



Pupils Who Abscond Policy

Staff Responsible:	Mrs A Sheridan
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Policy for Pupils Who Abscond

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

Where a pupil, present at formal registration, is found to be absent from school without authorisation, and was not seen leaving, the following procedures should be followed:

Member of staff to inform the Headteacher or member of SLT, DSL and Main Reception.

Headteacher or member of SLT organises search of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to.

If the pupil is not found, then all available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.

- Main Reception to phone Durham Constabulary when area has been fully checked if the child is not found.
- Main Reception to contact parents/carers and inform them of the situation.

Consideration will be given to whether the search should be extended beyond the school perimeter. This decision will be based on:

- Staff's knowledge of the child and on the levels of risk, and on what action is in the child's best interests;
- Any information regarding where the child has absconded to;
- Who the child might be with.

Any staff (this must be a minimum of 2) who leave the school grounds need to take a mobile phone to contact school.

Once a pupil has been found then the lead SLT member will use their professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.

A written report will be recorded on CPOMS

Member of SLT to brief Durham Constabulary and parents/ carers.

Where a pupil attempts or is seen to be leaving the school premises without authorisation the following procedures should be followed:

- Staff must follow the pupil to the perimeter fence or gate and must try to persuade the student to stay in the school.
- If a student is deemed to be a high risk to himself or other people, then staff should adhere to the *Team Teach* Policy with reference to holding the student, if appropriate.
- At all times staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the pupil to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may also cause the pupil to panic, possibly putting him or herself at risk by running onto a busy road, for example.
- If the pupil has left the immediate vicinity of the school, the DSL, Headteacher or SLT members must be contacted immediately and the lead person will direct the course of action.
- Staff (minimum of 2) will follow the student and engage in a local search, following the student at a safe distance if in view.
- The SLT lead may direct additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone to contact school.
- The SLT lead will contact the pupil's parents/carers.
- If the searching staff lose sight of the pupil they must contact Main Reception giving details of their location and the clothes which the student is wearing, in order that they may call the police.
- If the pupil(s) has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is no longer visible then the SLT will make a decision as to how to take matters further, which will take into account the age of the student, the prevailing weather conditions, the nature of the incident which led to the pupil absconding, the pupil's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes.
- If the pupil returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the Durham Constabulary will be informed as soon as possible.
- Upon his or her return to school, and when the student is calm, the student must be seen by the SLT so that the reasons for absconding may be discussed in detail. At this point a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of further actions.
- A written report will be recorded on CPOMS.

Appendix 1

Example School Procedure if a child is missing/ absconds.

Staff member informs Headteacher/ SLT that a pupil is possibly missing/ absconding

Staff check location of pupil, if pupil is still on the premises by: -

- Staff check last known location, known hiding places, calm down areas, areas pupil may regularly go to if absconding.
- Staff members man any points of easy exit from school grounds/ building whilst others sweep building/ grounds systematically.

Pupil not found on the premises

Pupil sighted leaving the premises

Staff leave premises to search/ follow if safe to do so

Contacting Key Personnel

- Staff inform parents by phone to alert them and maintain contact
- Staff inform the police

Pupil is found

Contacting Key Personnel

- Parents, pupil and police (if appropriate) attend school to discuss matter. This should be done ASAP.

Pupil found on the premises

Pupil deliberately absconded

Pupil accidentally lost/ misplaced

Contacting Key Personnel

- SLT and other staff informed.

Pupil refuses to come in/ go to Head

Pupil comes in/ goes to Head

Contacting Key Personnel

- Call parents
- Pupil and parent discuss matter

Investigation

- Investigate incident, determine how it happened and any lessons to be learnt.
- Take action to prevent reoccurrence and amend pupil and site risk.