

Scarborough Pupil Referral Service



Policy for Pupils who Abscond or go Missing

Drafted by:	Ratified by Management Committee:	Amendments made:	Review Date:
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Policy for Pupils who Abscond or go Missing

INTRODUCTION For the purpose of this policy guidance, the term ‘absconding’ is used to cover incidents of pupils or young people leaving school unaccompanied and without the prior knowledge of staff.

Principles and purpose:

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. The safety strategies will be dependent on school phases (ages) and vulnerability of specific individuals.

Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families has a role to play in safeguarding children. Pupils who go missing are potentially at risk of harm, and a significant number, because of their circumstances, may face the risk of sexual, criminal or economic exploitation. All school staff have a responsibility to provide a safe environment in which children can learn. (Keeping Children Safe in Education document & Working Together to Safeguard Children)

This guidance sets out the procedures for maintaining safety and dealing with the unlikely event of a pupil going missing off school site promptly and efficiently. It is the school’s responsibility to safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of children whilst in our care. Some pupils at Scarborough Pupil Referral Service have special needs and as such, are extremely vulnerable in terms of lack of understanding of their own safety, and the significance of school rules relating to attending and absconding. As a direct result of this, the school place high importance on awareness for staff regarding matters of safety, security and support for pupils and young people.

Where a pupil or young person is known to present a high risk of absconding and placing themselves or others in danger the school will create an individual assessment of risk reflecting those needs and how to address these in a positive way.

Staff Awareness

It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that they follow security and safety procedures to maintain the safest possible environment for the young person. They must familiarise themselves with the School Behaviour Policy and the individual strategies for support within each pupil’s Behaviour Support Plans and Risk Assessments. All staff are required to be vigilant in terms of escape routes and their awareness of pupil attendance.

Control measures and procedures to prevent absconding

1. Site security

- The site has two secure internal gates which should be closed at all times, other than in the event of a fire or emergency incident.
- Appropriate locks in place on internal gates.
- Doors into school should be locked and only usable by using the key pad. Doors that are activated by using a key pad or fob should not be propped open. The fire door in the common room should be kept closed and not be propped open other than in the event of a fire. The fire door in the kitchen can be opened during

breaks and lunch to allow pupils supervised access of the outdoor space but kept closed at all other times. All pupils should be escorted during transition times from one class to another to minimise egress from the fire door which allows entry and exit of pupils

Effective supervision

- Effective supervision is dependent on a number of factors including:
 - o Age of the pupils
 - o Ability of the pupils
 - o Number of the pupils
 - o Activities being undertaken
 - o Pupil behaviour
 - o Specific identified risks e.g. pupils with history of absconding, fire door positions and location of school in relation to town centre.
 - o class staff will be expected to supervise pupils who have a history of absconding between classes.

Individual Pupil Risk Assessments.

- Where there is a foreseeable risk of absconding, there should be an individual risk assessment in place with control measures to reduce risk of absconding.

External visits/sites.

- On an Educational Visit the security of the venue/location should be assessed and supervision levels altered accordingly.
- Ensure that there are robust systems in place so that there is a ratio of one adult to two pupils and regular head counts occur throughout the visit.
- In the planning for an educational visit the risks of absconding must be clearly assessed, particularly in the case where known absconders are in attendance. This should include transport

STAFF GUIDANCE FOR PUPILS ABSCONDING

In the unlikely event that a pupil or young person absconds, either intentionally or unwittingly, staff must activate the following procedure:

Where a pupil absconds, the following procedures should be followed:

- Member of staff to inform a member of SLT and main office.
- An SLT member will become the lead person.
- The teacher will organise a search of the classroom, SLT sweep the remainder of the school.
- If the pupil is not found then available staff to complete a more thorough sweep of the school and check the perimeter of the grounds.
- Behaviour Support and one ATA will leave school site and walk up Valley Bridge Parade to Valley Bridge. If the pupil cannot be seen Behaviour Support and ATA will return to school. If pupil is seen behaviour support and ATA will follow at a distance if safe to do so, only approaching the pupil where appropriate and depending on the staff's knowledge of the

pupil, the levels of risk and what actions are in the pupil's best interests, keeping school updated by phone. At all times staff must be aware that active pursuit may encourage the young person to leave the school or panic placing themselves in further danger e.g. risk of running into a busy road.

- If a pupil is not located within a reasonable timeframe (5 minutes), the lead person must contact parents/carers, requesting that the parent informs school if the pupil arrives home.
- If pupil is deemed vulnerable or at risk either from themselves or others lead person must call the police using 999 and advise that a pupil is missing, providing a full description, including the clothes they were wearing when last seen.
- The lead person may direct additional staff to join the search in a vehicle, taking a mobile phone with them to ensure contact with the school.
- Once a pupil has been found or returned of their own volition then the lead SLT member will inform parent/carer and police where necessary.
- Lead member will review pupil's risk assessment with health and safety officer in line with incident.
- A full and detailed report of the incident must be completed on CPOMs; this should include date, times, significant decisions made, actions taken, when and by whom i.e. police contact, parents informed external agencies etc.
- Please note if a pupil or young person leaves the building unattended or absconds in the community and there is not an additional staff member available staff should phone 999 while searching the area.

POLICY REVIEW STATEMENT

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if operationally required