership

The SLT member leading the incident will:

- Coordinate the school response and search activity
- Maintain communication with all staff involved
- Record the time, location and circumstances of the incident
- Ensure the remainder of the school continues to operate safely
- Liaise with parents/carers, the police and other agencies as required
- Maintain an accurate incident log

Post Incident

Following an incident of absconding, the SLT must ensure that appropriate actions are taken to safeguard the pupil, review the incident and reduce the risk of recurrence.

These include:

- Meeting with the pupil to ascertain the reasons for absconding.
- Checking the pupil's welfare and determining whether any medical attention is required.
- Informing parents/carers as soon as the pupil has been located.
- Debriefing staff involved, where appropriate.
- Considering whether the incident raises any additional safeguarding concerns.
- Reviewing Behaviour Smart Plans, risk assessments and support arrangements.
- Reviewing and updating safety plans, risk assessments and other support measures in line with the pupil's individual needs.
- Informing the Police, where applicable, that the pupil has returned to school.
- Reviewing pupil support plans to ensure appropriate control measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of future absconding incidents.
- Ensuring the whole incident is recorded on Behaviour Smart.



Absconding Procedure

