



Guidance on Pupils Absconding

Context

A pupil is deemed to have absconded where they have deliberately left school without permission and/or without notifying a member of staff. This guidance is designed to support schools in managing situations where a pupil has absconded and one or more staff members are present

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance Policy

Relevant factors to consider when making decisions regarding pupils who have absconded

- Age of pupil and any additional support needs or vulnerabilities relating to the pupil
- The pupil's current demeanour and the nature of any incidents which led to the absconding
- Any previous absconding incidents involving this pupil and the outcomes of these incidents
- The immediate environment of the school, including potential hazards such as major roads, railways, canals
- Prevailing weather conditions or any other situational factors such as ongoing building/maintenance work
- Where a pupil absconds but remains within the perimeter of the establishment grounds, Staff should be mindful of any actions which may increase the likelihood of the pupil leaving the establishment grounds

Where a pupil remains within the immediate vicinity of the establishment grounds:

- A member of SLT/Safeguarding should be informed
- Staff should encourage the pupil to initially return back inside the perimeter and thereafter the school building
- If the pupil refuses to return, staff should use the relevant factors listed above to risk assess whether they feel the pupil is at immediate risk of harm
- Staff should monitor the student from a window or viewing distance if able to
- Where immediate risk of harm is identified, staff should contact the police. The pupil's parents/carers or allocated worker from partner agencies should also be contacted



Where a pupil leaves the immediate vicinity of the establishment grounds:

- Staff should use the relevant factors above to re-assess the level of risk to the pupil
- Telephone call should be made to parents/carers within 15 mins of absconding – a discussion with parents on if to call the police should take place
- Where immediate risk of harm is identified, staff should contact the police
- Staff may follow at a safe distance, allowing them to keep the pupil in sight and maintain communication without causing the pupil to feel the need to run. Staff following pupils must continue to keep the police up to date with the pupil's location and any potential danger the pupil is placing themselves in at that time

When following a pupil at a safe distance, the following should be noted:

- Staff should carry a mobile phone or walkie talkie to enable communication with police and/or other School staff
- Staff should not place themselves in situations of potential risk or harm e.g. trying to stop fast moving traffic; climbing over fences; entering derelict buildings; walking along or crossing railway lines on foot
- Physical intervention should only be considered as a last resort where the staff member feels that to not physically intervene would likely result in physical damage or harm to the pupil. This requires to be a balanced decision which takes into consideration that to act may force the pupil to actually cause harm or injury to themselves.
- Staff should not use motor vehicles to search for an absconding pupil as it presents a risk of accident through driving and looking for the pupil at the same time.

All incidents must be reported on CPOMS - the Schools Incident Reporting System