



ReEngagEd Alternative Provision

Absconding Policy

Approved by:	S. Casey
Last reviewed on:	1 st January 2025
Next review due by:	September 2025

This is the policy for ReEngagEd alternative provision, which sets out the actions that will be taken if a student absconds from the school site.

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. A risk assessment will be prepared for those pupils who are at risk.

1. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this non-statutory policy is to set out clearly for all stakeholders, the process that will take place should a student abscond from school. Our aim is to work actively to provide a secure, safe environment, a school where students want to come to enjoy learning with others as part of a caring community. We recognise that it is possible that a student will abscond from our school and this policy is written to ensure we are ready to deal with this eventuality should it occur.

2. Agreed procedure when a student absconds

When a student attempts to leave the school premises without authorisation the following procedures should be followed:

- Member of staff to inform Headteacher/DSL who will inform parents immediately.
- Staff to be ready to communicate and respond via telephone.
- Headteacher, or nominated member of staff to take a mobile phone and follow the student to the school fence or gate and must try to persuade the student to stay in the school.
- Be aware of the risk of fight or flight. Passive monitoring, not chasing should be carried out as this could further endanger the student. Active pursuit may encourage a student to leave the area and may also cause the student to panic, possibly putting him or herself at risk by running onto a busy road; staff will not chase but will try to keep a student in sight at a distance.
- If by leaving the school the student is known to be putting themselves in danger, adults must exercise their duty of care and stop the student, physically if necessary.
- If the student has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds and is no longer visible, and parents/carers have not been spoken to directly, then the DSL/DDSL at

the host school must be informed. Staff will give the host school give brief details and the student's last known location. The host school will then be responsible for following their safeguarding/absconding policy. If the host school cannot be contacted, then the police will be informed

- Referring school will be informed.
- If the student returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.
- Upon his or her return to school, and when the student is calm, the student must be seen by the Headteacher or an appropriate member of staff so that the reasons for absconding may be discussed in detail. At this point a decision will be made as to the appropriateness of further actions.<sup>[L]
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- • If appropriate, a meeting with parents/carers will be arranged.
- A written report will be filed on the incident and recorded, a copy will be sent to the host school.

We cannot lock students in the school but will take every reasonable measure to ensure that it is a secure site. The role of the proprietor and Management Committee is to review the school regularly to consider additional measures that continue to make it even safer yet accessible for all.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

Each incident will be monitored and evaluated. Risk management plans for any student believed to pose a risk of absconding will be created / updated by school with the support of staff and parents/carers.

The Headteacher and DSL will ensure that there are protocols in place and that all staff are aware of it. Any changes to the plan must be communicated to all staff. Staff must be made aware of:

- the tendency to run of any 'at risk' student
- the adult supervision in place to prevent absconding
- for any 'at risk' students - any triggers, normal routes taken, known exit points, hiding places and any location that the student is likely to head towards
- Any other relevant information that they might need to know

4. Parents and Carers

Parents and carers of pupils are responsible for supporting the work of the school and encouraging their child to keep to all school procedures and policies. Once school has informed the parents/carers that their child has absconded, parents/carers are responsible for actively supporting the school with subsequent procedures and actions. This could include coming into school to help secure the safety of the student as well as meeting with a member of staff in order to agree to the subsequent actions. Where relevant, risk management plans will be shared and signed by parents/carers.

5. Next Steps

The incident will be discussed with the relevant parties to agree suitable next steps. Although not an exhaustive list, the actions that can be considered could include:

1. Individual Risk Management Plan.
2. Additional risk assessment of school premises to be carried out by Proprietor
3. Early help referral or advice sought from Children's Services
4. Adaptations made to the student's timetable
5. Use of social stories
6. External agency support sought
7. Home visit carried out

6. Health and Safety Management

The Proprietor regularly checks that the perimeter fencing is secure and that there are no holes or gaps in the fencing. If there are issues with the boundary, additional monitoring should be in place until these can be resolved.

All external gates must be shut during the school day.

Staff should be vigilant and look for signs of students attempting to leave the building/site. These should be dealt with or referred immediately to a senior member of staff.

Regular reminders must be given to staff to be aware of students leaving the building.

Access points should be minimised for visitors and the front door should be monitored closely by staff.