

Absconding is when a pupil goes beyond the fenced boundaries of the school without permission. Many of our pupils have difficulties managing their anxiety, and will often seek to abscond as a result. Other pupils may abscond for attention. In any circumstance, due to the vulnerable nature of our pupils, the absconding policy will be followed by all staff to ensure that pupils are safeguarded at all times. The absconding policy will also be followed if a pupil absconds during on off-site activity/ trip.

Within School:

Registers are taken every morning between 9.15 and 9.30 following arrival to school. Any absentees are followed up by phone call. A further register is taken in the afternoon once groups have returned from lunch. It is the responsibility of the staff in each class to account for the whereabouts of their pupils. Pupils are supervised at all times. Upon discovering a pupil is missing, an immediate search is undertaken by school staff looking in and around any usual haunts. The search will not exceed 10 minutes and a member of SMT must be informed immediately. If they cannot be found, it must be assumed that they have absconded. In this situation, parents/ carers/ social worker are to be informed immediately and kept up to date with the process. Once the pupil has been missing for 20 minutes the police are to be called. This may vary depending on the circumstance and individual needs of the pupil (see below).

If a Pupil Absconds:

Emergency fobs are available which can alert the office in the event of a pupil absconding. For pupils where there is a high risk of absconding, teachers are responsible for risk assessing pupils and putting adequate control measures in place.

1. Where possible, a member of staff should follow the pupil/ pupils, attempting to persuade them to come back onto site or keeping a safe eye on the situation. Staff will refer to the pupils PMP and individual risk assessment for further strategies.
2. The SMT must be informed immediately if a pupil absconds. This can be done by contacting the office or using the emergency fob/ class mobile. If appropriate, further staff members will be allocated to assist with the situation
3. SMT or admin will inform parents/ carers/ social worker and keep them updated.
4. If the pupil is missing for 20 minutes without being sighted, or the situation becomes unsafe, the police are to be informed.

Individual Circumstance:

The above response must be determined by the circumstances involved, determining their developmental level (age and maturity) and their emotional state. For example, if a pupil has no road awareness or is a danger to themselves or others, physical intervention could be necessary to prevent the pupil absconding. If they did abscond, the police would be informed earlier due to the higher level of risk. The response for older pupils who may live locally would be different again. Either way, parents/ carers/ social worker will always be informed as soon as possible, and a member of staff will follow to ensure safety. In all events, the pupil's individual risk assessment and PMP are to be followed.