



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.

This policy sets out the school's safeguarding procedures for managing incidents where a pupil absconds from school premises. The school recognises that absconding presents a significant safeguarding risk and requires an immediate, proportionate, and well-coordinated response to ensure pupil safety.

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Positive Handling/Physical Intervention Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE)

Duty of Care and Safeguarding Responsibilities

In accordance with Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) and Common Law, the school owes a duty of care to all pupils. The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure pupils remain safe and under supervision during the school day and during school-led activities.

All staff have a safeguarding responsibility to:



- Act immediately when a pupil absconds or is missing
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy
- Prioritise the safety and welfare of the pupil above disciplinary considerations

The response will be determined by the pupils:

- Age and vulnerability
- Emotional and mental health needs
- Medical needs
- Known safeguarding risks

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
- As soon as the pupil has left site, Admin team to call the police to make them aware
- Admin team to also alert parents and guardians that their child has absconded
- The SLT may direct additional staff to support in a vehicle, where deemed necessary
- If deemed necessary and proportionate for the safety of the pupils and the public, a physical intervention may be used
- If, after 10 minutes, the pupil is not found, the SLT will contact the admin team to alert 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/attendance team
- 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 any absconding incident, SLT will ensure that safeguarding actions are implemented:

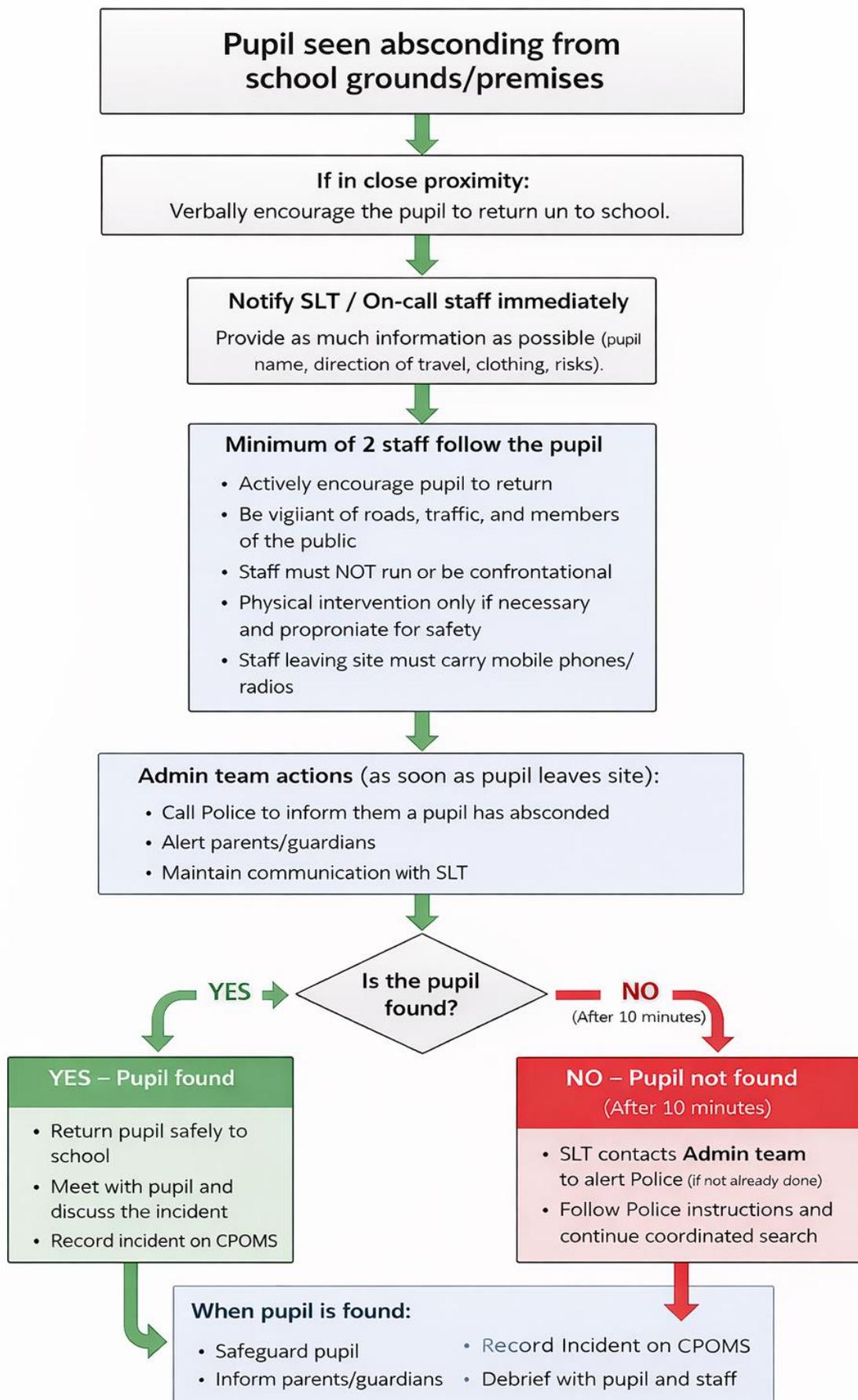
- A meeting will be held with the pupil to establish contributory factors and safeguarding concerns
- A risk assessment and individual safety plan will be reviewed or created
- Parents/carers will be informed of outcomes and next steps
- Police will be informed when the pupil is safely located (if previously contacted)
- Relevant support services will be engaged where appropriate (e.g. pastoral team, SENCO, safeguarding team)

All absconding incidents must be recorded on CPOMS, including:

- Actions taken and timescales
- Staff involved
- External agencies contacted
- Safeguarding outcomes and follow-up actions

Patterns and repeat incidents will be reviewed by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Senior Leadership Team to inform:

- Risk assessments
- Behaviour and support planning
- Preventative strategies





Detailed Report Procedure

Procedure: When a Pupil Is Observed Absconding

If a pupil is seen leaving the school site without permission:

1. **Immediate Safeguarding Response**
 - Staff should calmly and verbally encourage the pupil to return to school if it is safe to do so.
2. **Escalation to Senior Leadership**
 - A member of SLT or the on-call safeguarding lead must be informed immediately.
 - Staff must provide clear information including the pupil's name, description, and direction of travel.
3. **Staff Deployment**
 - A minimum of two staff members will follow the pupil at a safe distance while encouraging them to return.
 - Staff must remain alert to risks such as traffic, strangers, and environmental hazards.
4. **Professional Conduct**
 - Staff must not pursue in a manner that increases risk (e.g. running, shouting, confrontation).
 - Staff leaving the site must carry communication equipment (mobile phone or radio).
5. **Police and Parental Notification**
 - Once the pupil has left the school site, the Admin Team will notify the police without delay.
 - Parents/carers will be informed immediately.
6. **Additional Safeguarding Measures**
 - SLT may deploy additional staff or a vehicle if proportionate and necessary to safeguard the pupil.
7. **Use of Physical Intervention**
 - Physical intervention will only be used as a last resort where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, and must be in accordance with the school's Positive Handling Policy and statutory guidance.
8. **Time Threshold**
 - If the pupil has not been located within 10 minutes, SLT will ensure police involvement has been initiated.