



Absconding Policy

2026

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'.

Schools 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 the following procedures should be followed:

Member of staff to inform Headteacher or member of SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM, and main office;

Head Teacher or member of SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM organises search of buildings and known places that the pupil may have gone to; while office staff announce over the tannoy/phone.

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;

If the pupil has not been found following the search then the police must be called along with parents/carers. If the pupil is a Looked After Child, then the social worker should also be informed at this time.

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 staff who leave school grounds to take mobile phone to contact school.

Once a pupil has been found, the lead SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM member will use his/her professional judgement to outline the response towards the pupil and the support the pupil will need in the future.

A written report will be filed on the incident. [INC1 Reporting Form]

Headteacher or member of SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM to brief police and parents.

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 pupil to stay in the school;

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 school office, Headteacher or SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM members must be contacted immediately and the lead person will direct the course of action.

Staff will follow the pupil at a safe distance, if possible. Any staff who leave school grounds to take mobile phone to contact school.

The SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM lead will contact the pupil's parents/carers. If the pupil is a Looked After Child, then the social worker should also be informed at this time.

If the searching staff lose sight of the pupil, they must contact the school office giving details of their location and the clothes which the pupil is wearing.

If the pupil(s) has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is no longer visible, the SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM will phone the police and continue to liaise with parents/carers.

If the pupil returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed.

Upon his or her return to school, and when the pupil is calm, the pupil must be seen by the Headteacher/Deputy 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 filed on the incident. [INC1 Reporting Form]