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**Learners Absconding from Higher Farm Education**

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| **Last reviewed on:** |  **NEW** |
| **Approved by:**  | **Andrew Powell (Proprietor)** |
| **Next review due by:** |  **December 2025** |

**Learners Absconding from Higher Farm Education**

At Higher Farm Education, we recognise that learners with Social Emotional Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties experience a range of different physiological and psychological challenges within their daily life. All our learners have experienced significant adverse childhood trauma resulting in

* Underdeveloped capacity for attention, learning, concentration and kindness.
* Less sophisticated neuronal networks which reduces their window of tolerance and increases their risk of flight or fight behaviours.

As a result, learners at Higher Farm Education will occasionally display flight behaviours as a response to perceived threat. Learners are always supervised throughout the school day; however Higher Farm Education is not an enclosed site and learners are able to leave the premises if they become anxious.

A learner accessing the provision is ‘considered’ to have absconded if they knowingly or intentionally leave the educational site or the immediate area of an off-site premises without permission. To keep learners safe staff should adhere to the following procedures.

Individuals that are accessing our services will have had a risk assessment completed prior to attending our site and facilities as a learner. The contents of this risk assessment will be based on their pre-admission assessment and reviewed as needed by the Provision Management Team. This risk assessment would allow to grade individuals as low risk, medium risk or high risk in relation to absconding.

At all times a learner’s age, state of mind and vulnerability should be considered: - **First Response:-**

* If the learner is at the early stages of a crisis, staff should follow a self-regulation plan to help them feel safe.
* If a learner absconds from the site, staff should immediately inform the Provision Manager and maintain sight of the learner.
* On arrival the Provision Manager and/or Management Team will oversee the recovery of the learner

# Second Response:-

* If a learner absconds and cannot be seen by a member of staff, they are considered missing.
* If a learner is missing the Management Team should be informed and they will conduct an immediate search of the building and/or area
* If a learner is not on site a vehicle will be used to support the search and cover known locations that they may have visited in the past
* If the learner is not located and recovered at the first sweep, staff should move to the third response.

# Third Response:-

* If the learner is not located at the First or Second response, and the time has extended beyond what is deemed suitable by their risk assessment (a maximum of 20 minutes) the Management Team will do the following:
* Report the High risk learner to the Police and Parent/Carer and continue to search the local area at once.
* Report Low risk learner to Parent/Carer to encourage contact and maintain communication with them for an appropriate period before reporting to the Police in a timely manner.

Noted\* - Depending on the risk level of the individual (guided by the risk assessment), the times between actions may be shortened.

# Offsite Learning

If a pupil absconds whilst attending an offsite learning provision, then the following procedures should be followed:

## First Response:-

* The visit leader should direct staff where possible and if it is safe to do so to follow the learner and attempt to re-engage them into the group / session.
* If the learner is not close enough proximity to re-engage, staff should maintain sight of the pupil until further support/ guidance is received by the Management Team.
* If it is not possible to follow the learner due to the welfare of other learners who are being supported by the staff, then contact should be made to the Management Team and Provision Manager who will contact the Parent/Carer or referring/responsible agency for the learner.

## Second Response:-

* If a learner is not visible to the member of staff that learner is considered missing
* If a learner is considered missing, the visit leader will contact the Management Team and they will inform parent/Carer, referring/responsible agency and Police if appropriate
* If the learner continues to be missing, staff will use a vehicle to search for the individual if appropriate to do so.
* The visit leader will undertake a dynamic risk assessment to assess whether the remaining pupils are successfully managing with the disruption to the visit and whether they need to return to the Provision or change their location.
* If a change of location is deemed necessary, to safeguard the rest of the learners, then the site leader should determine who stays with the group and who is looking for the learner and seek further support from the The Management Team and Provision Manager.

**Third Response:-**

If the learner is not located during the First or Second Response procedure and the time has extended beyond what is deemed suitable as informed by the dynamic risk assessment (a maximum of 20 minutes) the Management Team will undertake the following:-

* Report High risk learners to the Police and Parent/Carer (if not already done so) and continue to search the local area.
* Report Low risk learners to Parent/Carer and maintain communication with them for an appropriate period before reporting to the Police in a timely manner.

Noted\* - Depending on the risk level of the individual (guided by the risk assessment), the times between actions may be shortened.

# Local Community

Local schools and community settings are provided with contact details of the The Management Team, so they can call them directly if any of the learners are spotted within the area. The Management Team will respond immediately if they become aware that any of Higher Farm Education learners who have absconded are spotted within the community.

If learners have absconded and displaying unsafe or dangerous behaviours, then a dynamic risk assessment should be undertaken immediately to assess if the Police need to be informed to keep all parties safe.

Staff should always follow the off-site risk assessment protocols.

# Post Incident review

Any incidents of learners absconding should be reviewed by the staff working with the learners. Staff should update appropriate risk assessments and self-regulation plans, with additional information and controls to prevent further incidents of absconding.

Incidents of absconding should be followed up by restorative conversations with the learners and their parents/ carers where appropriate to support their understanding of risks and the impact of them absconding from the education centre.

# Reporting

Incidents of absconding should be recorded using CPOMS. Parents/Carers and appropriate agencies should be informed of the incident and recorded on CPOMS and on the learner’s record. Those informed will be recorded on CPOMS.

# Monitoring / Evaluation and Review

The Management Team will ensure that all staff take responsibility for implementing the guidance and procedures. Overall responsibility will lie with the Safeguarding lead.

This guidance has been read by all staff working with learners; and Proprietors, Parents/Carers and the Police who agree with the guidance and procedures outlined within the document.