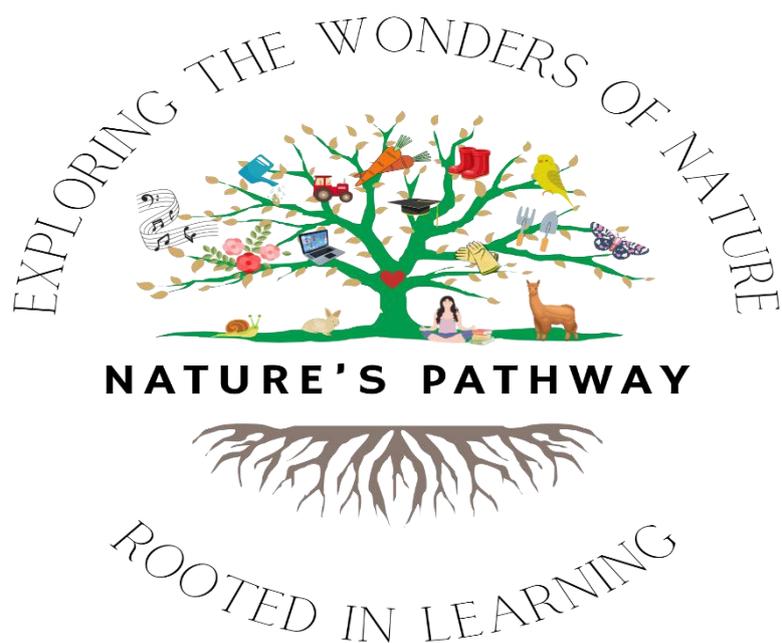


Natures Pathway



Absconding Policy

Commencement Date: 31ST January 2026

Review Date: 31ST January 2027

Signed: N. Butler

This policy should be read alongside Natures Pathways policies and procedures on safeguarding of children.

Natures Pathway works with children as part of its activities. These include farm and nature based activities, nature support during term time.

Purpose and Aims The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to ensure that every action possible is taken to secure the quick and safe return of a child if they go missing or abscond from our farm or out door woodland

Objective

- To locate any missing child quickly
- To ensure that the building, grounds and woodland areas are safe and secure
- To ensure that farm staff always keep children under proper supervision
- To ensure that if a child 'goes missing' during their time at the farm or woodland areas, they are located quickly and returned safely.

Strategies

In the event of a child being seen to leave the premises please follow the procedure below: Where a young person attempts or is seen to be leaving the premises without authorisation when in the care of staff, the following procedures should be followed:

- Member of staff to inform management. management to liaise with SLT of the child's school or commissioning body.
- Staff must follow the child to the gate and must try to persuade the child to stay in the premises.
 - If by leaving the farm the child is known to be putting themselves in immediate danger, adults must exercise their duty of care and stop the child, physically if necessary.
 - If already off farm premises, an active pursuit may encourage a child to leave the site and may also cause the child 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 child in sight at a distance if possible.
- The SLT at the child's school or commissioning body will contact the child's parents/carers
- If the child has left the immediate vicinity of the farm grounds and is no longer visible then the police must be informed immediately.

- If the child returns of their own volition, parents/carers and the police will be informed as soon as possible.
- Upon his or her return to us, and when the child is calm, the child must be seen by the management team 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
- A written report will be filed on the incident and recorded on the child's file and farm incident book. This will be shared with relevant parties in relation to the child's care.
- An update of the individualised risk assessment must be carried out following the incident.

The same steps should be taken in the event of a child absconding from an off-site visit or trip. This policy must be reviewed every three years, or after every incident of absconding, to ensure it is still fit for purpose.

This policy was last reviewed on: 31ST January 2026

Signed: N Butler

Renew Date 31ST January 2027 or as needed