

Absconding Policy

A student is considered to have 'absconded' if they intentionally / knowingly leave the school site or the immediate area of an off-site activity without permission.

1. If a child is seen to leave the school grounds without permission then staff must as much as reasonably possible maintain visual supervision of the child. Active pursuit may encourage the child to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may cause the student to panic and possibly put himself/herself at risk by, for example, running onto a busy road. If, however, a student is deemed a high risk to himself/herself or other people then staff should adhere to the Positive Handling and Restraint Policy with reference to holding the student.

2. There may be occasions when a student has left the immediate vicinity of the school and it is felt to be appropriate by the members of staff dealing with the situation to engage in a local search. If the student upon seeing the staff continues to run away then active pursuit must not be undertaken since this course of action could also cause the child to panic and put themselves at further risk. (On all occasions whenever a student(s) absconds from school then this should be reported to the Headteacher within 30 minutes).

3. If the student is still within the immediate vicinity of the school and is not showing signs of venturing any further staff may decide to do nothing except to monitor the student remotely with the expectation that the student will eventually return to school of their own volition. If the student persists in remaining outside the immediate school grounds then staff may eventually decide to approach the student in a friendly manner to see if the student can be persuaded to return to school. Obviously if the student upon the approach of that member of staff starts to walk further away then this approach must be abandoned at that time. Experience shows that in the majority of cases when a student remains in the immediate vicinity of the school then he/she will normally return in due course.

4. This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Supervision of Children Policy
- The children's home Missing From Home Policy

Protocol for absconding

If a student absconds:

- The Lead Teacher at school must immediately be informed of the situation.
- The Lead Teacher must then notify the most senior member of the Residential staff and request support.
- Where possible, a member of staff should follow the student at a safe distance and/or respond in line with guidance from the student's individual risk assessment and/or BMP. ☒
- Where possible, the member of staff following the student should remain in contact with the Lead Teacher at school via a mobile phone.
- The Lead Teacher will then, if appropriate, allocate further staff members to go and collect the student and return them either to the venue or to school. ☒
- The Lead Teacher will then inform the Head Of Education who will also inform the student's carers, social workers and keep them updated as necessary.
- If students cannot be seen then they are deemed to be 'missing'.

When searching for the missing student staff should:

- Check that the student has not returned to school.
- After 15 minutes (KS1&2) or after 30 minutes (KS3) the Lead Teacher should contact the Headteacher to agree with Lead Teacher as to whether to contact the police to report the student as missing.
- Undertake the completion of an Incident Report in which relevant members of staff will be required to outline the nature of any incident (if known) which led to the student absconding.

It is important that following an incident the issues that arise are addressed and staff should:

- Review the individual risk assessment for the student involved.
- Review the student's BMG.
- Where appropriate, talk through the incident with the student involved. Ensure that a record is kept of the discussion held with the student on the Incident Report.
- Keep all colleagues informed and discuss the incident in staff meetings and/or in supervision meetings.
- Review procedures for the individual every half term to ensure appropriate control measures are in place and that all staff are fully informed.

INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

What happens if you go missing?

What is meant by “missing”?

You will be considered missing if members of staff do not know where you are.

What is meant by “absconding”?

You have absconded if you deliberately go away from where you should be without telling a member of staff or without a member of staff giving you permission. What will happen if you go missing? The people looking after you have a responsibility to know where you are and to make sure you are safe. The Police may be informed that you are missing and they and the school staff will look for you.

What happens if you can't be found?

A meeting will be held between the school and the Police to plan how to search for you. Your name, description and a photograph will be given to the Police in order to help them with their search.

What happens when you are found?

You will be returned to the school and will be asked about the reasons for you going missing. This is to try and find out if anything is troubling you and to see if anyone can help. You do not have to run away to talk to someone. If you want to talk to someone outside of the school, this can be arranged. You may also be visited by a Police Officer who will check that you are back. This is called a “Safe and Well Check”. You will be able to speak to the Police Officer without any member of staff present if you wish to do so.

Will anything else happen?

If you are injured or unwell then you will be checked by a Doctor or Nurse. Your teacher or key worker will want to talk to you about going missing. If you have deliberately run away (absconded) then the people responsible for your safety will meet to discuss ways in which such incidents can be prevented by looking at the reasons for your actions.

Date approved: March 2016

Date last reviewed: September 2023

Next review (or before): September 2024

Signed: 

Position: Education Director

Staff Acknowledgement

In signing this document I am confirming I have read the information and have an understanding of the procedures outlined within the information provided.

I have had the opportunity to discuss this document with a Senior Leadership member of staff to gain further clarity.

I also know that if I feel I need further guidance I know I can access through the Executive Headteacher or Head Of Education.

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

Position:

Date:

School name:

Staff member name:

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