

Absconding Pupil Policy

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| APPROVED: | DATE: 15/11/2017 |
| SIGNED: | ROLE: EAB CHAIR |
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BASED ON THE DONCASTER LOCAL AUTHORITY APPROVED POLICY

AUTHOR: EDUCATION SUB GROUP POLICIES AND PROCEDURE TASK GROUP



Absconding Pupil Policy (including Abduction of Pupil)

Policy Statement

Under Section 3 of the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, Section 175 of the Education and Inspections Act 2002, and in Common Law, schools and other educational 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.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Crookesbroom Primary Academy provides a safe and secure learning environment and puts safeguards in place to monitor pupil attendance. When a pupil absconds, staff will follow the procedures listed to assist in the safe recovery and return of the pupil, and report all events for review of such incidents.

1. School Security and Monitoring

The School will monitor pupils' attendance throughout the school day and provide a secure site by:

- Recording pupil attendance at morning class registration between 8:50am and 9:00am;
 - Securing all designated security gates between the hours of 8:55am and 3:00pm;
 - Logging late arrivals at the office and on SIMs;
 - Monitoring and supervising pupils with the designated number of staff during play-times;
 - Teachers will report any missing pupils during class time to the main office who will inform the Head of Academy (Assistant Principal in her absence)
 - Monitoring and supervising pupils with the designated number of staff during lunch-time break;
 - Recording pupil attendance at the afternoon class registration at the end of the lunch break; and
 - Ensuring all none teaching/activity area doors are closed and locked where these could be used as absconding routes or obscure hiding places.
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- During out of school activities the responsible adult will register the class/group and monitor pupil attendance carrying out regular head counts and ensuring the class is split into smaller groups- all supervised by an adult. Any discrepancies will be reported to the main office who will inform the Head of Academy (Assistant Principal in her absence)

School visits will have an individual risk and supervision assessment. These are recorded using Evolve. No visit takes place before the risk assessment is checked by the EVC and Head of Academy who signs it off.

2. Absconding Procedures

Whilst attending school

There is no reason why pupils should leave the academy during the school day. In an attempt to prevent this, high fencing surrounds the school perimeter; playground gates are locked and the main entrance/exit of school has a security lock placed at a high level.

If a child is seen to leave the school grounds without permission staff must not run after them, nor should they ask any other child or groups of children to pursue them. Experience shows that this often exacerbates the situation since it is often the case that a pupil will go no further than outside the school gates and after a short period of time will return of his/her own volition. Active pursuit may encourage the child to leave the immediate vicinity of the school and may also cause the pupil to panic and possibly put themselves at risk by, for example, running onto a busy road. Every effort, however, should be made to de-escalate the situation and calm the child down.

If a pupil is deemed to be a high risk to him/herself or other people, staff should adhere to the Positive Handling Policy (Appendix 1 of the behaviour policy). This does not mean that staff should chase after a child in order to hold him/her).

On all occasions whenever a pupil(s) absconds from school then this should be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) immediately and it will be for them to decide the course of action to be undertaken.

In this situation,

- a) Is the pupil outside the school grounds but still within the immediate vicinity of the school and not showing signs of venturing any further?

In this circumstance, the SLT member may decide to do nothing except to try to de-escalate the situation and encourage the pupil back inside the school building.

- b) Is the pupil no longer visible and has left the immediate vicinity of the school grounds?

In this circumstance, the SLT will need to make a decision as to how to take matters further which will have to take into account:

- how vulnerable the pupil is;
- the time of day and how long the child has been off site;
- the prevailing weather conditions;
- the nature of the incident which led to the pupil absconding; and
- the pupil's previous history of being involved in episodes of absconding and their outcomes.

Having taken such factors into account the SLT member will initiate the following course of action:

- Nominate a team of staff tasked with dealing with the absconding procedures;
- Check that the pupil has not returned to school;
- Ensure the pupil's parents/carers are informed that their son/daughter has absconded;

- If after reviewing the incident and there is no further notification of the pupil's whereabouts, the SLT (at their discretion) will report the pupil as missing to the Police Community Support Officer or the police if there is no response from the PCSO and notify the Delta Academies Trust of their actions;
- Log the incident on CPOMs; including the events leading up to it and all subsequent actions.

If the pupil returns of their own volition, following the steps outlined above, then the parents/carers and the police will need to be informed as soon as possible of the pupil's return to school.

Upon their return to school, the pupil must be seen by the SLT or Learning Mentor so that the reasons for the absconson may be discussed in detail. At that point a decision will need to be taken as to whether it is appropriate or not for the pupil to be sanctioned for their actions.

In all circumstances of absconding, parents/carers will be informed unless the SLT recognise, through consultation with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, that this would lead to risk of harm.

All incidents of absconding must be recorded on CPOMs. The incident must be reviewed to decide upon further action in keeping with school's behaviour policy.

School Visits

A full risk assessment will be undertaken for each school visit and this, together with any pupil behaviour or absconding record, will assist in determining any measures required for specific pupils. A site-specific risk assessment will be undertaken for any pupil who is at risk of absconding.

Where it is considered the risks and histories of absconding are too hazardous for taking an identified pupil on a visit, the pupil will initially be excluded from the visit and parents/carers will be invited to a meeting informing them of the school's decision and reasons. (The meeting will be logged on Evolve and CPOMs.) The parents/carers have a right to appeal against this decision or discuss any alternative/additional arrangements that would eliminate or reduce the risks associated with the pupil attending the visit e.g. a family member accompanying the child on the visit (if the school deems this appropriate).

For the purpose of this policy, school visits are categorised into three levels and have appropriate management and assessment criteria. The following chart will be used to assess and manage school visits and provide the appropriate procedures to be adhered to.

| Category of Visit | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 |
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| Description | | | |
| Examples of school visit | Outside activities including: Water based Water close proximity General public spaces | Internal Site Specific activities including: Museums/Galleries Theatres | Local visits including: Post Office Church Library |

Absconding on visit

An absconsion will initially be treated in the same manner as an event of a lost/missing child and the following procedure will immediately be followed:

- The party leader is informed immediately;
- If a child is seen to abscond from the school group then in no way should staff run after them, nor should they ask any other child or groups of children to pursue them but keep visual contact at a safe distance if possible;
- Ensure that all other children are safe with appropriate adults;
- If a child is not seen absconding but becomes unaccounted for, start a systematic search, based on where the child was last seen and with whom, making sure all areas are covered;
- The Party Leader will inform the venue staff so exits and entrances can be secured and monitored;
- The Party Leader will immediately inform the school office who will contact a member of the SLT;
- A member of the SLT will become the Incident Manager or nominate a senior member of staff to manage the situation;
- Contact will be held continuously between the Party Leader and Incident Manager;
- The SLT and/or the Incident Manager will review all factors regarding the location/pupil, and then inform parents/carers if he/she is not on the visit within an appropriate time, dependent upon the circumstances and location.
- The SLT and/or Incident Manager will review the information available regarding contacting the police authority responsible for the visit location and Delta Academies Trust.
- If the child is unable to be found the SLT/Incident Manager would then implement Delta Academies Trust emergency guidelines.
- The Chair of the EAB will be informed of the incident.
- A full review of the incident will take place and outcomes will inform future practice.