

Pupil Absconding Policy

The Bridge



Approved by: Nikita Boydell **Date:** June 2023

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Next review due by: April 2025

INTRODUCTION

The Bridge is committed to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of students and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. The Bridge strives to provide a secure and safe environment where students will want to come and enjoy learning with others. It is always our expectation that students will choose to comply with policies and procedures whilst on school premises or under the direct supervision of staff whilst on educational visits. There are occasions however where students choose to abscond from the school site or the supervision of staff whilst on an educational visit.

TO ABSCOND IS TO LEAVE WITHOUT PERMISSION.

Staff should always bear in mind that students who have chosen to abscond may be upset and as such, they may not be thinking rationally. It is important that the response of staff is to remain calm, maintain visual contact and work to re-engage the student and return them safely to the school. At no point should staff run after a student, nor should they ask other students to assist in pursuing the absconding student. Active pursuit may encourage the student to leave the immediate vicinity of the surrounding area and may also cause the student to panic and possibly put themselves at risk. If however a student is deemed to be a high risk to themselves and/or other people then staff should adhere to the use of the restraint policy with reference to holding the student. This does not mean that staff should run after a student in order to hold them. In all instances of absconding a senior member of staff should be informed. The date and time of the incident should be recorded as a safeguarding concern by the staff member dealing with the student on Safeguard My School.

When visual contact with a student is lost then the parents/carers should be telephoned and informed. A record of this call including time and any agreements should be recorded on safeguarding log. In circumstances where there are concerns for a student who has absconded and the parents or carer cannot be contacted, then the police should be contacted, and the necessary details passed on.

Once the student has returned safely and all parties have been informed it is essential that school are parents have a thorough discussion to put a plan in place to make the child feel safe at The Bridge and to prevent the incident happening again.

ABSCONDING WHILST OFF SITE ON EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND TRIPS

1. In the event that a student chooses to abscond the trip leader must follow absconding procedures as shown above, directing staff to maintain visual contact with the student if possible and informing the office immediately.
2. Office staff will inform the student's parents/carers and record details as communicated by the trip leader on safeguard my school. A record of the telephone call to parents/carers must also be included on the form.
3. Emergency procedures as set out in the individual educational visit/trip risk assessment must be followed.

INFORMATION WHEN CALLING THE OFFICE

Exact details:

- The precise location
- Who was the absconding student with?

- When was the student last recorded as being seen?
- How did the student abscond?
- What time did the student abscond?

IF ASKING THE OFFICE TO INFORM THE POLICE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS REQUIRED:

- Height and build of the student
- Colour of the student's hair
- Details of what the student was wearing including any distinguishing accessories i.e., bags, sunglasses

In the event that the student returns to the group then the school must be informed immediately, and details recorded on SMS. Calls home must be made, and details recorded on SMS by SLT. Parents and carers of students are responsible for supporting the work of the school. Once The Bridge has informed a parent/carer that their child has absconded, parents and carers are responsible for actively supporting the school with subsequent procedures and actions. This could include coming into the school to help secure the safety of the child/young person as well as meeting with senior staff to agree subsequent actions.

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STUDENT ABSCONDS

FOLLOW STUDENT IN A CALM MANNER, DO NOT RUN! TRY TO KEEP THEM IN SIGHT. YOU MAY **ONLY** HOLD A STUDENT WHILE IN PURSUIT IF THEY PUT THEMSELVES OR OTHERS AT RISK.

REPORT TO SLT A CONTINUED UPDATE OF LOCATION, THEY WILL CONTACT PARENTS. THE AIM IS TO **ALWAYS** SUPPORT THE STUDENT IN RETURNING TO SCHOOL.

STUDENT IN SIGHT

REMAIN IN CONTACT AND AWAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS.

SLT TO CONTACT PARENTS IMMEDIATELY. IF PARENTS AND EMERGENCY CONTACT CANNOT BE REACHED THEN POLICE TO BE INFORMED.

STUDENT IS EITHER RETURNED TO SCHOOL OR COLLECTED BY PARENT.

STUDENT OUT OF SIGHT

CONTINUE TO SEARCH FOR THE STUDENT. CALL SLT IMMEDIATELY WITH A FULL DESCRIPTION OF THE CHILD.

SLT TO CALL PARENTS AND POLICE.

IF CHILD COMES BACK INTO SIGHT, THIS MUST BE REPORTED IMMEDIATELY. CONTINUE TO GIVE UPDATES.

IF CHILD REMAINS OUT OF SIGHT, FOLLOW UP INSTRUCTIONS FROM POLICE.

STUDENT IS EITHER RETURNED TO SCHOOL OR COLLECTED BY PARENT/POLICE.

ABSCONDING INCIDENT TO BE RECORDED ON SAFEGUARD MY SCHOOL. INCLUDING ALL TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS WITH PARENTS/CARERS.

A FOLLOW UP MEETING **MUST** BE HELD TO PUT IN PREVENTATIVE MEASURES AND STUDENT RISK ASSESSMENT TO BE AMENDED.

HIGH LEVELS OF ABSCONDING WILL REQUIRE A RISK MANAGEMENT MEETING.

STUDENTS MUST FEEL SUPPORTED AND NOT SCARED BY OUR PRESENCE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, THE BRIDGE IS A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL.