



Connection ● Communication ● Independence ● Aspiration

Absconding Policy

Absconding is when a learner goes beyond the fenced boundaries of the school without permission. Some of our learners have difficulties managing their anxiety, and a small minority of these may seek to abscond as a result. Other learners might not have an awareness of danger and could put themselves at risk unintentionally. In any circumstance, due to the vulnerable nature of our learners, the absconding policy will be followed by all staff to ensure that learners are always safeguarded. The absconding policy will also be followed if a learner absconds during on off-site activity/ trip.

Prevention:

All learners are closely supervised at all times whilst in school. Outdoor spaces are fenced and risk assessed. Unused rooms are always locked.

Registers are taken every following arrival to school. Any absentees are followed up by phone call (Refer to Attendance Policy). A further register is taken in the afternoon. It is the responsibility of the staff in each class to account for the whereabouts of their learners.

Learners who present a known risk of absconding will have a risk assessment in place to reduce the risk of absconding. Personal safety and life skills are an embedded part of our curriculum.

Within School:

Upon discovering a learner is missing, an immediate search is undertaken by school staff looking in and around any familiar places. The search will not exceed 10 minutes and a member of SLT 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 learner has been missing for 20 minutes the police are to be called. This may vary depending on the circumstance and individual needs of the learner (see below).

If a Learner Absconds:

1. Where possible, a member of staff should follow the learner, attempting to persuade them to come back onto site or keeping a safe eye on the situation. If appropriate, further staff members will be allocated to assist with the situation.
2. Staff will alert the office in the event of a learner absconding and SLT must be informed immediately if a pupil absconds. For pupils where there is a high risk of absconding, the allocated member of staff will carry a school mobile to aid communication.
3. SLT 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 response must be informed by the individual circumstances, determining their developmental level and their emotional state. For example, if a learner has no road awareness or is a danger to themselves or others, physical intervention could be necessary to prevent the learner absconding. In all events, the learner's individual risk assessment are to be followed.