



## **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 then the action taken will depend upon the age, maturity, emotional state or medical condition of the pupil.

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
- A minimum of 2 staff are to follow the pupil and actively encourage them to come back to school. Staff must be extra vigilant of the local area, including risks of roads/traffic and members of the public
- 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
- If, after 5 minutes, the pupil is not found, the SLT will notify parents/carers
- If, after 10 minutes, the pupil is not found, the SLT will contact the police



**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, a minimum of 2 staff are to search the local area for up to 5 minutes. 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, after 10 minutes, the pupil is not found, the SLT will contact the police

### **Post Incident**

Following an incident of absconding, the SLT are to ensure that appropriate next steps are taken. These include:

- Meeting with the pupil to ascertain the reasons for absconding
- Appropriate sanction/safety plan implemented in line with individual needs
- Communication with parents/carers
- Inform the Police (if contacted) that the pupil is back in school
- Review of pupil support plans to ensure that all control measures are in place to prevent any future absconding
- Whole incident recorded on SchoolPod.

